Being True to Myself and Finding Balance
My experience as an asylum case officer at the Swedish Migration Agency during the largest influx of asylum seekers in history

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Author’s perspective
It was a long journey before I came to the Master of Arts Program in Peace, Development, Security and International Conflict Transformation at the University of Innsbruck in Austria (Ma program in Innsbruck). However, there were many reasons why I ended up in the very different, to say the least, Ma program in Innsbruck.

Being in the Ma program in Peace brought me a lot of insight about myself and my own inner conflicts. It also provided me with valuable tools in order to work as an Elicitive Conflict Worker (ECW). I will in this thesis go in depth about what it means to be an ECW and were the idea and concepts comes from. I will also focus on the essential trainings for an ECW.

From the philosophy of the Ma program in Innsbruck I have learnt that who is writing is important, as it will affect what is written. Who that person is and why s/he write is of interest. Therefore, I want to give you a short glimpse of what brought me to where I am today and how I came to write this thesis and who I am in terms of writing it.

Unaware of my own conflict
In September 2015, I started working for the Swedish Migration Agency, little did I know what I was getting myself into.

My motivation to get the job at the Migration Agency was to learn about the system of how asylum applications were processed and on what grounds the decisions was made, from the inside of the system. I felt I had for a long time tried to fight the immigration system, which I did not agree with, from the outside. It had felt like banging my head against a wall. I felt it was not possible to really understand how decisions on asylum applications could be made,
sometimes it felt so arbitrary and much like a lottery. I had a strong urged to really understand the system and how the laws were applied in order to be able to influence and transform the system.

During my time as a student (2013-2014) at the MA program in Innsbruck, I moved back to Sweden, a country I had left in 2005, to find myself. As soon as I turned 18 years old I left and travelled the world. For every trip I did it became harder for me to move back to Sweden. After my first semester in Innsbruck, I realized I had to go back to Sweden, if I really want to look at myself and face my own inner conflicts.

I realized that I had for a long time been searching for something outside of myself. I realized when looking closer at myself I had a sorrow that was not healed. When I grew up, I had been living in a beautiful house together with my family, my parents and older brother. The house, the street and the neighborhood had been my entire world and I had no need to leave it. I dreamt about one day buying the house and raising my own family there. When I was 18 years old my parents decided to get a divorce and the house was sold, it left me devastated.

Instead of accepting what was and how to move on from there, I denied that my parents had divorced and began to travel, as far away as I could. I did my first trip abroad and realized it was easier to be far away where I was not faced with the fact that my parents had divorced and what I had called my home was now gone.

Later on I realized that what I was searching while travelling was a place to call home. Nevertheless, I continued to travel and move around for almost 12 years. I did not realize that what I had to do was to come go back, to my family
and to Sweden and deal with all the emotions and feelings that the divorce had created inside of me.

Even though, the experience of traveling around seeing the world had its charm and I did not realize how much the fact of not having a physical space to call home and being close to my family was exhausting. Coming home was difficult, but also made me learn about myself, which I will explore more throughout this thesis.

By becoming aware of how the loss of my home and connection affected me, I also resonated with many of the people that had lost their homes and families as a result of having to flee their country. Not totally aware of this at the time I started to engage in activities to help immigrants which has seek refuge in Sweden.

Doing so I got involved in a loose organization called Asylgruppen\(^1\). The organization helped asylum seekers, migrants and undocumented migrants. The organization was a flat organization solely made up by volunteers and donations from the civil society. The group organized social activities, legal advice, demonstrations, lobbying, helping with contacts with institutions, helping with finding housing and economical help, activities to learn the Swedish language, amongst other activities (Asylgruppen i Malmö).

I got involved and helped as much as I could on my spare time, which was quite a lot since I was a student at the time. However, the situation got out of hand quite quickly. I felt with my whole heart for the people coming to Sweden to seek protection. I did not know many in the organization at the time but got in contact with a few people that I was a contact person for. I quickly felt very alone

\(^1\) The Asylum group, free translation by the author
in the situation and not knowing how to handle the situation I was in. I took the many stories I was told into the core of myself and felt with my whole heart the suffering of the stories people told me about how and why they had come to Sweden, I took their stories as mine.

On top of the stories of how and why they came to Sweden and the suffering they had faced, it was the additional layer of them being denied protection in Sweden now living underground hiding from the Swedish authorities, in many cases. That provoked deep feelings in me that was even harder to handle then the terrible stories they had told me about why they left their countries.

I believe that the stories of how it was to live in hiding, not as part of the society did hurt me on the inside. I felt for people that have had to flee their country coming to Sweden and then been given the cold shoulder. Not being brought in but kept outside. Since the people I meet did not see any possibility to go back to the country they came from, they felt it was a better option to live underground in Sweden than to go back to their country of origin.

Living without documents in Sweden means; that there is always a risk of being caught by the authorities and put in detention and being sent back to their country of origin. There are no possibilities to find work legally, an apartment, get a bank account, get a phone contract, get healthcare, not to mention being a legal person in the country with full rights (Hall 2014 & Mattson 2008).

For the people, I meet, the better option was to live in hiding then to go back to their home country. Since this happened in ‘my country’ I felt ashamed that Sweden was treating people this way. I was not previously aware about this
situation that many people found themselves in, within my so-called home country, and this bothered me.

At the moment I was not aware of how deeply this resonated within myself. I have never been in such a situation, not being allowed to stay in a country and not being able to go back to my own country because of the fear of dying. However, I have felt the feeling of not having a home, of not being able to find a place which I can call my home. I have experience how it was to leave my family behind distancing myself from them, even though it had been my choice and I had not been forced to do so in order to save my own life.

Nevertheless, at the age of 18 travelling felt like the only way to survive and live a happy life since I did not want to accept what had happened at home, that I had lost my home, my house. I know that it cannot be compared, but it resonated deep inside of me and I was attracted to this environment in search for a new home, or to make sense of my own feeling of not belonging.

Wanting to be an ECW this behavior and the lack of awareness about it is not helpful. Therefore, I will explore this further throughout this thesis. Not being aware of how deeply this resonated within myself and with my own conflict made me act in an uninformed way, maybe causing more harm than good.

**Getting out of balance**
Realizing the situation so many people in Sweden founding themselves in made me frustrated, sad, overwhelmed, angry and furious. I felt, at first unconsciously, that it was up to me to solve their situations, since they were in ‘my country’. I had a feeling that their issues and needs were so much more important than mine or maybe it was a disguise to not have to deal with my own issues. In this
situation, I did not know my limits and threw myself in too deep. I drowned in the needs of others with no regard for my own needs, or my own limitations as being of importance. Anyhow, it kept me busy not having to deal with my own issues of home and belonging.

When someone told me I needed to keep a certain distance to the people I tried to help, I could not understand them. I felt that creating a distance was a way of differentiating myself from ‘them’. I saw people distancing themselves from ‘them’ when we went to legal counseling or seeking healthcare or social services. I did not want to do the same to the people I was with since I felt they deserved and should be meet with a real human connection and not a ‘professional distant person’, since that was not my role.

Instead I opened my heart to be present, with every person I meet, and listened to them patiently. I did it in such a way that I did take on the pain, of the people I met as my own. After not too long I drowned in the misery of others and in emotions that were not mine.

Sometimes I felt I was in more misery than the people in front of me. I was totally out of balance. This was after my first term as a student of the Ma in Innsbruck. I had gained a few tools but apparently not enough to keep myself in balance. When the present phase finally came I was almost broken. I went back to Innsbruck in a search for more skills to be able to find this balance where I could help but still be whole.

**Searching for tools in order to make a difference**

After finishing the third semester at Innsbruck MA in Peace I felt that I was really banging my head against the wall and it felt like the wall was the Law. I decided to go to the partner university of Innsbruck, the UN University for Peace in Costa
Rica to study a Master of International Law and Human Rights. I felt that I needed to understand the law in order to really be able to influence the system I had been working against for so long.

In the end of my studies in Costa Rica I was working on this thesis a lot. At that moment the thesis had its main focus on the notion of home and belonging in regard to myself and also the people that I had worked with through Asylgruppen in Malmö.

As time passed I started to look around for work back home, in Sweden, and I found out that Swedish Migration Agency were hiring at the time. At first it did not even cross my mind that I could apply for a job at Migrationsverket² (Migration Agency). At some point I realized; where could I better learn and understand the system, the system I despised. A quote I learned as I grew up crossed my mind ‘know your enemy’ (Tzu, 2003).

I decided to apply for the job in order to really learn the system and also in order to be within the system which would maybe give me the possibility to really influence the system from within.

Getting the job, I was excited, but also a bit reluctant since I was afraid I had sold my soul to the devil. I tried to stay strong in the belief that I was going to be able to influence the system to become more generous and that the people that I was going to meet was going to be treated with respect and dignity and as a human being, no matter what.

**Working for the Swedish Migration Agency during the largest influx of asylum seekers ever seen in Swedish history**
I started my work as an Asylum Case Officer the 1th of September 2015 at the Swedish Migration Agency. I had not even worked for more than two weeks

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² Swedish Migration Agency
when Sweden received more asylum seekers than Sweden had ever experienced before. In September 2015, a total of 24,307 people applied for asylum, compared to the same month in 2014 when 9,976 applied for asylum. (Migrationsverket, 2016a).

In October 2015 even more people applied, with a staggering 39,196 people applied for asylum compared with 6,009 that applied in that month of 2014. Never before in the history of Sweden had such a large amount of people come to Sweden to seek asylum in such a short period of time (Migrationsverket, 2016a).

This was not so strange seeing what is going on in the world, and forcing people on the move. Never before has so many people been fleeing their countries since the World War Two. So the influx of people has not only been to Sweden (UNHCR, 2015). Nevertheless, I will focus on my own experience, which is limited to Sweden. I will also later in the paper go deeper into my experience working as a case officer during this period in Sweden. I will focus on how this have affected me and what I have done to handle this situation doing the work I am doing.

In regard to the amount of people coming, Sweden was not prepared to receive that amount of people in such a short period of time. The Swedish Migration Agency, did not know how to handle the situation, neither did the Swedish government. Starting to work for the Swedish Migration Agency at this time was a surreal experience. The whole agency, from my perspective, went into crisis modus, which I somehow experienced more as a survivors’ mode. Leading to constant short-term planning of work, if planed at all.
In addition, the trainings for the new hired staff was canceled, because of the high workload. This lead to newly hired staff working with issues they were not properly trained for. Also the possibility, and encouragement, to work long hours and extra days was prompted. In my case, I was eager to finally work with what I had for such a long time studied and prepared myself for.

Nevertheless, I did forget the most important training I had received, the approach of the ECW, to also take care of myself. At the same time working as an ECW had its limitations and difficulties, since the system I worked in has a prescriptive approach and not an elicitive, something I will go into depth with throughout this thesis.

**Loosing track of the training received in Innsbruck**

I jumped in with both feet and I got sucked down all the way to the bottom, where I did not know how to reach the surface again. I forgot all about the training of the Awareness, Balance and Congruent communication, which will be discussed in details later on in this thesis. I forgot to stay aware of myself, my physical, emotional, mental and spiritual limits. Already after a few weeks I was exhausted both physical, emotional, mentally and spiritually, I was totally empty by the end of the year 2015.

Even though, I continued since I lost the balance between compassion and self-care. I saw all the people coming as my own personal responsibility to support and help. I fell so deep into the ocean of compassion that I was about to drown. I gave up myself since I did not regard my own needs and life as important, since the struggle of the people coming to Sweden was more important and urgent, again. Similar to what I had felt when I first started to engage in the work of Asylgruppen.
I was also not clear in my communication, since I accepted more and more work, without listening to my body and myself telling me it was enough. I was not able to communicate my needs and often said opposite to what I was feeling. In the meeting with the people coming to Sweden I was giving a lot, even though, I had nothing more to give, I often had a feeling it was not enough and in the end I got burned-out.

Finally, my body forced me to stay away from work and this made me realized what I had forgotten. A few days' sick at home, away from work, I got in contact with myself again, and realized that I had to remember and practiced what I learnt at the MA program in Innsbruck.

Reminding myself that if I got burned out and out of balance I was not going to do a good job working with other people. If I as an ECW am not aware of myself and my conflict, burned out and out of balance, not being able to communicate congruent I will most probably create more problems for the people I am working with, then helping and supporting them.

This is of highest importance when working with people, that the way I treat myself also affect the people I am working for and my possibility to help and support or create even more conflict in an already conflictive environment, doing more harm than good for myself and the people I work with.

Writing this paper are for me a way of re-member and realizing the theories and practices and deepening my knowledge of how I learn to work as an ECW, long-term, within the field of refugee work. It also, as mentioned before, helps me to experiment and learn how to apply what I already learnt and apply it in my specific field of work. I also believe it is for me important to deepen and
expand my understanding of the practice of ECW, beyond the teachings of the MA program in Innsbruck, in order for it to fit my field and me.

Old behaviour patterns
Working long hours and six days a week in order to deal with the influx of people is exhausting on all levels. I have realized how important both rest and time to do other things than just working are; to recharge, in order to be present with the people I meet at work.

This two experiences helped me to realize the importance to also take care of myself. During my training in Innsbruck I learnt the importance of not taking on what is not mine. How it is important to be present with the person whom you are listening to, but not to take on the emotions or feelings of that person. To listen while realizing it is not your story and how important it is not to mix in your own story into what the other person is telling you. To be aware of the Self and the other and what is yours and what is his/hers and not include your own fantasies/stories. I will go deeper into this further on in this thesis (UNESCO, 2014a).

Nevertheless, the important point to be made here is that for me it is easy to take it all on me, even stories, pain and responsibility for many things that are not mine, at the same time mixing up my own stories with the people I meet and my own fantasies and project my own issues and struggles into the stories I hear. In this regard there is important for me to clear out this sometimes too tangled stories of my own and the feelings and emotions of the many that I meet, as those stories resonate deep inside me. As a responsible human being and as an ECW this is especially important.
**Research Interest**

Since my motivation to join and work for the Swedish Migration Agency was to try to influence the system from the inside, I have had the feeling that I have not been able to do so. I have the feeling that I have been too busy falling back into old behavior patterns that are not necessary helpful in order to transform the conflict I have with the system which I am work within. In order to influence the system, I need to understand my conflict with the system on a deeper level. I also need to untangle my own projections and trying to see the whole picture without judging.

Since I am striving to work as an ECW I need to take a closer look at how I can be an ECW within the prescriptive system I am currently working within. I will further develop what is the main differences between an elicitive and a prescriptive working method.

In large a prescriptive working method comes from a modern understanding that it is possible to find the right formula of how to ‘fix’ a problem and that this way of dealing with a certain problem can be applied anywhere where there is a similar problem. At my work this mean more practically that all the people that are coming to Sweden and seeking asylum can go through the same asylum procedure and out of that an objective decision if that person can stay or not can be produced.

From an elicitive understanding there is no one solution fits all, but in each system is the potential and will to find balance and find a way to transform the conflictive energies. In other words, an elicitive approach at my work would mean more attention on each individual that are claiming asylum and a more holistic understanding of that person and what s/he have been through.
Also realizing and acknowledge how the meeting between the case officer and
the asylum seeker will affect both and that neither of them will be able to be
objective. I will continue to explore what possibilities there is to work with an
elicitive approach in the role of being a case officer at the Migration Agency.

It is important to me to find what is behind the burnouts I have
experienced. This is important for me in order to become professional in the
work I am doing. To learn how to keep in balance, so I do not burn out again and
again, but can work long term doing good instead of harm to myself and to
others. To learn to be a responsible ECW.

In order to have a compass to guide me on how to find my place and act
accordingly in regard to my role as a case officer at the Migration Agency I need a
tool. As I experience myself being conflictive about my role at work and my wish
to transform the asylum system into a more generous one I want to use the
Elicitive Conflict Mapping (ECM) as a method for this thesis. The ECM is one of
many tools that I have been trained to use at the Ma program in Innsbruck.

In order to come to the core of the purpose of this thesis I want to set the
frame of how I see conflict, transformation and peace, which is highly influenced
by the philosophy of the Ma program in Innsbruck, before I go into the method
and stating the questions of the thesis.

**Setting the frame**

**The Different Peace Families**

Inspired by the Peace Philosophy of the MA program in Innsbruck, I want to set
the frame for how I understand, see and experience peace(s). To start, I want to
include a short overview of the five different peace families and their importance
for further understanding of ECM as an applicable tool for peace work and to understand how I perceive myself as an ECW.

Wolfgang Dietrich has developed a systemization of different variations of peace. He claims that peace cannot be understood as a singular peace, but as plurality of peace(s). He has in this way systemized the different main characters of peace that can be seen all around the world, in different shapes and expressions. In his first book (out of three) Interpretations of Peace in History and Culture, he goes comprehensively through what he recognizes as five peace families, as he calls them, the energetic, moral, modern, postmodern and finally transrational peace (Dietrich, 2012). All of those peace(s) are present everywhere all the time, however, often one or two of them are predominant in a certain context, which sometimes throw the system out of balance.

**Five different Peace Families**
For the understanding of my inspiration for this paper as well as its context, I will briefly explain here these different peace families. Starting with the energetic peace family, which are deeply related to my personal understanding of peace.

*Energetic Peace*
The Energetic peace is focused on the interrelation between everything. That everything is part of everything. In the MA program in Innsbruck the Ying and Yang symbol is used for describing the energetic peace;

The symbol for yin and yang is an ideal type representation of energetic peaces. Everything is contained within everything. Peace implies the sublation of all dualities and a comprehensive harmony between heaven, the human being, and earth (Dietrich 2012, p.16).
The perspective is grounded in a holistic understanding of peace. This understanding can be traced back to the agricultural societies where peace came out of fertility, of the soil and reproduction of animals. Peace was made out of the union between male and female, and the goddess was often used as a symbol for worship, the symbol of life.

The energetic peace revolves around the understanding that all systems are always aiming for finding dynamic balance, harmony. From an individual perspective to a societal, nature and in cosmos the system aim for constantly balancing the relation, to harmony. Therefore, the energetic peace family represents peace out of Harmony (UNESCO, 2014b & Dietrich, 2012).

**Moral Peace Family**
The moral understanding of peace differentiates itself from the energetic understanding in the sense that it separates the human and material world that we can see from the divine sphere. The moral understanding of peace places god separate from humans and changes the understanding of the ‘all is one’ understanding from the energetic into a polarization of the opposites; good/bad, right/wrong, dark/light. This also creates a division between ‘us and them’ and who are in that case good or bad, kind or evil.

From this understanding of peace the importance is what is right and wrong and who is good or bad. Therefore, the question of justice becomes important, to punish the wrongdoer and compensate the ‘victim’, the good. So the moral peace family represent peace out of Justice (UNESCO, 2014c & Dietrich, 2012).

**Modern Peace Family**
The modern understanding of peace goes further and separates even more the understanding of unity of the whole. The spiritual becomes totally separated
from the material. The modern perspective promotes an understanding of what we cannot see or measure do not exist. The understanding is that the world functions like a machine and if we face problems we only need to change the spare parts, and the machine will run smoothly again.

Here the understanding of a god is lost and replaced with reason and science. The world, humans and nature can be ‘fixed’ through reason and logic. There are no other spheres than the one that can be measured, and the understanding of harmony both in nature and between humans is lost. Thereof comes the modern peace out of the representation of peace out of security (UNESCO, 2014d & Dietrich, 2012).

**Postmodern Peace Family**
The postmodern understanding cannot stand-alone but comes as a doubting counterpart to the modern peace. Postmodern peace deconstructs everything that the modern peace constructs, and doubts it. Postmodern do not believe in singular understandings of terms such as peace, but in a plurality, and that it has to be reinvented and brought anew in each encounter.

Therefore, postmodernity is not interested in finding out general knowledge that can be applied everywhere, like the modern understanding, but more about contextualized understanding of knowledge. Out of this comes the understanding that postmodern peace out of truth(s) (UNESCO, 2014e & Dietrich, 2012).

**Transrational Peace Family**
The transrational peace follows the logic of the postmodern in the sense that it agrees that there are pluralities and no fixed truth that can be found. It also relates that everything is contextual, and has to be understood that way. Everything is relational and cannot be separated. The transrational also
acknowledge reason as a valid perspective, however, not the only one. It reintegrates the spiritual aspect of life. It recognizes that all of the previous aspects of peace are important and that we have to take all of them into consideration and find a balance among them (UNESCO, 2014f & Dietrich, 2012).

**Perception of conflict**

After given an overview of the different perspectives of peace, I want to give a short overview of my understanding of conflict. From my personal perspective I understand conflict to be present in everyday life, to various degree and intensity. Conflict, I believe, is inherent in the nature of human interactions and relationships. Conflicts are what make us develop and grow, if we deal with them in a constructive manner. For me the interest in peace and conflicts studies is just the interest in how I can transform conflicts into something I can learn and grow from.

In my understanding conflicts can occur on many different levels, from personal, family, community, societal to global. I understand conflict to be blockages, of an otherwise balanced system. For me conflict is often something that takes up a lot of my time and energy, either it is a personal, societal or a global conflict.

Conflicts often throws me out of balance. Making me react instead of act. It can also give me the drive and passion I need to accomplish something that feels important to me. It can equally throw me into a dark hole where I am not able to act at all. For me the field of conflict studies is a personal, as well as academic, exploration of how I can transform my own personal and inner conflicts as well as facilitate transformation of conflicts in diverse settings and contexts.
I feel that how Lederach explain conflict is for me a beautiful reminder of how we can understand conflict. I wish to remember his understanding when conflict throws me out of balance. He says;

Conflict flows from life. [...] rather than seeing conflict as a threat, we can understand it as providing opportunities to grow and to increase understanding of ourselves, of others, of our social structures. Conflict in relationships at all levels is the way life helps us to stop, assess, and take notice. One way to truly know our humanness is to recognize the gift of conflict in our lives. Without it, life would be a monotonously flat topography of sameness and our relationships would be woefully superficial. Conflict also creates life; through conflict we respond, innovate, and change. Conflict can be understood as the motor of change, that which keeps relationships and social structures honest, alive, and dynamically responsive to human needs, aspirations, and growth. (Lederach, 2003, p.18.)

From my understanding this is what makes the study of peace and conflict the most interesting interdisciplinary field to dig deep into. Since it happens on all levels of society, from personal to global, it is interesting to study and understand how we respond and deal with conflicts that arise.

If we see conflict in a similar mode as Lederach is explaining, the world would be a less violent place and we would have the possibility to look at ourselves and grow and evolve from the conflicts we are facing in our everyday lives, I believe.

Also Wolfgang Dietrich give his perception of conflict;

Believe that conflict is a natural product of human interaction and inherent in every relationship. It is a necessary driving force for changing the course of events, relationships, and the participants themselves (Dietrich, 2013, p.6.).
I agree with his understanding that all participants also change as the conflict within a relationship force the opponents to consider the others perception. Also the realization of that others do not perceive a certain situation in a similar way, broadens the perception of both parties. All this happens within human interactions and relationships, as conflicts are relational.

Dietrich further suggests that;

Conflict is inevitable and constant in human existence because our perceptions are always clouded by projections. The purpose of peace work is to understand this and to reduce the clouding as much as possible, remembering that it can never be eliminated altogether, only kept in momentary and dynamic balance. (Dietrich, 2013, p.38.).

In a similar way John Paul Lederach argues in his book Preparing for Peace, conflicts to “be a natural, common experience present in all relationships and cultures” (Lederach, 1995, p.9.). He continues to explain conflicts, from a constructionist view, to be something socially constructed.

Lederach believes conflicts to be sprung out of what people put into the experience of a conflict. The conflict is, as said, a social construct, which means a conflict appear and evolves when people combined it with their own knowledge and their values of what is happening, which in turn is rooted in people's culture. Their way of perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to a social reality, lead to a construction of a conflict (Lederach 1995, p.8-9).

Lederach argues that;

Conflict is connected to meaning, meaning to knowledge, and knowledge is rooted in culture.” Culture in this context means the collective knowledge of how to organize life and how to respond to the social reality in that specific context (Lederach,
In everyday life, people go through events where they perceive, interpreting, express and respond to their social reality, most of the time without much friction. However, sometimes the way different people perceive or interpreting certain events might lead to conflict. Conflict in this sense is socially constructed and relational. Since we can construct the conflict it is also possible to deconstruct and transform the conflict.

Lederach argues that since culture can be understood as shared knowledge created and used by a certain group of people in order to understand and respond to the social reality around them. Conflict can be a socially constructed social event. Therefore, culture should be seen as a key resource of transforming and understanding the construction of conflict (Lederach, 1995, 7-10).

To make it clear, it is important to point out, what Dietrich argues in his second book (2013, p.7); “Conflict is not a disturbance, but an unchanging element of social life. It is not the conflict that is the problem, but the way in which we deal with it”. It is an important point. Peace studies have developed out of the field of international relations, which have seen conflict as a disturbance and from a modern understanding something that can be fixed. In this thesis, conflict should instead be understood from a transrational understanding as something relational and part of a whole system. Conflicts are a natural part of life, and are needed in a world of harmony, where both peace and conflict have to be present to balance life.

Dietrich portrays this beautifully by stating:

Conflicts are a vital gift to every human context. Peace work is
the art of constructively applying this gift’s creative energy toward rebuilding personal and social relations that are in a constant state of flux. It is, therefore, more of an artistic endeavor than a linear, formulaic accumulation of activities that aim at a specific goal. (Dietrich, 2013, p.7.)

It is with this understanding that I want to endeavor on an artistic search for exploring how the conflict I am experiencing in regard to the stricter immigration policies and my own work as an asylum Case Officer, can transform into something creative, empowering and constructive, which gives energy, love, wellbeing and peace.

**Conflict transformation and the training and understanding of the peace worker**
A dominant understanding of how to deal with conflict on an international level is sprung from a modern understanding of peace and conflict, approaches such as conflict resolution and conflict settlement. Also the understanding of using the term peacebuilding comes from the same understanding. From a modern understanding conflict can be prevented and peace can be built. The conflicts in the world are problems that can be fixed, if we can only figure out the formula that is the correct universal cure.

However, since this approach have been heavily deconstructed as a result of postmodern research, this approach is not given preference, instead I want to dwell on how conflict transformation can look like from the approach of conflict as socially constructed and from a more holistic approach such as the understanding of a transrational approach of conflict transformation (Dietrich 2013, p.7.).

Again, I am following Dietrich’s approach, the approach thought at the MA program in Innsbruck, of conflict transformation. From my understanding
Dietrich means that conflict is a blockage of vital energy. The conflict might cause sorrow, fear, outrage, and anger, creating a dysfunction in the flow of interhuman relationships.

He believes that the way to resolve such a dysfunction is to transform the conflict. “In other words, it must be remembered and neutralized, so that the social system can grow through it and, thus matured, discovering and develop new choices” (Dietrich, 2013, p.8.). Conflict transformation goes deeper and change human relationships and gives space for personal consciousness to grow (Dietrich, 2013, p.8.).

Dietrich means that with the often-used approaches of conflict resolution or prevention, conflicts are merely confined short-term, since they are only suppressed, which will only shift the energy of the conflict elsewhere. It means that there are still blocked energy and that it will eventually re-surface if not transformed in its broader sense. Instead transformation aims for and allows the realization of further choices in regard to the blocked relationship (Dietrich, 2013, p.8.).

The feeling of blocked relations, where feelings of no way out of the situation, might lead to frustration and an exaggeration of the already blocked situation (Dietrich, 2013, p.6-10.). On the opposite Dietrich argues that;

Conflict transformation is the search for new perspectives and options in relation to the problem. However, the problem itself is not what fundamentally is the problematic; what is problematic is the manner in which we addressed the problem. (Dietrich 2013, p.9)

Also Lederach, believes that transformation provides a more holistic understanding then the modern understanding of conflict resolution. Lederach
believes that conflict resolution is a too narrow understanding, which only aims to end or prevent the current situation, instead of seeing the possibilities for growth. Conflict transformation do not stop with only preventing or ending something unwanted, but also vision to create what is desired, in addition.

Lederach continues to argue that through conflict transformation, the relationship, the event and the participants in the conflict, which are the creators of the conflict will have to also transform, as the conflict transforms.

When a conflict arises the perception of the self and the others transform, often to a less accurate understanding. When conflict transform, in a constructive way, happens the perception of the self and the other transform, which can lead to personal and community growth.

Lederach points out that;

A transformation of the system and structure is assumed, in which the relationship are embedded and which can be changed by building on the energy and impact of the conflict itself. In other words, conflict is seen as a transforming agent for systemic change (Lederach, 1995, p.18.).

Therefore, it is of most value to hear and see the individuals that are part of the conflict, since they already have the knowledge needed to transform the conflict. Especially, when safe space is created for them to see and hear each other out. It is the role of the facilitator to hold this space (Lederach, 2003, p.22. & Lederach, 1995, p.119-122.).

In order to apply the approach of conflict transformation, in comparison to the modern approach of conflict resolution, it demands a new mindset of the peace worker. Lederach and Dietrich both argue that the training of the peace worker equally has to change, in order to transform the mindset. The largest
difference from a conflict resolution approach is that the peace worker, which is intervening in the conflict, does not see him/herself as a neutral objective bystander, but is aware that as soon as s/he enters the conflict, the conflict and the people involved will change, as will the peace worker.

The peace worker is also not coming to the conflict to provide people involved with his/her expertise and prescription of how to solve the conflict at hand. Instead, the peace worker is there to help facilitate and hold space, for the parties to discover and explore the opportunities that might already be there, but hard to see and recognized for parties that might be distracted because of their conflicts. It is a chance for the group, together with the facilitator, to re-discover what is already present in regard to knowledge about how to transform the conflict, and realizing more options on how to transform and create a more desired situation and relationships.

This approach needs to be highly participatory in nature and the facilitator is a participant like the others, but also helps to hold the space together with the people initially involved in the conflict. The transformation and healing that might happen, through the activities performed, is as much a healing process for the facilitator as it has potential for the group involved in the work.

However, this demands a lot of the person facilitating the work. Both Dietrich and Lederach are clear on this point. Lederach argues that a peace worker engaging in an elicit conflict transformation approach needs;

- The capacity to see the situation beyond the urgent push for an immediate definition of the problem and a quick solution;
- The capacity to integrate multiple time frames;
- The capacity to turn opposites, situational dilemmas, and paradoxes into choices;
- The capacity to be on friendly terms with the fundamental complexity of conflicts;
- The capacity to see identity needs behind seemingly issues.

(Lederach, 2003, p.48-60)

This approach of the conflict worker differentiates itself from the profile of a conflict resolution worker. It is from this understanding of the peace worker that the understanding and training of the ECW has developed.

For me this means, in regard to the my thesis, to see the situation beyond the urgent need for definitions and quick fix solutions, rather to let the topic unfold organically, in order to see what can be found beyond the surface.

Finding the balancing of turning contradictions, opposites, situational dilemmas, and paradoxes into creative options and choices of how to handle the situation, with multiple timeframes in mind. Be able to stay on friendly terms with the complexity of the conflict and, especially, the conflicts that arise within me in regards to the topic.

In addition, the capacity to see identity needs behind seemingly factual issues, will for me, be of interest since my research might evolve a lot around that topic. I believe that the identity needs are behind many of our conflicts, especially when dealing with immigration policies.

Were Lederach left of in regard of how to train the new generation of peace workers, Wolfgang continued to develop the concept of the ECW and what training would be needed. He further developed this within the frame of the Ma program in Innsbruck. Since I am a student there and Wolfgang has been my
teacher I am highly influenced and somehow trained in many of the principles of the ECW.

For you, dear reader, to get a better idea of what an ECW is; Dietrich emphasize that an ECW requires;

- Self-awareness and openness, selective authenticity;
- Attention and empathy in relationships;
- Congruent communication; an attitude of scientific enquiry concerning facts;
- Respect for the self-healing powers of the conflict on the technical level;
- Systemic understanding of the self-healing creative potential of the context;
- Acknowledgement of what emerges in a given context;
- Courage to articulate and stand by one’s position;
- Humility in view of the limitations of one’s position. (Dietrich, 2013, p.12).

For me, exploring and experimenting with my own ability as an ECW this mindset brought by Dietrich, will guide me. I will deal and engage with these perspectives as I dive deeper and explore what it means to be an ECW within the chosen field of this thesis. However, these principles are here to set a frame for the continuation of the paper.

So to continue on the path of an ECW, I will look closer at the preferred profile of the ECW, before I will go deeper into the method of ECM.
The Elicitive Conflict Worker
In this thesis the ECW is an interesting figure. In one way the ECW in this paper refer to me, additionally it refers to peace/conflict workers that are working in a holistic and self-aware approach. The word itself; elicitive, is not in the English dictionary, but was first used by Paul Lederach (1995);

“[Elicitive] derives from the verb ‘to elicit,’ meaning to bring forth or to evoke. The term was initially used in Gestalt therapy and humanistic psychology as synonymous with evocative; it refers to processes in which therapists provide the frame but not a guideline for their clients’ transformation” (UNESCO, 2014g).

In this manner the ECW are creating a frame, a space, for the conflicting parties to meet and through their own inherent abilities be able to transform the conflict. The ECW are expected to have certain skills and awareness in order to provide the frame in which all parties can find as a safe space.

In contrary to many other understandings of peace work the ECW is not an objective bystander, as soon as s/he enter the conflict s/he becomes part of it. Therefore, also the (personal) conflicts of the ECW can resurface and enter the conflict if the ECW is not aware and have worked on her/his own conflicts in advance, it is therefore of highest importance to be aware of one’s own conflicts and not mix or project them on the conflict the ECW are hired to work in (UNESCO, 2014g). Wolfgang Dietrich have developed some important pointers on the profile of the ECW.

Competence skills
The core qualifications of the ECW are what the Innsbruck approach calls the ABCs (Dietrich, 2014, p.53.). Representing;

A-wareness of the own physical, emotional, mental and spiritual limits;
Balance between compassion and self-protection; and

Congruent communication

Through the MA program in Innsbruck I have been trained in this manner, in order to become an ECW. One of the purposes with this thesis is to apply the knowledge gained and methods practiced in the frame of the MA program onto the reality of the work I am now doing, within the Swedish Migration Agency.

Those principles are important for an ECW to have in mind. To really understand how these three core qualifications are important I will discuss them in regard to the tools that the ECW have in her repertoire.

Tools of the ECW

Active Listening

The practice of Active Listening has the potential to drastically change the quality of the relationship. Many times conflicts arise between people because of misunderstandings, often in relation to poor communication. The practice of Active Listening is a helpful tool to make sure that both parties ‘really’ listen to the other, which also leads to the other person feeling ‘really’ heard (Rogers & Farson, 1987).

The practice of Active Listening consists of the person listening, doing so actively. This means that that person drops all his/her judgments, prejudices, pity or other disturbing obstacles. The meaning of the practice is to listen fully to what the other part is saying without interfering. It is also important that the person listening is also trying to get inside the speaker, in order to understand her/him and where it is coming from (Rogers & Farson, 1987).

This technic of Active listening is developed by Carl Rogers, for him the aim of Active Listening is to;
**Listen for total meaning:** besides listening to the content of the message, we try to understand the attitude or feeling underlying the content.

**Respond to the feelings:** frequently, the feeling or attitude underlying the content of the message is more important than the content. Remain sensitive and respond particularly to the feeling component. What is the speaker trying to tell me? What does this mean to him/her? How does the speaker see the situation?

**Note all cues:** Pay special attention to other forms of communication besides the verbal. The volume and inflection of the voice are relevant, and so are the speaker’s facial expressions, body posture, and hand and eye movements, just like his/her breathing (UNESCO, 2014h).

Following these simple guidelines many conflicts can be transformed before even becoming a conflict, since the listener already understands from where the other person is coming and how s/he perceive the situation.

In this regard also the listener might change his/her own perspective on a certain topic since ‘really’ listening to the other person perspective. Also if the active listener has really been able to get into the other person and feel what s/he is feeling it is more likely that the listener then has developed a sense of empathy for the other person.

From the other side the one that have been speaking and listened to, have also felt that s/he was heard, seen and respected. Many times also the possibility to fully express oneself and be listened to in a respectful way can help to release much of the tension and frustration, which can be boiling up if not able to express oneself and having the feeling of not being taken serious.
Non-Violent Communication (NVC)
Marshall Rosenberg (2003) have developed the dynamic communication technique that is called Non-Violent Communication. The technique helps to communicate clear and from the heart instead of from a place of fear and anger.

Rosenberg divide communication styles between giraffe language and jackal language. He uses the giraffe as a metaphor of using language coming out of the heart, since the giraffe has the biggest heart. The jackal language is when we speak out of fear or anger. The jackal language blocks ourselves from being in touch with our own and the other persons feeling. It is moralistic, judging and blaming. In contrary to the giraffe language that is seeking from the heart, trying to connect with the other person’s heart and communicate heart to heart.

Rosenberg points out four basic steps to follow in order to speak in a non-violently way;

Observation
Feelings
Needs
Request

First, it is important to understand what is actually happening in a certain situation. The challenge here is to observe what is actually happening without judging what is happening, whether I like what is happening or not.

The second step, is to observe what am I actually feeling in that specific situation. How did this situation that I observed, made me feel? Also here it is a challenge not to use the jackal language of blaming or judging.
Thirdly, the identification of which needs of mine are connected to the feelings I feel in the certain situation? Is my needs meet or unmeet in the situation and how does it make me feel?

Lastly, what concrete action do I want to request in the certain situation in order to enrich my life? Here it is very important to not make demands from the other person. It is a request that the other person might or may not fulfill, since demanding or shaming someone to give us what we want are violent communication.

When we put out a clear request, we are honest about what we do want and not stating what we do not want. When we state clearly what we do want in the form of a request it seeks to motivate the other person to understand why we want a certain action from them but leave it up to them to take the action if it feels suitable for them.

Non-violent communication is an extended version of active listening or the next step of active listening. Active listening is important when practicing non-violent communication in order to properly hear what the other person is trying to communicate. Non-violent communication is all about compassionately listen and then to compassionately speak and being honest and true about what one is saying.

Non-violent communication can also be used as a jackal language translator. If I am listening with my giraffe ears to someone speaking a jackal language, I have to really stay with myself and only observe instead of going into the defensive language style of the jackal and judge or shame the other person. I have to try to listen to what is said behind the violent language used.
If the technic is used, it has the potential as well as active listening to transform conflicts since conflicts often rise from misunderstandings or miscommunications. Non-violent communication makes it possible to with congruent communication transform the conflictive dynamic in a certain situation. It also has the potential to transform the state of heart.

When someone have been respectfully listened to and also there has been clear communication of what the other person observed, felt and identified his/her own needs and constructed and expressed a clear request. It makes it easy for both parties to see how the situation was experienced from the other side, which carries the potential of connecting hearts and transform the conflict (Rosenberg, 2003 & UNESCO, 2014i).

**Clarity process and Reality Check**

Jeru Kabbal (2006) have developed the method of the Clarity process. The method builds on the assumption what happens to us during our childhood often solidified into behavior patterns that we continue to live by in our adult lives.

Kabbal, coming from the field of humanistic psychology, believe that by focusing on the present we can correct and adjust our behavior patterns in accordance to what is appropriate to the present situation. Kabbal recommend a number of methods to gain clarity, one of them being the method of quantum light breath, which have the potential to bring insight and clarity (Kabbal, 2006 & UNESCO, 2014j).

Also the Reality check is closely linked to the Clarity process, however, it also focusses on the physical body. The reality check is a tool to bring back the attention to the present moment. Questions like; How is my body chemistry,
How is my breath, What am I seeing/tasting/smelling/hearing right now in this very moment?

This questions help us to bring the attention back to what is actually happening in the present moment. The Reality check is also a training in seeing the whole picture. Trying to see the situation from outside the body, from a bird perspective, from above. In order to change the picture when given some perspective (UNESCO, 2014i).

For an ECW the ability to see the bigger picture and see it from a distance helps, when the ECW might find herself in the middle of the eye of the storm, it can be helpful to be able to then see it from a distance.

*Internal Observer*

The method of Reality check is closely related to the method of the Internal Observer. In the Ma program in Innsbruck we were drilled to switch on the internal observer again and again. We were trained to use it as often as possible so it would become a natural part of us. However, the method of the Internal Observer is not so complicated, but the practice of it is very difficult, especially in the moment of conflict.

The practice of the Internal Observer is to observe yourself and the surrounding, to take a distance and see the situation before you blindly react to what is happening. It is important to use the Internal Observer to do just that; observe, not judging, blaming or shaming. It is easy that the Internal Observer turn into a Judge if one is not careful about the practice. We often judge ourselves and others, but the Internal Observer is only there to observe the situation. This practice is important for the ECW to be able to observe the situation and prepare for the next step, but also to see oneself in the context (Dietrich, 2013, p.80-81.).
Theme-Centered Interaction

The method of Them-Centered Interaction is developed by Ruth Cohn (2004), coming from the field of humanistic psychology. The method aiming for the potential of constructive healing for the individual. The method pays attention to the connectedness between the I, We and It.

Ruth Cohn developed the method by the use of a triangle;

- the I as person, facing the theme and the others;
- the We of the group members who become a group by facing the theme and by interacting with one another;
- the It as a theme to be worked on by the group (Dietrich, 2013, p.86.).

In addition to the I, We and It, there is the area referred to as the Globe, which in the picture surround the triangle. The Globe is always there and influence the rest direct or indirectly (Dietrich, 2013, p.86.).

From Cohn’s method we especially used two important sayings at the MA program in Innsbruck; ‘Be your own chairperson’ and ‘Disturbances have priority’. This was used over and over again at the training in the MA program.

To start with the expression of ‘Be your own chairperson’; it entails that as an ECW to be aware of the I in relation to the We and It and even the Globe. When I am aware of my own internal disposition in regard to the rest I can take a responsible decision for myself that will also affect the others and the it, since we are all connected and relating (Dietrich, 2013, p.86-91.).

Secondly, the expression ‘Disturbances first’; entails that all is connected and therefore any disturbances in one of the sides of the triangle affect the rest of the triangle. If the disturbance is not dealt with it will block the flow of the rest of
the triangle, when dealt with properly it can transform and relations can transform (Dietrich, 2013, p.86-91.).

In addition to the philosophy of how a ECW should be trained and what skills s/he should master s/he have an important method in her/his toolbox which helps her/him to find guidance in the conflict landscape is the ECM.

**Using the Elicitive Conflict Mapping as a method and compass in my search for balance working with people**

![ECM mind map](image)

The idea of the Elicitive Conflict Mapping has come out of the previous understanding of transrational peace and the applied work of the ECW.

The ECM is a tool that can be used by the ECW in order to orientate herself in the conflictive landscape of a conflict. It can also be used as working method for team organization in order for the team to gain a common visualization of the conflictive landscape and preferable some guidance and discussions on possible steps forward. A third way to work with the ECM is as a working method for conflict transformation in and of itself.
This method differs from a modern understanding of conflict resolution, where the purpose of intervention in a conflict is to find a clear solution, a prescriptive solution, to solve the conflict. Within the understanding of elicitive conflict transformation there will be no solutions, just different steps which might recover balance for a while. (UNESCO, 2014g)

However, just as all maps are just maps, the ECM may never be misunderstood as the conflict itself. It is important to understand that the ECM is merely a map and not the conflict itself. To gain an in-depth understanding of the methodology of the ECM one can find extensive work on the transrational model of the themes, layers and levels in Wolfgang Dietrich (2013 & 2015) second and third books of his trilogy on the Many Peaces. Wolfgang Dietrich (2015) last book of the trilogy of Many Peaces is dedicated to explain the method and theory of the ECM, however the book is so far only in German but will be published in English this year, 2017.

To make it easier to understand I am using the map (see figure 2) that is used by the MA program in Innsbruck to make my point more visible. As you can see there are several main branches coming out from the middle of the map and in the middle of the map the ECW is placed. Since I am later going to use the ECM on my own conflict, I am here illustrating the ECW (me) at the centre of the map.

Since I started to work at the Swedish Migration Agency as an asylum case officer I stated to feel conflictive about my role. As I wished to work in an elicitive way, as an ECW, my role at the Migration Agency challenged me. I experience the limitations of working in a prescriptive system, not allowing me to work in a more holistic manner. Working with people that have face traumatic experiences have also challenged me to stay in balance.
On top of the conflict I felt in the beginning when I first started working for the Migration Agency in 2015, after the new laws that was introduced in 2016 my feelings towards my job became even more conflictive since I did no longer feel I could stand behind the laws I was supposed to implement.

I am using the ECM as a tool to guide me and untangle my own conflict in regard to my work and the immigration policies in Sweden. The method stresses the importance to start with finding an entry point from where the more complex conflict can be analysed. In order to do so it is important to find a concrete situation, an episode, to find an entry point. A conflict consists of many episodes making up the conflict. From the episode the epicentre can be analysed through going through the different branches, themes, layers and levels.

*Episode and Epicenter*

In every conflict there is several episodes that happens between the conflicting parties. It can be episodes that intensify the conflict or episodes that comes like explosions from latent ongoing conflicts. Using the ECM it is important to choose one specific episode from the chain of episodes. By choosing one specific event it gives the ECW a more tangible episode to work with in order to find an entry point in order to go to the depths (Koppensteiner & Echavarria, 2016).

An episode is one event that have happened that was part of the conflict. It can be any event that was part of the conflict, from a small event on a personal level, to a huge event on the more global level. The importance is that the episode, the event, can be clearly defined. It cannot be a series of events but it should be one event, even though it might be part of a serious of events one has to be chosen for the purpose of the ECM (Koppensteiner & Echavarria, 2016).
It is later with the work of the ECM method that I can find the epicenter of the conflict, the epicenter where the energy of the conflict is being produced. I need to reach here in order to understand what is the deep rooted cause of the conflict, which often only show the surface of, which is only the episode. To reach the epicenter of the conflict the conflict has the potential to be transformed in a more sustainable manner than if the conflict is only worked on at the episode (surface) (Koppensteiner & Echavarria, 2016).

Lederach explain episode and epicenter to be;

An episode of conflict is the visible expression of conflict rising within the relationship or system, usually within a distinct time frame. It generates attention and energy around a particular set of issues that need response. The epicenter of conflict is the web of relational patterns, often providing a history of lived episodes, from which new episodes and issues emerge. If the episode releases conflict energy in relationship, the epicenter is where the energy is produced (Lederach, 2003 p.31.).

Therefore, it is important for the me, the ECW, in the initial stage of mapping the conflict to first identify an episode. By doing that I will listen to the primary narrative of the conflicting parties. The next step will then be to enter the conflict through one of the themes. This is an important step since this will determine how the ECW, I, will be perceives from other parties.

Since all themes are interrelated, it means that working on one will transform the dynamic of all the others. Therefore, it might not be necessary to enter the conflict on the theme which is already being emphasized as the primary theme. For example;

While approximating a conflict through the primary theme of security is viable and might be appropriate in many
circumstances, from an elicitive perspective the type of intervention ought to not give the topic of security additional weight, but to relativize security’s meaning, to bring back to awareness the question of harmony and so bring the system back to balance (UNESCO, 2014o).

It is a delicate task, since the parties in the conflict might embrace the topic of harmony as a fresh breath, it could also be received with opposite feelings, making the parties feeling not being taken serious. If the conflicting parties are concerned about security and the ECW come in and start to work on the topic of harmony, they might believe that s/he have not understood their problems (UNESCO, 2014o).

When the ECW enter the conflict I have already become part of the conflict. From an elicitive understanding I can never be a neutral party but hopefully an all partisan. When already being part of the conflict it is time for the ECW to use my tools and make a reality check as well as remembering the principles of the ECM, to feel if I am in the right place and where to take the next steps (UNESCO, 2014o).

When this is done the ECW, me, wants to go beyond the primary themes and the episode and see what is behind in order to get closer to the epicenter of the conflict, by analyzing the epicenter the analyzing of the themes, layers and levels follows. To keep me on track and helping me to relate the ECM also have one branch of principles which is important to mention before taking in closer look at the themes, layers and levels.

**Principles**

*Correspondence*
The principle of correspondence is used for the peace worker as a guide and to remember the importance of introspection into the Self of the peace worker. Correspondence refers to the understanding “as above, so below; as within, so without” (UNESCO, 2014k). Correspondence reminds and make me aware that conflicts and issues that lies inside of me also corresponds to the outside, thereof so within; so without. Therefore, I, as a peace worker, need to be aware of my inner struggles before entering a conflict episode.

Correspondence is also related to harmony and if I am not in harmony how can I resonate with harmony on the outside, again; so within so without. In this case I believe it is important to then see and feel how I personally relate to the topic of harmony and the topic of security, since it is triggering feelings and emotions inside of me. On the same token realizing that there is not a coincidence that I am interesting in the topic of harmony and security since it is triggering emotions and feelings within me. I will dwell further into this in me thesis were I am applying the ECM on my own conflict.

Resonance
The principle of resonance also plays a similar role for the peace worker of becoming aware of the own inner struggles or tensions since they resonate with the different parties to the conflict. The work of the peace worker is sought to create a space where resonance can become possible. To seek resonate between the me and the conflicting parties but also a space where the conflicting parties can have a chance to hear the other out and hopefully be able to resonate with them.
Homeostasis

Homeostasis refers to the constant flow of energies and dynamic equilibrium of such. It builds, in this context, on the systemic theories on how systems are being self-regulating in harmony. In the understanding of the ECM this can be seen that the conflicting parties will have a natural will to restore their relations to harmonious relationships again. Therefore;

“In short, the principle of homeostasis refers to the self-regulatory quality of open systems, such as individuals and groups, which strive for dynamic equilibrium. Homeostasis invites the elicitive conflict worker to understand facilitation as external environmental energy that can contribute to restoring the harmonization of intra and interpersonal tensions and conflicts” (UNESCO, 2014m).

Homeostasis is the connection in between everything, nothing is separate, and all is striving for balance, harmony, in each system, all systems. This brings my mind to the understanding of the transrational peace where all the other peace families are included in a holistic manner. I believe this is the most important point to be made, that all peace families exist at the same time, it just about finding the balance amongst them from moment to moment (UNESCO, 2014m).

Themes

By using the ECM I have a compass to guide me in the conflict. In order to find an entry point to the conflict it is important to find the theme of the conflict. Lederach argues that; “The storyline of the conflict has a primary theme, a central topic that dominates the narrative, a conglomerate of issues towards which the energy is being pulled”. (UNESCO, 2014n).
Since all the themes are interrelated it might sometimes be hard to distinguish the primary theme. In order to identify the primary theme, the ECW has the toolbox of his/her competence skills such as; active listening and non-violent communication. To actively listening to the conflicting parties and to myself to hear out the unmet needs might help the ECW to more easily identify the primary theme.

The different themes are coming out of the understanding of the plurality of the concept of peace, namely the Peace Families. They help the ECW to find the thematic emphases of the narrative told by the conflicting parties (UNESCO, 2014n).

*Energetic Peace – Peace out of Harmony*
As previous explained the understanding of energetic peace is deeply rooted in the understanding of harmony. If the primary theme would come out of Peace out of Harmony, it will be preferred in all situations and will be highly respected and strived for.

To make it more easy to hear when the theme of harmony is the primary theme of the conflictive narrative, it is helpful to look at how the lack of harmony can express itself; construction of a group that are not like ‘us’ but evil, bad, wrong. ‘We’ construct ‘them’ and put them into a homogeneous group, which is not possible to escape. If the narrative surrounds these topics, it might indicate unmet needs and lack of harmony (UNESCO, 2014b&o).

*Moral Peace – Peace out of Justice*
The moral understanding of peace comes from the urge to punish the wrongdoer and make sure the victim is compensated. There is a clear divide between the victim and the perpetrator and one cannot be both. The lack of justice might
express itself in unmet needs like; demands of material goods and necessary utilities as well as necessary services.

The understanding of justice comes from a linear thinking, meaning that justice have to come to the victims in the future when the wrongdoer will be punished for injustices committed in the past. This lay the way for revenge and envy, which can easily lead to justification of violence (UNESCO, 2014c&o).

Modern Peace – Peace out of Security
From the modern understanding of peace, peace out of security, the materialistic sphere becomes important. It is often in this sphere we can find the unmet needs of modern peace. This might express itself as; the fear of losing what one has, materialistic things such as food is not enough for everyone, the need for security materialistic and physical. The need for the nation state of fulfill the promise of keeping laws and order and protection of the citizens, especially from foreign threats (UNESCO, 2014d&o).

Post-modern Peace – Peace out of Truth
Since post-modern peace comes as a doubting counterpart of the modern peace, it contests peace out of security. It questions everything and believes that there is no singular truth but truth has to be negotiated in every encounter. Since post-modern peace understands the world as it is many different truths out there, the unmet need might express itself as; a call for the possibility for all different prayer facilities, several political institutions and educational institutions, a plurality of all (UNESCO, 2014e&o).

Transrational Peace
Transrational Peace tries to combine all of the above four themes, finding a balance amongst them. Transrational peace recognize the importance of all of
them. The importance of “personal harmony, structural justice, relational security and cultural truth” (UNESCO, 2014f).

However, since transrational peace, means balance amongst all of the themes, the ECW will not listen for unmet needs like with the other themes. If there are unmet needs on any of the other themes it will be a lack on this theme as well. I will first have to find out what is the primary theme of the conflictive narrative before I try to create space for transformation, aiming to re-establish balance within all themes.

**Layers**

*Episod: Dance of the persona*

The Dance of the persona is the representation of the episode. As mentioned before, the episode is only the surface of the deeper conflict. The episode is what is first visible to the other conflicting parties and to the ECW. Nevertheless, what is said and done at this level resonate to all other layers, the principle of resonance and correspondence, there of the importance to start with the episode (UNESCO, 2014k&l&p).

Remembering the principle of correspondence refer to ‘as above, so below; as within, so without’ (UNESCO, 2014k). It reminds the me that what is said at the surface correspondence at the other layers, as well as between the intrapersonal and interpersonal layers (UNESCO, 2014k).

*Sexual family layer*

This is the first layer, just under the surface of the episode. The family layer tells me that we are all shaped by our families. We
have all learnt as children how to act in life by watching our parents, siblings and extended family. We have created patterns which later reflect how we deal with life also as adults (UNESCO, 2014q & Dietrich, 2013).

As mentioned earlier Jeru Kabbal (2006) deals with how to become aware of those behavior patterns that we learnt as children and transforming them into more suitable behavior patterns for an adult. Nevertheless, working as an ECW, being aware that the family I have grown up in has shaped who I am and being aware of how that has shaped me is important. Similar the understanding that the other people I have around me are also shaped by their families, either it is my colleagues as an ECW, or the conflicting parties that I am working with.

On the same lines, we are all sexual beings, whether it be myself, my colleagues, or the conflicting parties. In many contexts, this might be a sensitive issue to deal with, maybe even taboo. However, it is important as an ECW to be aware and open enough to realize that it is always part of the context like all the other layers. This does not necessary mean that the topic of sexuality has to be pushed upon people to work with, there is many entry points, and working on one will affect the rest of the system. Even though, it is important that the ECW are aware that this might be a blocked area were a lot of the conflicting energies are produced (Koppensteiner & Echavarria, 2016).

Since this layer is in direct contact with the episode, it might influence the happenings in the episode. Often conflicts that seems to come from another layer boils down having their epicenter within this layer. This layer has a huge potential for transformation, but equally for destruction. The topic of family and sexuality are often deeply sensitive issues for all of us, since it is close to our core (UNESCO, 2014q & Dietrich, 2013 p.209-213).
**SocioEmotional-Communal layer**
The next layer is the SocioEmotional-Communal layer, which has its focus on bonding and society. This layer goes beyond the layer of the family and focusing on the more communal layer. If this layer is in balance the society and the members of the society find their place and act accordingly, which creates equilibrium between the intrapersonal and interpersonal layer, through resonance (UNESCO, 2014r & Dietrich, 2013).

If there is a conflict on this layer it often has to do with the need to dominate others or the experience of being excluded. Often a previous feeling of exclusion plays out as a power struggle to control others in order to not be controlled oneself. Often conflicts on this layer are transformed by themselves through concrete events, where we need to cooperate in our daily life (UNESCO, 2014r & Dietrich, 2013).

**Mental-Societal layer**
In this layer the mind plays an important role. It is through the mind and the mental capacity that all the other layers can be grasped and understood. This layer is also understood to be the layer of the “heart and the mind” (UNESCO, 2014s). It is by the heart qualities of love and compassion can be felt with the senses and experienced (UNESCO, 2014s & Dietrich, 2013).

Even though, we need the rational mind to mentally grasp and balance the previous layers the rational mind also carries the potential for total destruction. The rational can create an idea which can lead to the conflict and justify the use of violence. From an elicitiav perspective it is of no use to try to
transform a conflict that has started as a rational idea with more reason. Similar to the themes it might be better to start in a different layer then the one that is already overburden (UNESCO, 2014s & Dietrich, 2013).

Even though, I need to listen to the conflict and use my rational mind to filter what is happening. However, not reducing the conflict to what can only be understood by the rational mind. Since the ECW are trained in a transrational manner I understands that there is more to the conflict then this layer. It also takes for the me to be clear in my own mental layer so there is no clouding of the experience of resonance and correspondence at play (UNESCO, 2014s & Dietrich, 2013).

**Spiritual-Policity**

This layer is where we reach the transrational layers. This layer is not of importance to the modern understanding of conflict, since this layer does not exist. In the transrational understanding of conflict this is of highest importance. This is the layer is the correspondence between the intrapersonal layer of spirituality and the interpersonal layer, the policity, which represent the external observer. The external observer is the interpersonal correspondent to the intrapersonal internal observer (UNESCO, 2014t & Dietrich, 2013).

Both observers are just observing the dance of the persona without judging in a loving way, one intrapersonal and the other interpersonal. This is noting exceptional, rather something normal as long as we are aware of the potential and do we actualize it (UNESCO, 2014s & Dietrich, 2013).
Global layer
“The global layer points at the layer before the beginning of individuation and towards the life-impulses that come from the epicenter” (UNESCO, 2014u). This layer is far from the conflicting episode and the egos that plays a role in it. Even though, it pervades everything and is therefore important to be aware of. It is through the global layer that it is possible to experience peace (UNESCO, 2014u & Dietrich, 2013).

Epicenter
Also this layer is far beyond the conflict work but it is the universal layer which has to be included in mapping of the persona (UNESCO, 2014v & Dietrich, 2013).

Levels
The last branch of the ECM is the Levels. For me it is important to see who is involved in the conflict and on what level are the people playing a role, it is also important for me, as an ECW, to situate myself on what level I am entering the conflict and on what level do I have access (UNESCO, 2014w).
The idea of Top, Middle Range and Grassroots Leaders was developed by John Paul Lederach (1997). He developed the idea of a triangle from his work in the field of conflict transformation. During the 1980's and 1990's the field of peace work was highly influenced by the ‘top-down or bottom-up’ peace building. In the 1990’s the bottom-up approach became the most used approach, since the face of the wars changed from interstate wars to inner state wars, civil wars, which could be addressed through bottom-up approaches.

Almost ten years later, 2005, John Paul Lederach (2005) improve his triangle. He emphasis in his book The Moral Imagination, that relations are like a spider web, they are not clear struck like the first pyramid but all are interrelated in some way. This means that all actors affect each other all the time.

*Top Level Leadership*

In accordance to Lederach this level represents the top few people with influence over the many. They are the top political, religious or military leaders. They are the visible leaders of a state or other high rank people, which have access to power and the possibility to influence important political positions (Lederach, 1997 & UNESCO, 2014x).

It was and still is from this level the top down approach was meant to function. The top down approach was the idea of negotiations among top leaders that would have the effect on all the level below, the solution of the conflict coming from the top. This approach is still used, even though, it is usually only one of many approaches to transform the same conflict.
**Middle-Range Level**
The Middle-Range Level consists of many different kind of people. What is essential for the people at the middle-range is that they have access to both the Top-Level-Leaders and the Grassroots. It is people that are highly respected in their societies or have a position where they have good contact with both the other levels.

It might be NGOs, religious institutions or academia or other institutions with broad networks, which can work as a link between the top and bottom, to help them to understand each other and work as a bridge. This level can be compared to the spider in the web, which have contact with all people involved (Lederach, 1997 & UNESCO, 2014y).

**Grassroot Level**
This level is the base of the society. This level represents the majority of the society. In today’s conflicts it especially on this level that most of the suffering is located. Often the people at the Grassroots are suffering due to decisions that have been made at the top-level. In conflict situations this level is busy with struggling to survive and covering basic needs (Lederach, 1997 & UNESCO, 2014z).

Nevertheless, this level consists of the people that are usually the most affected by the conflict. There is often initiatives and demands for influence and change coming from the Grassroots. From this level also leaders from the masses are created, people that are respected and put forth by their communities, may it be peace activists or tribal leaders. Those people have a huge potential to transform conflicts if they are able to make their voices heard all the way to the
top, maybe with some help from the middle-range people (Lederach, 1997 & UNESCO, 2014z).

Sri-Yantra
Since Lederach (2005) developed his pyramid further by adding the understating of the spider web in 2005. Wolfgang Dietrich have taken the pyramid even further by introducing the Sri-Yantra (UNESCO 2014ab). The Sri-Yantra take a holistic approach and argues for the full structure, where each pyramid contains the components of the whole. The pyramids go from a two-dimensional to a three-dimensional, which shows both vertical and horizontal connections between the levels and the layers.

In the Sri-Yantra the pyramids point in opposite direction which symbolize the non-duality reminding us of the phrase ‘as above, so below’. It also shows how the middle level have the possibility to communicate bottom up and top down. It also consists of smaller and bigger pyramids within each other, showing that each pyramid is part of both the bigger and the smaller in an endless complex extensile division (UNESCO 2014ab).

The Sri-Yantra shows how we are all interrelated and that all the levels and layers are part of a complex conflict. This gives the understanding that a conflict cannot be solved through a prescriptive way but need holistic understanding of the conflict. As have been mentioned before that elicitive conflict transformation embrace such a holistic understanding and are not
aiming at providing a prescriptive solution to the conflict but try to restore the
dynamic equilibrium in a concrete social system were the conflict is visible, in
the present moment. Therefore, the Sri-Yantra is only in helping to find a guide
of orientation within the conflict.

**Finding tools for transformation – intervention strategies**

After I have mapped all the different maps of the ECM and analyzing the result of
all the maps together it is important to me to take time for reflections and time to
accept what have come up in my maps. When this have been done it is important
to continue the work and harvest the fruit of the knowledge I have gained.

From this, the method of ECM suggest to come up with three concrete
intervention strategies. Since I by this point should have gained a broad and deep
knowledge about the conflictive landscape I am in, the maps will help me to
come up with suitable intervention strategies in order for me to see where I can
take the next steps.

Again, indifference to prescriptive methods this method will only be able
to give intervention strategies that are suitable for the concrete situation that
have been analyzed. The intervention strategies are not prescriptions that aim at
solving the conflict but only other steps in the relational system, which might
lead to transformation of the conflict at hand.

The presumption to come up with three different intervention strategies
is so the conflicting parties will have choices. If there is only one intervention
strategy it is not much of an option, with two there is a choice but with three it
gives me the freedom to choose what step I want to take.

What have been learnt from the analysis of the map will then be used to
find what could be an appropriate entry point for the different intervention, here
a decision has to be made. Secondly the type of method for the different intervention strategies need to be decided, depending on what deems appropriate in the given situation. After this have been done, I have to come back and reflect on what did the intervention strategy I decided on bring about.

**Research questions**
I am intrigued using the tool of ECM as the method for my thesis looking at what is behind my own conflict with being an asylum case officer at the Swedish Migration Agency. I want to analyze if my intention of influencing the system have been possible. I believe it is time for me to take a thoroughly look at if it is possible to work as an ECW at my work, or to what extent it might be possible. Finally, I want to try to find out what is behind the many burnouts I have had and what can I do in order to find a more balanced way to work within this field of work. What intervention strategies can help me in that. So my questions in this thesis are;

- How can the Elicitive Conflict Mapping be a useful tool for me in my work as an asylum case officer at the Swedish Migration Agency?

- How possible is it to work as an Elicitive Conflict Worker being an asylum case officer at the Swedish Migration Agency?
Chapter 2 ECM as a guiding tool in my own conflict

After finishing my three semesters at the MA program in Innsbruck I went back for an advance course in the Art of Elicitive Conflict Mapping in Innsbruck in October 7-11th 2016. The course was held by Norbert Koppensteiner and Josefina Echavarria at the Grillhoff Seminar Center in Innsbruck, Austria. I took the opportunity to use this workshop as a practical tool for my master thesis. During the days I was mapping my conflict using the ECM and with professional guidance of Norbert and Josefina.

During the ECM workshop we used different methods in order to go deeper and analyze our conflicts. After every map we used the method of active listening and we had the possibility to share with the group what had come up for us during the mapping. It was a time to actively listen to the others as well as having the possibility to fully express and be listened to in a respectful way having the others in the group to acknowledge what was going on inside of me while I mapped my conflict.

We did it in the big group as well as in smaller groups and two and two. We also mirrored each other, were we repeat what we had heard to really acknowledge what we had heard from the other person. This was for me a helpful exercise, since it made me more aware of what I was telling. When I had the chance to hear another person repeat what I had experienced, it made me able to listen to my own story.

As a first step of the workshop we had a dance session. We danced in order to get back into our bodies and finding our place within the group that we were going to be part of for the next coming days.
The transrational peace philosophy recognize the importance of using the body as a tool to find out more about the conflict and also its potential to transform the conflict. Therefore, we used dancing as one of the tools to come in contact with our bodies. The dance we used is inspired by the 5Rhytem dance, by Gabriella Roth (1989).

Wolfgang Dietrich describe why Roth’s dance can be used for transforming conflicts;

Rhythmic, expressive motion releases the amour and blockages stored by the body, the numbness resulting from behavior through which we have learned to protect ourselves against violations, but which deprives us of the joyful risk of openly experiencing the present. Feelings are real. They are not abstractions that can simply be switched off. The unity of body and mind express the physical manifestations of feelings in the present (Dietrich, 2013, p.114.).

From this understanding the movement, dance, helps me as an ECW to come in contact with what my feelings are at the present moment. It also helps me in order to move the parts of my body where I am experience blockages in order for the blockages to move and transform.

During the dance at the first evening of the course, it was slow and gentle. We did different group exercise to get to know the people in the group. Since all the participants, except one, had been a previous student of the MA program in Innsbruck I feel a feeling of trust that ‘all is welcomed’, an expression used at the MA program in Innsbruck, meaning that whatever will come up is welcomed, you can be who you truly are. After being working intense both at my job and at the thesis it was a nice break to become aware of how my body feels again. I felt very
stiff, at the same time very relaxed being in a space, held by facilitators I deeply trust.

For me there was also a minor feeling of being nervous, nervous of what would come up in my maps. I wondered if I was really ready to see what was under my own personal layers.

**Individual orientation guide for an ECW**
The method of using the ECM comes from practical examples of Tony Buzan (2010) method of mind mapping. The idea is to start off by first getting into making free association mapping. Using a blank paper, for a short limited time of for example three minutes, to draw everything which you associated with a certain word. By drawing and writing without thinking logical about what you are doing helps to make things come up which might be important.

After the first day’s afternoon of introduction and dancing to get into our bodies and getting into the group we started with the mind mapping. It is a bit of a confusion in the beginning. I felt a bit of doubt of how this mind mapping would actually work. My topic seemed too complex for a simple mind map.

We made mind maps spontaneous from one word, like cat. This is silly I thought. I was not seeing how it will take me to the huge conflict that I am feeling inside. After some practice it went better and I got more into it, still doubting though how this would bring me any closer to my epicenter.

After some practice we moved on to starting to map what we feel is our conflict that we are bringing to the course. For me it had seemed so clear what was the conflict. Now when I had to write it down it all seems so confusing. Josefina and Norbert got us to start with the episode. I felt it was so difficult to choose one specific event, when there was so many. I wondered how could this
one event would make it possible for anyone else then me to understand the conflict I feel conflict. I felt that there was so much more behind that needed to be understood, but I needed to trust Josefina and Norbert that they know what they are doing and that step by step the story will be told of my conflict.

Finding my episode

An episode of conflict is the visible expression of conflict rising within the relationship or system, usually within a distinct time frame. It generates attention and energy around a particular set of issues that need response. The epicenter of conflict is the web of relational patterns, often providing a history of lived episodes, from which new episodes and issues emerge. (UNESCO, 2014n)

To find an entry point in order to be able to map my conflict I had to narrow it down to one specific event, one episode. The event is not an isolated event that raised from a vacuum, the event is like the quote above refer to, only one of many that are providing a history of lived episodes. However, in order to be able to go deeper into the different themes, levels and layers of the map I need a specific episode to use as a starting point for my mapping.

My episode – the voting of the restriction law – the new law

The 21 of June 2016 I was at work. I do not remember what time during the day it happened. I just remember the moment. I had known about the possibility for this to happen for some time now, but still, I somehow though it could not happen for real. After all, this was Sweden, a country that for decades 'hitting themselves on the chest' telling themselves and the world that they are standing up for human rights, for all, and the importance to standing up for the protection and rights of asylum seekers.
I was sitting in a tiny room with some of my colleagues, we were all watching a computer sending live from inside the chamber of parliament. The parliament was to vote about the bill which have become called the ' Restriction law which limit asylum seekers’ possibilities of being granted residence permits and the possibility for the applicant’s family to be re-united in Sweden’ (Sveriges Riksdag, 2016).

I sat there and just listened to the spokesman, which read all the decisions that the parliament was to make a decision about that day. He read them one by one and conducted the voting, one by one. The voting was conducted by the parliament members pressing a button at their seat, one for yes, no or refrain. The voting was quick. All of the sudden it was the time for the voting of the new law that would restrict the possibilities for asylum seekers to receive resident permit in Sweden. The main parties voted for the bill, only two parties voted against, 240 members of parliament voted for the passing of the bill, 45 against, 30 refrained and 34 were not present at the voting (Sveriges Riksdag, 2016).


I could not believe what had just happened, it all went so quick on the screen, and immediately after applause could be heard in the Chamber. I had to stand up, I had to get out of the claustrophobic room, I thought I was going to throw up. I did not know what to do, I could not believe what had just happened, it must have been a mistake. I did not know how to behave I had to leave work, I could not stay in the office, where I felt the walls coming closer towards me. I felt suspicious about my colleagues, I felt I did not know anymore who felt the same
as the parliament, that we need to restrict the asylum laws so we would not ‘drown’ in the flood of refugees fleeing wars and coming to us to seek protection.

I started working at the Migration Agency, believing I could affect the system and change it into something much more open and welcoming, with more generous asylum laws. I had hopes that it was possible to make a change from the inside, but what happened now was the opposite. I felt like the world trammelled and all fell over me. How could this have happened. How could the Swedish politicians have changed their attitude 180 degrees, in such a short period of time. The world went the opposite to what I wanted, what I strived and fight for. What should I do? What could I do?

I left work early that day. I went home and I cried. I cried for all the people that would be affected by the new law. I cried for all the children which might never see their parents again or who now maybe have to take the dangerous boat trip over the Mediterranean, because they cannot any longer come through the safe and legal journey that family re-unification means. I cried for myself and for the reality of the country and society I now live in. How could this happen? How could I go back to my work the next day and be part of this politics and having to implement them?

The new law
So what did the new law mean. How would it actually affect the lives of people that have come to Sweden in order to seek protection.

The 21 of June 2016 the Swedish Parliament voted in the Chamber about the bill Limited possibilities of being granted a resident permit in Sweden. The new law entered into force 20 of July 2016, nevertheless it will affect persons that have applied for asylum in Sweden before that date.
The new law is temporary and will be in force for the next three years, until 2019. During this time in 2018 Sweden will have a general election and some of the parties have made promises that they will make the new law into a permanent law if they win the election (Nya Moderaterna, 2015 & Sverigedemokraterna, 2016).

The new law will only grant people which are entitled to protection temporary resident permits, from previously being granted permanent resident permits. A person can be granted resident permit because of refugee status or subsidiary protection, which is same premises as before 20 of July 2016, the difference is in the rights given to the person which are granted protection (Justitiedepartementet, 2016).

A person granted refugee status will receive a 3 years’ temporary residence permit in Sweden and have the right to family unification, if s/he applies for the family reunion within 3 months from the date s/he receive the residence permit. As soon the person has received residence permit in Sweden have applied for family reunion the process starts, which might take another 1-2 years before his/her family has a decision and can come to Sweden (Justitiedepartementet, 2016).

A person that receive subsidiary protection in accordance with the new law entitled to a temporary residence permit for 13 months. A person with subsidiary protection do not have the right to apply for family re-unification during the first 13 months of the temporary residence permit, if s/he was registered his/her asylum application after the 24 of November 2015. Persons that registered their asylum applications before the 24 of November are still
entitled to family re-unification even though s/he have received subsidiary protection (Justitedepartementet, 2016).

The date of the 24 of November are important in regard to the application of the new law. Firstly, as stated above the persons that have received subsidiary protections are still entitled to family re-unification. Also families with children that are under the age of 18 years old at the time of the decision whom applied for asylum before the 24 of November will still be given permanent residence permit if they are entitled protection (Justitedepartementet, 2016).

However, if the children are born after the 24 of November or if the children off the family turn 18 years before they receive the decision they will receive temporary residence permit as they will be regarded as a family with children any longer (Justitedepartementet, 2016).

Unaccompanied minors, children under the age of 18 without guardians, that have applied before the 24 of November are also exempt from the new law and will receive permanent residence permit if entitled protection (Justitedepartementet, 2016).

The 24 of November became a breaking point date due to it was on that day the government had a press release, which announced the bill of the new law to the public. The government told the public that they planned to implement restriction laws in regard to asylum and immigration since the government thought Sweden needed a 'breathing space' from the people coming to Sweden in order to seek protection.

The government argued that the system was not able to accommodate for more people. Therefore, this date became an important date dividing asylum seekers possibility to gain the same rights. The people which applied before the
24 of November would gain more rights. Nevertheless, asylum seekers which is no part of a family in Sweden and applied before the 24 of November but got his/her decision after the 20 of July 2016 would still receive a temporary residence permit instead of a permanent, that a person that was granted protection before the 20 of July 2016 will received (Regeringen, 2015).

The persons that have the possibility to apply for family reunion can only apply for husband/wife/registered partner/cohabiting partner and unmarried children under the age of 18 years old. Married couples have to be above the age of 21 and have cohabiting before the first person came to Sweden, unless they have children together (Justitedepartementet, 2016).

In order to bring your family there are requirements that have to be fulfilled. The person that have received residency in Sweden need to be able to provide financially for him/herself and the family members that want to re-united in Sweden. The person does also need to have a home that is of sufficient size and standard for the family members that are coming, so the family can live together in that accommodation. The maintenance requirements are not applicable if the person in Sweden apply within three months from the day s/he was granted a residence permit (Justitedepartementet, 2016).

In accordance with the new law the possibility to receive residence permit on particularly distressing circumstances will no longer be possible, during the period the temporary law is in force, unless it would violate any of the International Convention commitments that Sweden have to oblige (Justitedepartementet, 2016).
Sweden have also had a paragraph in order to accommodate for the future environmental refugees, this will also not be in force during the temporary law (Justitedepartementet, 2016).

This is the new law in short, which is implemented as a temporary law for the next three years. Depending on what happen in the next general elections, the law will be abolished and the previous law will come into play again in three years or the new restriction law will become permanent.

The law was suggested by the government and the purpose of the law is to aims at vigorously limit the number of asylum seekers to Sweden, but at the same time improve the capability for reception and integration (Regeringen, 2015). However, the laws have become complicated both for case officers as well as for the asylum seeker to fully understand since many laws are applied parallel, which creates confusion within the asylum system.

**The mapping**

So after I made a conscious decision on what was my episode, the voting in the parliament became the clear episode. From this episode I map out all the layers, levels and themes of my conflict. So in the middle of the map I choose to put the voting in the parliament as the episode, my starting point.

**Mapping the Themes**

After I had mapped out the episode of my conflict, I starts making my first mind map in regard to the theme. I start with the first theme of harmony to see if I can hear the narrative and find my primary theme. But firstly a reminder what harmony means in the context;
Harmony

Energetic peaces are holistic. They perceive all existence as a fabric interrelating nature, society and divinities (cosmos). the individual is never separate, but always part and parcel of the larger relationality that, in turn, ultimately is a temporary manifestation of the primal energetic Oneness of all being. (UNESCO, 2014b)

From this understanding, and mine, the influx of asylum seekers cannot be seen as an issue for ‘us’ how to deal with ‘them’ since we are all the same, ‘Oneness of all beings’. Nevertheless, in my mind map of harmony a lot of unmet needs came up. What I see is the complain about the group ‘asylum seekers’. They are all bunched together as a homogenous group, from which there is no escape. Looking at the narrative of what the political discussion has been arguing; the migrants has become perceived as the ‘others’.
Especially since, the narrative of the government changes and started to talk about the need for limiting the numbers of people coming to Sweden, for seeking protection. When Sweden started with the id-controls in order to distinguish between the people that was allowed to enter its territory and people which was denied access, this division became even more clear (Regeringen, 2015b).

The Swedish government made the decision on November 12th to reinforce the inner border controls, meaning that id-controls were being conducted by the police on the Swedish borders. Persons that did not have a valid visa or resident permit in Sweden was asked of wanting to seek asylum and brought directly to the Migration Agency to register their application and leaving their fingerprints, if not willing to apply for asylum they were not let in.

In addition to the Swedish border controls the transportation responsibility was put into force and the transportation companies was forced to check the id-documentation on all their passengers. The transportation companies had the responsibility to make sure that all travelers had valid identification or they would be charged with a big fine if the police found people without it at the borders. This meant all the ferries, trains and taxis was responsible for making id-controls. This meant in practice that people without valid id-documentation could not manage to come to the Swedish border even though they wanted to come in order to seek for asylum.

As the number of asylum seekers rose in Sweden during the fall and winter of 2015, so did also the narrative in regard to the questions of how are Sweden going to be able to integrate the huge number of people coming to Sweden. Another question that also arose if those people were going and even wanting to integrate or if ‘they’ would want to force their own views on to ‘us’.
Also this is understood differently from an energetic perspective.

In energetic approaches, peace is understood as a unification of opposites. With our human senses, we perceive different polarities and thus the question of peace is how to balance them. It is then assumed that such balance, in an energetic manner, can only be thought as a dynamic equilibrium (UNESCO, 2014b).

From this understanding, and my interpretation, the influx of people can be seen as an interesting exploration of the unifications of the opposites. To see what we have in common and were we are opposites. Exploring how we can balance this in order to find peace amongst ourselves. There is so much we can learn from each other.

Breath
One topic that was really standing out on my map of the theme Harmony is breath. Dietrich beautifully writes;

Breath is a promiscuous lover. The breath you just took was in someone else a moment ago, and when you let it go, it’ll move on and become part of someone else. Breath keeps everything moving; without it there can be no dance. (Dietrich 2013 p. 45)

In this sense also breath is connecting us all in a constant dance of life. Without breath we die and as we breath we share it with everyone else.

In the map breath is coming up really strong, however, even here I feel a lack of breath. I feel like I am suffocating. I feel like I cannot breathe enough, like the air is not reaching the bottom of my lunges. I cannot get enough of air. I feel a pressure over my chest, it is creating a feeling of fear and desperation, frustration and more fear, wanting to be able to breath fully. It makes me feel
stuck and helpless. Afraid of not ever being able to breath freely and fully, a feeling of not being able to live freely and fully.

These feelings make me sad. I feel a bit hopeless and almost wanting to give in and give up, since I feel so weak and tired, tremendously tired. Even though, I know how powerful the breath is, it is hard for me to catch it.

Dietrich writes;

Breathing is an existential action at the contact boundary involving space, time and power. It is not only necessary for survivor, but also for experience; that is, the subject experience of a situation not only expresses itself through the breath, but is also determined in a circular fashion by the function of the breath. (Dietrich 2013 p.45)

Breathing is necessary for life and also necessary in order to live. In order to experience and live fully. What I see in my map, is the lack of breath and how people are dying, drowning in the Mediterranean Sea in order to reach Europe. In 2016 the world has seen the highest number ever recorded of people drowning in the Mediterranean Sea. The number have reached over 5,000 persons, children, women and men, an average of 14 people a day have died in 2016. The number of people that have drowned on the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 was 3,771 deaths. Even though, no one knows the exact number of people that have drown trying to reach Europe (UNHCR, 25 October 2016 & UNHCR 23 December 2016).

In September 2015 the Swedish prime minister Stefan Löfven held a speech, were he said “My Sweden do not build walls” and Sweden will continue to stand up for the protection of asylum rights. On November 24 of November 2015 the government had changed and was now to implement id-controls on the
borders and stricter asylum laws. In order to be able to enter Sweden, valid identification was needed even for persons coming to seek asylum (Regeringen, 2015a & Regeringen, 2015b).

The government argued that the Swedish welfare state needed a ‘breathing space’. They argued that Sweden was facing a system collapse of the welfare state if the numbers of people coming to Sweden would not decrease soon. Municipalities was not ready to receive all the people coming. Schools were not able to receive all the children coming, unaccompanied or with their families. The social service, which had the main responsibility for the unaccompanied minors did not manage to receive and accommodate for the 35 369 that came in 2015 (Regeringen, 2015).

Most importantly the Swedish Migration Agency did not manage to physically accommodate for all the people coming to Sweden by the end of November 2015. It was a couple of nights that a few men that had sought asylum was not give a place to sleep by the Migration Agency. It was a very stained time in Sweden as everyone tried to find solutions on how to find more places which could accommodate all the asylum seekers (Svennebäck, 2015).

As I was working at the Swedish Migration Agency at the time, I was out many nights to make sure that people had a bed to sleep in. We went to the evacuation housings that the municipality had provided. It was nothing fancy, the beds were hard military steel stretcher with a thin mattress with a military blankets and a pillow directly on the floor. At the evacuation housing, were I was working, it was old office spaces that had been re-arranged as rooms accommodating several people or families, that had to share the rooms, no
privacy what so ever. It was not great, but it was the best that Sweden could provide at the time.

Every day we went out, from the office to the evacuation and transit accommodation, to find out if someone had slept in each bed, since a lot of people decided to leave for different reasons. If no one had slept in the bed the previous night we had to give it to another the next night, that’s how tight it was with finding beds for the people coming. This temporary living conditions became more long-term than anyone wanted. At the same time many people could move after a few days, the problem was that they did not necessary move to a better accommodation, since there was such a lack of accommodation in all of Sweden in the end of 2015 beginning of 2016.

Even though, those people that had reached Sweden could breath as they were alive. It was maybe not the life they had hoped for and heard about before they came to Sweden. Nevertheless, as I see it, Sweden stood up for those people and provided them shelter when they could no longer stay in their own country. I do understand that it might be seen as naïve to think that Sweden could help all the people that could not stay in their own country.

From my perspective, from an energetic point of view, how can we not. The other person is me and I am him or her. We are both sharing the same breath, we are both coming from the same source, it could have been me and you but now it is him and her. From a holistic understanding we are the same. So how can we in Sweden say that we need a ‘breathing space’ when that means taking the breath of others.
The map of justice brought to me several topics. Law is one of the branches that stood out on my map very clearly. From the branch of law many minor branches are formed. One of the first branches coming from the main branch law is the International Conventions the 1951 Refugee Convention.

The 1951 Refugee Convention are a legal document defining the term ‘refugee’. In 1967 the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees was added and those documents was adopted by the UN General Assembly by the Resolution 21898 (xxi) those documents are commonly referred to as The Refugee Convention (Refugee Convention, 1951).

The Refugee Convention (1951) is the main legal document that are created in order to protect the rights of refugees in the world. The Refugee Convention was created as a legal document in 1952 and is now ratified by 145 State parties. This document defines the term ‘refugee’ and outlines the rights of a refugee. It also outlines the obligations of States protection of refugees.
The term “refugee” shall apply to any person who; [...] person owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UN General Assembly, 1951, Chapter 1. Art.1a).

Previous to the Refugee Convention the Universal Declaration of human rights (1948) states “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution” (UN General Assembly, 1948. Article 14a).

These documents lay the ground for international protection of refugees and is the base of the Swedish Alien Act. In the Swedish Alien Act, the same definition of the term refugee is used, while making explicit that fear of persecution due to gender or sexual orientation also should be considered grounds for refugee status. In the Refugee Convention gender or sexual orientation is considered to be part of affiliation to a particular social group, chapter 4, 2§ in the Swedish Alien Act (Justitiedepartementet, 2005).

The status of gaining refugee protection is considered the highest form of protection that an asylum seeker can gain. If an asylum seeker does not fall under the definition of be granted refugee status s/he might have the prerequisites of gaining ‘subsidiary protection’. Subsidiary protection can be granted to a person whom have left his/her country of origin and are at of being sentenced to death, risk of being subjected to corporal punishment, torture or
other inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, or as a civilian, is at serious risk of injury due to armed conflict, chapter 4, 2§, Swedish Alien Act (Justitedepartementet, 2015).

Before the temporary law was implemented asylum seekers could also be granted residence permit under ‘other protection’ meaning that the person did not need protection from persecution but had extraordinary circumstances directly linked to their personal situation, often in regards to serious health issues. Under the new law this protection is no longer in force, except if a rejection of the asylum claim would conflict with any of Sweden’s international obligations (Justitedepartementet, 2016).

The 4 chapter 2a§ of the Swedish Alien Act, ‘other protection’, was previous especially used in sensitive cases such as unaccompanied minors. When those kids did not have asylum claims granting them refugee status or subsidiary protection the ‘other protection’ could be used to grant them residence permits in cases their families could not be located and it was not possible for them to return to them.

With the new law this possibility is not accessible anymore. This have created a lot of discussion in Sweden the last year since the new law came into force. This means firstly that a lot of those unaccompanied minors are given a negative decision, which mean deportation and since there is yet no organized reception in Afghanistan Sweden are not allowed to send them back. Since they are not receiving permits or protection status in Sweden, they are given inhibition on their decision until the day they turn 18. When they are 18 they can be deported without an organized reception since they are then adults and suppose to take care of themselves.
The legal documents like the Refugee Convention and the Swedish Alien Act was created aiming to protect people that are fleeing war and persecution. Sweden have always had a very generous asylum politics since the creation of the Refugee Convention. During the Iraq and Iran war many came to seek protection in Sweden and in the 1990s many people came to Sweden from the Balkans.

Even though, Sweden have never seen so many people coming seeking asylum in such a short period of time as happened during the fall/winter 2015. In November and October 2015, 80 000 people came to seek asylum. This was a chock for all of the people in Sweden and it became clear that the Swedish institutions and the Swedish reception system was not prepared for such an amount in such a short time. Neither was the schools the healthcare the municipalities the social service. No one was prepared to receive all this people. Still today we are seeing the result of the huge amount of people that came, 160 000, as they are still here.

What I find confusing and really frustrating are how our own Prime Minister Stefan Löfven can stand on Medborgarplatsen\(^3\) in Stockholm and giving a speech to the nation saying:

\begin{quote}
Millions of people are fleeing from war and terrible terror,
people like you and me, people with hopes and dreams, but that
are forced to flee from bombs with their children in their arms.

On their way they risk their lives – in narrow cargo bays,
containers, unseaworthy boats.

Everyone will not make it. Alan, 3 years old, was washed up on
the beach. The horror, the fear that this little boy experienced,
shall no one, ever, have to experience.
\end{quote}

\(^{3}\) Citizensquare free translation by the author
I mourn with him and all other children that dies while they flee war. I mourn with his parents and relatives. I mourn with humanity, when this takes place in front of our eyes.

The sorrow we all share should we transform into the energy to act. Now we have to react. Sweden will continue to take its responsibility. But it is not enough. The whole of Europe need to do more[...] Europe’s cooperation was borne out of our own horrible war. This year it has been 70 years. We said; “Never, ever this can happen again.” Our cooperation united Europe after the cold war was ended. We said; “Never, ever more walls to make difference between human and human.”

Now again, we have to decide what Europe should be. My Europe receive people that flee war, in solidarity and unified. My Europe do not build walls; we help out together when the need is great.

And if we all carry the task together we can make a difference for people. Sweden and Germany cannot do it all alone. All EU-states have to help.

Now it is time for Europe to stand up for humanities inviolable value and rights, that we in ourdeclarations have sworn to protect. For that Sweden will stand for. That is what we stand up for here today (Regeringen, 2015a)

For me, this is how I would be proud of Sweden if we stood up for the people coming to seek protection in this manner. A state that shows humanity and stand in solidarity for people which have fled their country risking their lives on the way. Many of the people I have meet through my work have also told me that they came to Sweden a country they knew stood up for people fleeing their own countries. A country that respect human rights and help people in need. Something many claim is not happening in their own countries.
For me, this was one of the reasons why I decided to work for the Migration Agency, since I did feel that Sweden were standing up for the rights of the refugees, to a certain point. I wanted to make a change to make it even more generous and hoped that from the inside of the Migrations Agency this would be possible.

Almost three months after Stefan Löfvens speech, the immigration situation had changed drastically in Sweden and the immigration discussion had taken a 180 degrees turn from what was the message in September 2015. The drastic changes was obviously a reaction to the biggest reception ever seen in Sweden of asylum seekers. By the end of November Sweden received 10 000 asylum seekers a week, during two months 80 000 asylum seekers arrived.

During this time, I had only worked a few weeks at the Migration Agency. I often worked 12 hours shifts and 6 days a week. I am not doing what my contract had set me to do, working as an asylum case officer, but rather just conducting reception for all the people that was coming. Every day and night busses with people came to my office from Malmö, full of unregistered asylum seekers. Since so many people were coming daily to Malmö, south of Sweden, the Migration Agency offices in this region did not manage to register people at enough speed. Therefore, they sent busses with people to the officer where I am working and other offices all around in Sweden all the way to the very north of Sweden.

It was also a question of finding accommodation for all those people. In the south all the accommodations were full. The more weeks was passing, the more people was coming, the fuller the accommodations became all over Sweden. By the end of November there was no more matrasses to buy in
Sweden, they were all bought up by the municipality accommodations for hosting asylum seekers.

A tent camp was put up in in the middle of the winter in Sweden, in order to be able to host more people. Gymnastic halls and schools were used as big sleeping halls. The evacuation halls, which would have been used in case of war in Sweden, opened up. Every night, all over Sweden, there was a chase for more beds, to make sure all people coming could have a bed to sleep in.

My task became to inform the newly arrived people about the extraordinary situation they had now come to in Sweden. Informing what Sweden could now provide for them at the moment. Many people was surprised at what they were given, many had family, friends and relatives that had come to Sweden earlier when the reception had been more organized and better.

I was also surprised of what I saw. During a week I worked in a temporary camp called Malmömässan at Hyllie, the first train stop at the Swedish border to Europe. Malmömässan is an exhibition hall that the Swedish Migration Agency rented for a period of time, meant to be a reception/waiting hall. This was after the Swedish government had re-introduced inner border controls. The police meet the asylum seekers at the train and brought them to a bus which brought the asylum seekers directly to the camp.

They were brought to Malmömässan waiting to get their application registered with the Migration Agency. Since the pressure was so intense on the Migration Agency to register all the people coming they ended up with a backlog of a couple of days. Therefore, the expected waiting room Malmömässan was supposed to be turned into a massive sleeping hall for people waiting to get their application registered. The government wanted to have control of how came to
the country and wanted to keep people in one place while they awaited their turn to be registered.

Working at Malmömässan was a big chock for me. Never could I in my wildest fantasies imagine the way people fleeing their countries of origin coming to Sweden would have to face what they did in Malmömässan.

The big exhibition hall was remade to accommodate for people awaiting the asylum application to be registered. Initially the idea was for people to be able to wait inside some hours before they could be brought to the Migration Agency reception office in Malmö, but as the number of people coming increased by the hour the waiting turned into several nights.

Adult, children, elders, sick and pregnant ladies had to sleep all together on the hard concrete floor. Attempts was made to bring in beds but they had to be taken out since the fire department claimed it would be too high risk of a fire to spread. Therefore, all the people had to sleep only on a thin carpet on the concrete floor, some for several days. There was no organization in the way people could sleep and no privacy. For 24 hours the bright light was on, due to the security risk of turning it of during the night.

In addition, the hall was not made for sleeping and for people taking care of their hygiene. The week I was there up to 1200 people was held in the area for several days. In the hall was only seven toilets and sinks. Many of the people that came had been traveling through Europe for months and had not more cloths that they had on their bodies. In the exhibition hall there was no possibility to shower or to do laundry.

Women tried at times to make sure that no man came to the bathroom so they could clean themselves, but this always ended up in fights and men
penetrating the group of women standing guard for other women. In the end women was not able to clean themselves during their stay at Malmömässan.

Working there I was ordered not to allow anyone of the people to get out of the premises. I confronted the Head of Unit and asked her if the Migration Agency had the right to keep people in custody in such a way. She told me that if people wanted to leave they were free to leave. At the same time, I was ordered to guard the emergency doors making sure that the people inside did not try to get out.

The whole area was also fenced and had security guards at all entrances. People were not allowed to leave the premises, not even to meet with their families or relatives that had come to Malmömässan to meet with them, they had to talk through the fence.

As a State Official I am not a doctor, still I got in charge of deciding who needed medical care and who could wait. A lot of the people that was locked inside Malmömässan needed healthcare and was in an urgent need of seeing a doctor. The Migration Agency was hesitant to send people to hospital, since they saw it as a risk they would not come back to the camp.

Therefore, we that worked at Malmömässan for the Migration Agency, had to sort out who was in most need of medical attention. Flyktinghälsan\(^4\) came once a day in order to give a first examination. It was two nurses for a few hours each day, trying to attend to all the people that needed help. This was not nearly as much medical service that was needed and some people waited for days before they were able to get a first examination.

\(^4\) Health center for immigrants in Sweden, free translation by the author
When people had to go to the hospital we were ordered to not let the whole family go, in an attempt to make sure the rest of the family had to come back. If there was no family but a single person that had to go to the hospital they had to leave all their stuff behind, also that in an attempt to make sure they would be more keen to come back. The reality was that the person then had to leave their stuff unattended for the time they were gone in the middle of the approximate 1000 of other asylum seekers that was waiting in Malmöässan, hoping for their stuff to still be there when they came back.

People that had gone to the hospital and was prescribed drugs were not allowed to go out of the camp to the close by pharmacy in order to pick up the drugs. Also persons which had already need of prescribed medication was not allowed to meet a doctor to get a renewed drug during their stay in the camp. It was only during the last days of the camp that the Migration Agency arranged with a cooperation with the pharmacy which made it possible for people to access the medication they needed (SVT, 2016).

During the hours the nurses were not there it was up to me and my colleagues to take the decision who was sick enough to go to the hospital and who could wait to seek medical care. It was a huge mess and to me unacceptable that I without a medical training should take such decisions over other people’s lives and wellbeing. It should not be my job to take such decisions.

The camp that was temporary set up at Malmöässan was under the authority of the Migration Agency and only lasted for a couple of weeks before it was shut down. It was shut down due to the decreased number of asylum seekers that arrived to Sweden following the id-controls. However, during its relatively short time in use it received massive critic. Anonymously police
officers that had insight of the situation in the camp went to the media and reported about the inhuman situation for the people which stayed there. Also the Swedish Red Cross and Save the Children reported about the alarming situation inside the camp (Rädda Barnen, 2015 & SVT, 2015).

When the Malmömässan closed down all people were moved to evacuation facilities or temporary accommodation. In some of those places there was also no real place for showering or washing their cloths. The smell and hygienic situation many of the people I meet during this time, I never thought I would see in Swedish asylum reception. But it was as the politicians said, it was a refugee crisis in Sweden which had never been seen before.

This was for me a horrific experience, feeling ashamed that Sweden could not do better. I cannot even imagine how it must have been for the people that was actually kept inside Malmömässan at the time. What must they have been thinking about Sweden. Yes, it might have been worse from where they had come, but still, I have a hard time to get over what I saw. How could Sweden not have been more prepared, how could we have not dealt with this better. When I saw the accommodations and the way we treated them it was no better than we treat cattle. How will we make this right for the people that had to go through this experience.

Coming back to my main office, in another city of Sweden, I was marked by what I had seen. Coming back my boss asked me how it was. I told him it was awful. He said okay and left the room. The next day I was really not feeling well. I had been working almost three weeks straight without break, so I asked my boss for a day off. I was refused and he told me I had to deal with my work here now, since I had been gone for more than a week.
I was shocked, did he not understand what I had just been through, did he not understand what I had just seen and experienced? Off course he could not, I do not believe that it is possible to imagine what I had just gone through. But to be told that I had been away for too long and that I now needed to catch up on my workload in the office deeply hurt me. I felt that I had really made a huge contribution taking on the work I did in Malmö.

I was also shocked that I had no were to debrief in order to handle the emotions and feelings that got triggered inside of me due to what I had seen. I realized that I was on my own with that. Coming home that evening my body reacted and I got high fever and had to stay home from work for the next coming days. I had to take care of myself. I did a lot of active listening with my mother and I cried I lot and I wrote a lot. Also writing this here in the thesis gives me a feeling of healing that experience for myself.

Even tough, the example of Malmömässan is a horrible one, many did not have this experience which came to Sweden. Not to minimize that the reception at the time was not what Sweden wanted it to be, it was under the standards that had been set out.

Even though, the people that came to Sweden were now in a country which were not getting bombed, in a country where a war was not going on. Just like Stefan Löfven was saying in his speech, in September 2015;

Millions of people are fleeing from war and terrible terror, people like you and me, people with hopes and dreams, but that are forced to flee from bombs with their children in their arms[...] The sorrow we all share should we transform into the energy to act. Now we have to react. Sweden will continue to take its responsibility (Regeringen, 2015a).
As he said, now is the time to react. We did and we took a great responsibility when many countries in Europe did not, even though it was not perfect and more could always be done. Those people came because they had to leave to their homes to save themselves and their children. We should not forget that it could have been us, you and me. To think about that makes me able to continue to work and to make sure that the people that I meet get the best reception that is possible despite the circumstances.

I am not naïve and do understand that the high increase of people in such a short period of time was challenging for Sweden and its citizens. I also realize that not all Swedish citizens are keen to accommodate for so many people that were coming to Sweden, however, Sweden have signed the Refugee Convention and thereof bound itself to follow it and up hold it. Therefore, what we did is what we should continue to do, in my opinion and Sweden's obligation due to signing the conventions.

Nevertheless, Swedish politicians started to doubt. Voices raised that something had to be done about the situation. More and more parties started to demand the government to control the situation and to limit the number of people that was coming to seek asylum. At 24 of November these voices had been so loud that the Prime Minister Stefan Löfven talked to the nation together with the vice Prime Minister Åsa Romson.

The speech was a 180 degree change from the speech that was held in September, it was hard to believe it was made by the same government. The press conference announced the proposal of the new law. The Prime Minister announced that the Swedish asylum reception system needed a ‘breathing
space, as well as the institutions and municipalities. The Prime minister announced that Sweden was no longer able to receive more people coming to seek asylum, now Europe had to take a greater responsibility (Regeringen, 2015c). Only three months earlier the Prime minister had said;

> Millions of people are fleeing from war and terrible terror, people like you and me, people with hopes and dreams, but that are forced to flee from bombs with their children in their arms (Regeringen, 2015a).

The phrase; “The sorrow we all share should we transform into the energy to act. Now we have to react. Sweden will continue to take its responsibility” (Regeringen, 2015a).

I felt that that the feeling of responsibility from the government to stand up for the people fleeing war was now gone. The focus was on Sweden and how Sweden would be able to deal with all the people that had come. The government now argued for the responsibility to take care of the people that had already managed to come to Sweden, unfortunate the rest had to go somewhere else.

The government argued that this was the only way to put pressure on the rest of the European union member states. Now it was up to them to stand up for the people coming to Europe to seek protection.

The question is why other states, that had previously not, open up and taken in those asylum seekers would do that now, just because Sweden said they had enough. So instead of the remaining states that had not taken in as much people that Sweden and Germany had done, was also now closing their borders, just like Sweden. It became a domino effect where the borders closed all the way

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5 *andrūm* free translation by the author
down to Turkey. So where should people go when the rest of Europe were not willing to take them.

As mentioned before, the new law makes it impossible for the asylum seekers that received subsidiary protection to apply for family reunification during the thirteen months that their temporary residence permits last. The majority of the Syrian cases that I have handled were only given subsidiary protection, which leaves their family members in a war-torn country or in a camp somewhere on their way to Europe, without the possibility to re-unite with their family member in Sweden. What will those families do now? Wait in a war torn place like Syria and risk their life or should they risk their life in a rubber boat over the Mediterranean Sea?

From my point of view the new direction that the government are taking with stricter asylum law will lead to this. I wonder how does that go together with the demand Stefan Löfven encourage Sweden to in September 2015 in his speech in when he said;

Now it is time for Europe to stand up for humanities inviolable value and rights, that we in our declarations have sworn to protect. For that Sweden will stand for. That is what we stand up for here today (Regeringen, 2015a).

Apparently those words are not important anymore. Now, I feel, Sweden are not standing up for the right of family unification. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights declare that family should be seen as a fundamental group unity of society and should be protected (Article 16(3)) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child Right states that ‘family reunification shall be dealt with by the States Parties in a positive, humane and expeditious manner’ (Article 10(1)). Also
within the The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (The European Convention) does article 8 the ‘Right to respect for private and family life’ declared that family is fundamental for each and every one (General Assembly, 1950 & General Assembly, 1989).

Also during the draft of the Refugee Convention the fear of persecutions of a refugees’ family was recognized. Therefore, a protection regime was linked on the individual persons fear of persecution to family unity. In the Final Act of the diplomatic Conference, which adopted the Refugee Convention, strong recommendation was given, Recommendation B; which urges governments to ‘take the necessary measures for the protection of the refugee’s family […] the unity of the family […] is an essential right of the refugee’ (Final Act 1951 Conference).

Therefore, have many organizations like Save the Children, Red Cross, *Flyktinggruppernas riksråd* (FARR), Ombudsmannen for Children and several other have harshly criticized the new law and what it would mean for the individual, for integration and for children both in Sweden and in the conflicting countries (Lycke, 2016).

For me, it is not possible to understand how a government could make such a turn in such a short amount of time. Yes, off course Sweden were taking a lot of people, but compared with nearby countries, such as Lebanon, Jordanian, Pakistan, Iran and other countries next to war-torn countries the number Sweden are taking in is marginal (UNHCR, 2017).

How is it possible as a Prime Minister to stand in front of the nation and holding a speech ‘that our Sweden do not build walls and that we will stand in solidarity with the people that are coming to Sweden’. To in the next moment
restrict the possibility for people to come to Sweden and make sever restrictions on the laws. Holding a speech which goes totally against the previous one. For me, this is fooling people, gambling with their lives. Many of the people that decided to come to Sweden journeyed for months. The picture they had of Sweden changed while they risked their lives to come here.

Laws are supposed to be foreseeable, in this case, the laws are retroactive. Since people only have the possibility to apply for asylum in one country within the European union, due to the Dublin Agreement (European Commission, 2017) the people that did apply for asylum in Sweden because of the generous laws and because they believed they were being able to bring their families here, have now been fooled since the law changed for them during the time they have been here only because their case had not been handled before the new law came into force.

At the press conference at the 24 of November 2015, Stefan Löfven also announced that Sweden would implement id-controls at the boarder to the continent. This was also one of the tools to regulate and limit the number of asylum seekers to Sweden (Regeringen, 2015b. & Regeringen, 2015c).

People that was coming to the boarder had to present a valid identification, which had to be approved by Swedish authorities, which in practice meant that some nationalities would not be able to enter Sweden, since the Swedish authorities do not approve their nations identification documents.

In general, this made it impossible for many people to come to Sweden and of course especially hard for certain nationals were the possibility to receive an identification is very hard or impossible. In Eritrea for example people within the military age, which is between the age of 18- 50 years old, is not allowed to
receive a passport. As a consequence, the majority of the Eritreans fleeing from the national service do not have a passport for clear reasons and then face a problem to reach the Swedish border. Not even if they announce that they want to apply for asylum were they allowed to enter Sweden, since Sweden meant that they then could and should apply for asylum in Denmark or Germany, the first EU State they came to.

Also Somalian nationals do not have a government that can issue them passports. Many of the Afghans, especially Afghan minors which had never lived in Afghanistan but in Iran, do not have passports or do not have passports that Swedish authorities approve as valid. Just to mention a few groups of nationals which might have face problems when Sweden re-introduced id-controls.

Just to mention the many people where they had to flee their house because it is getting bombed, Isis invading or the passport was taken by the smugglers or lost on the boat over the Mediterranean or stolen somewhere on the way, which is in the nature of the matter with people that have to flee from war and persecution.

In accordance with the Refugee Convention (1951) a person should not be punished for illegally entering a country if s/he come to apply for asylum. I would argue that when Sweden decided to put up id-controls and not allowed people which wanted to apply for asylum to enter our country if they did not have valid identification, is a grave violation of the right to seek asylum in accordance with the Refugee Convention.

The argument of why the id-controls were needed was to get a control and overview of who was actually entering Sweden. I would argue that this argument has no bearing, since the showing of a passport do not make any
difference. It is commonly known that when Isis invaded Raqqa they managed to get hold of the machines and unprinted passports in Syria, therefore, Isis themselves have been able to produce illegal Syrian passports.

Also the businesses of selling look alike passports and fake passports have exploded the last years as a consequence of the huge amount of people coming to Sweden. So in order for the Swedish police on the platform of Hyllie station, which is the first train station on the Swedish side of the bridge from Denmark, see if the passport was a look alike passport, a fake passport or a passport issued by Isis, is not possible, it has to be thoroughly investigated by an id expert. It has also become know that some of the persons that have hidden themselves among the refugee stream of people and then later have conducted terrorist acts have used fake passports or look alike passports.

I do understand and have also experienced the issue when the identity of a person which are seeking asylum is not really possible to identify. Since the Swedish ‘legal position’ states that an asylum seeker have the responsibility to prove or clarify his identity. The natural way to clarify and prove ones’ identity is through the showing of a passport or other identification documents with photos. If that is not possible for the asylum seeker, by the principle of free evidence, other documents and the asylum seekers own story can help in order to clarify the identity (Migrationsverket, 2013 p.3).

The lowest standard in order to be possible to be given a residence permit in Sweden is that the identity has to be made likely. This is because the government need to know who is given a residence permit. Also the asylum procedure takes great emphasis off clarify the identity, since it is part of the process to find out if a person is in need off protection. Identity in regards to
asylum seeker consists of the person’s name, time of birth and citizenship. This is needed to know about the person in order to take a decision in line with the law (Migrationsverket, 2013 p.3).

The importance of the name of the asylum seeker as a part of his/her identity is in order to know who should be issued the permit. The time of birth in order to clarify if the person is a child or an adult, since the procedure and the right to stay in Sweden differ between adults and children. The citizenship is of course of outmost importance since the asylum claim will be tried against the country from which the asylum seeker claims to be. The claim of need of protection from persecution in the country of origin to be tried the Migration Agency need to know from what country the asylum seeker has citizenship in.

So the knowledge of from where the asylum seeker comes and where s/he has a citizenship is important and often becomes a complicated issue during the asylum process. Nevertheless, this is the work of the case officers at the Migration Agency to investigate. The people that do not have a valid passport should not be stopped already at the border not even being able to enter due to the lack of identification, in case they announce that they have come to seek asylum.

In the beginning of the id-controls many families trying to reach Sweden was faced with huge challenges. Many times not all the family members had the valid identification. Sometime it was only the father in the family that had and not the youngest children, since the family did not have the time to apply for passports when their home got bombed. Or maybe the men in the family did not have passport since they did not have the possibility to apply for a passport since
they were supposed to enlist to the military, the reason to why they had to flee.
So how can we hinder those people to even come to Sweden to apply for asylum.

*Laws used to divide people*
The laws like the Swedish Alien Act and the Refugee Convention was put in place in order to protect people in need of protection. However, there is also other interests that are in play in each situation. It is the sates sovereignty to decide who they do want to have in their country. Each state has the sovereign right to regulate its immigration. Even though, since Sweden has signed the Refugee Convention and ratified it and made it national law, Sweden are obligated to take in those people which fulfil the criteria of protection in accordance with the international convention we have signed.

Even though, the sovereign right to regulate immigration also makes a divide between who is citizens of the country and who is not. The importance of receiving a passport or becoming a citizen becomes essential since it gives more rights than when not having these privileges.

This is not new phenomena that came up with the influx of asylum seekers in 2015 but have been a way for States to use the law in order to legally discriminate the people not wanted in the state. In order to put up obstacles in form of legal requirements it is possible to keep out the people that is not wanted. During colonial times it was the colonized people that was not wished for in the colonizers home country. Legal criteria were put in place which made it impossible for the colonized people to move. Today, we are seeing the same with what is called ‘regulated immigration’, to my opinion (Anderson, 2013).

This makes a division between people and create a feeling of ‘us and them’. People with full rights as citizens and people with temporary residence
permit, which cannot feel safe always wondering if they are going to be allowed to stay or not. This is creating a society were those individual become easy to abuse.

With the new law only giving temporary residence permits one of the criteria's in order to obtain a permanent residence permit is to have a job were you are able to support yourself. In this case the possibility to have a job become so important for that person and can be the factor which give him/her a permanent stay in Sweden but also the possibility to bring his/her family to Sweden. In this way the possibility for the employer to abuse the employee can accrue but the person might not quite, since too much are on the table for that person to give up its job.

*Legal certainty*
In my role as an asylum Case Officer I am meeting with the persons that are seeking asylum. I am the one conducting the interview with that person in order to investigate who that person is and from which country s/he is from. After the person have made clear who s/he is and from where, my main task is to let the asylum seeker tell his/her free story about why s/he left his/her country of origin and why s/he cannot return. Listening to the story and asking questions I have to find out if that person is in need of international protection under the Alien Act. I also have to figure out if what that person is telling me is trustworthy and likely.

This is of outmost importance and the decision will be taken on the bases if the story the person is telling is likely and trustworthy, if not they will be denied asylum and then also protection status and residence permit and be sent back to the country of origin. The question I have been asking myself since I
started this job is; how sure can the Migration Agency be when they deny a person protection and residence permit due to the story not being likely or trustworthy. This have really challenged me during my time as an asylum Case officer, since it is ultimately I that have to argue for the Decision Officer that the story is trustworthy and likely or not.

When a person from a different country, culture and religion than me are telling me a story of traumatic events, from my personal perspective I can try to understand the other person, but I will never really understand what that person have been through. What might sound totally unlikely in my ears might be something totally normal for that person from the specific context s/he comes from.

One example is the unaccompanied children from Afghanistan which often do not know when they are born. In the afghan context the importance of when you are born, which date and year is not important, birthdays are not especially celebrated. From a Swedish perspective this is very strange, any teenager in Sweden would know exactly what date and year they are born, because in the Swedish society it matters and its part of your identification number that you use all the time, even as a child.

Another interesting examples are when asylum seekers claim conversion as the reason for their need of protection. Then my job lays in investigating if that person truly have converted and genius in her/his heart have taken on another religion. This are often done by knowledge questions about the new religion as well as questions about the feelings that surrounded that person when s/he took such an important step in live, which are often connected with
the threat of death, death sentenced and expelled from the family and society if returned to the country of origin.

If we are going to be honest with ourselves, how would I, or anyone for that matter, be able to determine for sure if that person have changed his/her religion in his/her heart or only done it for the possibility to gain protection status and residence permit in Sweden. How can the Migration Agency, for sure, determine this.

In the case of asylum applications, the criteria are not beyond reasonable doubt but the person have to make it likely and trustworthy. If the Migration Agency do not believe the proclaimed claims the person will be rejected and forced to leave Sweden. In the case the Migration Agency, for example, do not believe a person which claim s/he has converted to Christianity from Islam and are deported to a country where apostasy is charged with death penalty. Then with the wrong decision the Migration Agency will become responsible for the death of that person.

So how can we, case officers, the Migration Agency, be so sure that we are taken the right decisions. Especially when it comes to rejections which do not allowed the person to stay in Sweden and we send someone back that have actually been converted and he face the death penalty.

From my experience within the Migration Agency the law give space for arbitrary interpretation of the law. When the Asylum Officer and the Decision Officer often, only based on a person’s story, be able to decide if the story is likely and trustworthy, which in the end can be a decision of life and death for the person which decision we have in our hands. I experience that those decisions are taken arbitrary and the personal reference of both the decision officer and
the case officer influence the way the decision goes, if the person are allowed to stay or not.

Before I started to work at the Migration Agency, I could not in my wildest fantasy, or maybe nightmare is more suitable, believe that the work I was going to conduct was given so much space for arbitrary application of the law.

During the procedure of the processing the asylum claim the person who have sought protection have the right to orally put forward his/her claims. In many cases the oral story is the only evidence in the case. It is common due to the nature of the case that the applicant does not have any written documentation on the threats they have received, which have made them to flee their country. They do only have their story on what happened for example in the interrogation room, in case they have not been tortured and still have marks on their body.

In many cases the story is the only thing that the Migration Agency have to take a decision on. The story has to be likely and trustworthy in order to be true. The applicant also has to tell a story in a chronological order and with as much details as possible without inherent contradictions and inconsistencies, a person’s claim can be rejected due to inconsistencies and poor details.

This is the procedure even though it has been proven that persons that suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (ptsd), which many of the asylum seekers are suffering from, inconsistencies in talking and short memory, memory loss and hard to put things in right time frame is symptoms of ptsd. Nevertheless, this is what we require from the asylum seeker in order for him/her to make him/herself trustworthy and understood as telling a likely story.
from my perspective, working as a case officer i have realized how much power I have to influence the individual cases. what personal stand point i, such as wanting a generous immigration laws or strict immigration laws, is affects the individual case. if i go into the investigation room with an open mind or if i go in with the attitude that i am going to find out the lies the person in front of me are telling. if i am considerate and aware that the effect of ptsd and that the person i meet might suffer from and therefore might have troubles to answer all my questions.

also depending on what kind of questions i ask, i influence what information i receive. since there is no clear protocol, but we all have individual protocols that we alter, we all decide what questions we ask, in cooperation with the decision officer. in addition, it is evident that it also depends not only who is the case officer but also who is the decision officer.

most of the time i as a case officer can influence the final decision to a certain degree, in the way i argue the case to the decision officer. i often have the choice of which decision officer i decide to present the case to. i also know what decision officers are more prone to make a positive decision in a certain case category, for example, conversion cases or honor related cases or sexual orientation. knowing that it depends which decision officer i go to and how i, as a case officer, argue the case i would argue is arbitrary.

there is the law as a framework, but i would argue that it gives away for a tremendously huge interpretation sphere. since in many cases it comes down to the question if what the person have told the case officer is likely and if s/he
believes the story or not. If the case officer believes the story the person will get a positive decision and if s/he does not the asylum seeker will be rejected.

It is important that the law is not totally static in the sense of not seeing the individual case and what could be grounds for protection. Nevertheless, I cannot get over the fact that the case officer and the decision officer do have that much power in their hands. In many cases the case can be argued in both directions, which gives room for arbitrary decisions, and the possibility for the personal opinion of the individuals that take decisions in the case, which means that one person can be rejected while another can receive a permit on similar grounds.

In the case of a rejection the asylum seeker can appeal the decision. If the story have not been trustworthy in accordance to the Migration Agency it is hard for the asylum seeker and his attorney to convince the Migrationsdomstolen\(^6\) (Migration Court) to change the decision.

*My trust in Swedish institutions*
For me to take the decision to actually work for the Migration Agency, I believed Sweden would be the only country where I could actually do this job. I did know that Sweden was not perfect and I had previous often felt that the asylum procedure was maybe not the best way to deal with people coming here. Like the example, how can a case officer know for sure if the story an asylum seeker is telling is true, in and of itself this is impossible. Nevertheless, that is the daily job of the case officer and decision officer to take those decisions.

If the Migration Agency decide they do not believe the story of the asylum seeker in most cases the asylum seeker get a negative decision and have to

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\(^6\) Migration Court free translation by the author
return to their country of origin, as the Migration Agency then argue that the person runs no risk of being subject to persecution when returning to the his/her country of origin.

That means in practical that if the case officer and the decision officer is making a mistake of not believing an asylum seekers story, if the story is true that person is running the risk of being subject to persecution and maybe even death or inhuman and degrading treatment. For me, this is a hard insight to live with working as a case officer, especially since I often feel the decisions are arbitrary and/or not investigated enough.

Since there is always, especially during 2016, to produce as many final decisions as possible, quantity seems to be more important than quality, even though we deal with real people’s lives. I ask myself can I take this responsibility? Can I live with the consequences?

Security

Figure 20. My map of Security, Kristin Solberg in 2016
During the process I have felt that the topic of security is one of the hardest for me to map. It stirs up many emotions inside me. Also during my semesters in Innsbruck, when it came to dealing with modern peace it always made me very frustrated.

For me, the modern peace represents the many aspects that I perceive as negative in my own society. For example, the topic of nation state and borders. When I started university I did my first course in Political Science, I really wanted to understand how the nation state and the borders in the world had come to be and why. My issue with that also came up strong in the mapping.

Borders, Nation state and Fear
For me, both the nation state and borders represent the colonial European power, which suppressed the rest of the world, and somehow are still today. I believe that I feel guilt and shame over that since it come from the same part of the world. Also the fact that I grow up in a country which have not faced war as long as anyone I know have lived. I grew up in a country where I could have a good life, materialistically in any case and not have to fear bombings or starvation.

By coming from Sweden, I was born with what can be seen as a lot of privileges. I can travel the world and I could always come back. I will not be discriminated at any border controls and no country will suspect me to come to their country in pursuit of a better life, since I am coming from one of the world’s richest countries. When I have lived in a what is usually called ‘undeveloped’ country, some people have asked me why I choose to live in their poor country as I could live in my own rich country.
For me this has been something strange, even since I was a child, how could life be so different because of where you are born. I believe this is one of the reasons why I have felt such a desperate frustration for the injustice of me being able to move freely while others cannot. I am seeing how the border controllers are behaving differently towards me then to others, favoring me.

I have traveled the world and never faced any problems at any border in regards being able to enter the country. When I have seen my friends born in different countries has not had the same opportunity as me. Nation States and the borders are built on the understanding that there is a need to protect the borders and also control who is coming inside the borders.

For me, this brings me to the understanding of “The state of nature” seen from a Hobbesian perspective. Hobbes believe that all men are born equal but;

From this equality of ability, arise equality of hope in attaining our ends. And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies (Hobbes, 1968: Ch. XIII).

Hobbes believe that men therefore will protect themselves from attacks, by dominating as many as possible to safeguard security, it becomes a war of “every man against every man” (Hobbes, 1968: Ch. XIII).

Hobbes explain what happens to man if there is no authority, no government, no laws, then man fight every man. I understand the modern understanding of the need of borders and controls in order to safeguard order and security. I hear the same underlying tone in the narrative of migration control, that people that have come to Sweden have done so in order to take
what is ours, since there is not enough for all of us we need to protect what is rightfully ours.

Nevertheless, I do not perceive the world in this way and I do not believe that this is how people do behave. As far as my experience reach, where I have been people that have the least is where they have given the most, while people that have a lot are the people that want to give the least.

From a modern understanding of the world things and people can be fixed. The nation states and the borders are also ways to fix the world, to organize and categorize people into boxes or countries and keep them there to make life easier. The immigration control builds on this system to organize the world and people in accordance. It is a formula that can be calculated, how many should we take in, or if we do not control, all the people in the world will come to our country and since there is only a certain amount of food and wealth it is not possible for all to get, therefore we need to keep people out.

In order to legitimate the creation of the nation state and the creation of borders, people had to come together. So the nation state is inherently a constructed idea, an illusion, that we share history and that we do belong together and should stay together. This implied illusion of togetherness also implies an otherness, the dichotomy between inclusion and exclusion. “It is relatively uncontroversial to hold that ‘modern states - particularly those in Europe - were built on notions of shared identity and values, constructed or otherwise’” (Phillips 2011 in Anderson, 2013, p.35).

Also today, the illusion of sameness is still seen as the truth to many. I believe this is one of the reasons to the high rise of nationalistic political parties in Europe and the high support to them by the population. As more immigrants
are coming, especially from countries ‘far’ from our community of value, fear and xenophobia rise. Parties that play on our shared history and identity and the importance of preserving that community of value, get more support, as they still believe in the illusion.

I do believe, in opposite to a modern understanding, that the ‘shared community of value’ is not something static that we can preserve, but it is constantly changing and will continue to do so, even how much certain people are trying to hold on to certain believes or traditions. I believe the fear is that many times the identity, the nationalistic parties are talking about, do not really exist in the reality, it is only an archetype that no one really lives up to.

When the importance to live up to this archetype becomes so important to establish and the legitimacy to use violence to reach that goal get mixed, we have already seen in history what can happen, during colonization, World War II as well as during the present flow of migrations that are stopped outside of the European borders.

In this regard Goldberg (2002, in Anderson, 2013) reminds us that the ‘state of nature’, the founding myth of the state for social contract theorists from Hobbes to Rousseau, is conceived in racial and gendered terms. While race is morally irrelevant, its great thinkers are ‘fixated’ on it (Goldberg, 1993 in Anderson, 2013).

Goldberg has convincingly argued that the modern state is unavoidably racial. Race, and its intertwining with gender, he claims, is integral to the emergence and the development of modern states. The imagination of an age of homogeneity, and the writing out of what is now perceived as racial difference, is a
part of that construction (Goldberg, 1993 in Anderson, p.35).

From the creation of nation state and the construction of a shared identity, this intensified during the time of colonization and the importance to distinguish between people increased. “Colonialism was key to the creation of ‘race’ and racial categories (Stoler, 1995) and whiteness ‘at home’ was intimately an inextricably related to blackness ‘abroad’ (Anderson, 2013 p.36). Reinforcing the difference between ‘us and them’.

That the division between the ‘us’ and ‘them’ has been created and are still being re-created. The new law is one example on how the division between ‘us and them’ since the Swedish government are now only giving temporary residence permit making the transition and integration into society and into the ‘us’ longer and harder.

The ‘us and them’ is created through attitudes and understandings of sameness and shared identity that needs to be protected. It is also a play of power and fear of losing power and economic privilege. It is about keeping people out that might challenge the power, if let in, and about not sharing the economic benefit of the nation state with less lucky habitants from poorer states (Andersson, 2013).

This is legitimized through laws and policies controlling the state and its borders. The boundaries put up by wealthier states to keep out unwanted, poorer, individuals are not put up for the individuals coming from the wealthier countries. Implementing the new law have even made it harder for people to enter making sure that Sweden do not have to take the responsibility for more people coming to Sweden, even though they are coming because they had to leave their own countries due to war.
Nevertheless, privileged individuals coming from the wealthy countries do not often notice the immigration controls and the migration management policies, since their passports are not restricted and they can move freely. In the cases that Sweden need cheaper labor, then immigration control can loosen up in order to facilitate our demand, to again get restricted when the need is meet. Similar to the tightening of the new law, since Sweden do not feel they are able to pay for the reception of more asylum seekers.

I still struggle with the narrative that is often heard in the migration discussion that we have to safeguard our own interest and making sure that we are not losing our sameness and shared identity, since for me this is just an illusion. I do now understand how these arguments can be brought forth, since the Swedish identity is nothing static and somehow only an illusion that no one really lives up to but merely an archetype.

I can definitely understand this way of thinking in the history when people were more separated and the world seemed so much bigger. However, today when the world is so globalized, to my understanding this idea is just naive and dangerous and impossible to realize. We are all mixing and melting today and there is no possibility to exclude oneself so totally to have a homogenous “us”.

We are today part of so many ‘us’. The world is becoming smaller and the closer we come the more we need to learn from each other and also realize how same we are and how much we can learn and celebrate both our differences and our similarities. In order to get out of the historical pattern of creating and deepening the division between ‘us and them’, we should by now have learned from the history of what the consequences can be if we do not learn.
Mapping the topic of truth brought me back to the understanding of the nation state as an illusion of a common identity. It brings me to the conclusion that also the understanding of refugees and migrants are an illusion. The concept of a refugee is written down and constructed in the Refugee Declaration by the UN. It states clearly who can be considered a refugee and that such a person should be given protection. In the Swedish Alien Act, the same constructed is made.

The concept of the refugee has been developed in order to protect the people that need protections. However, what I have seen through my work as an asylum case officer the term also bunch people together and creates an illusion of them as a homogeneous group. It also creates the idea that people which get rejected protection in accordance with the Swedish Alien Act is not in need of protection and are therefore not allowed to stay in Sweden.
What happens when this concept of refugees become challenged? I believed before that it should be challenged and broadened in order to include more people, which are also in need of a safe place where they can create a better life for themselves and their families.

Instead during my time at the Migration Agency, this concept was challenged and it became an even stricter interpretation on who should be given protection, due to the governments stand that Sweden had to lower the numbers of people coming to Sweden. By working at the Migration Agency I was part of upholding and making stricter interpretations of who is a refugee under the law.

For me, it became questionable to be part on making decisions on people lives that would have profound consequences for those and for their families. The concept of who is a refugee become, in my opinion, static when it is applied onto a person. For that person his/her whole life will be determine on that status or not receiving that status.

Is that the point? What have been stated in the Refugee Declaration and in the Swedish Alien Act will have that influence on a person. During my job there has been too many people that do not fall into the strict interpretation of the concept of who is a refugee. Nevertheless, they are in need of protection even though they do not fulfill the exact criteria of what is stated. Then they receive no help or protection and are sent back to their country of origin.

The topic of truth becomes delicate here, because who’s truth are we talking about. In accordance with the Migration Agency the asylum seeker need to tell a story that is trustworthy and likely, in order to be believed. If the story told are not considered to be trustworthy or likely to have happened the asylum
seeker are not considered to be trustworthy and may have his/her asylum claim rejected on those terms.

But how can a case officer at the Migration Agency know if the story is truth worthy or not. how close is the truth of the case officer the truth off the asylum seeker? From my perspective, no one can ever decide to fully know if someone else tells the truth or not and even if that person does, what is told might not be true for the person that is listening.

Anyhow, talking about truths, for migration control and regulated migration the bottom truth is that states have the sovereign right of their territory, and can determine who should be let in and how can be denied access. Since the regulated migration, border controls and the whole work of the Migration Agency builds on that truth that Sweden is a sovereign nation state that have the right to decide who is going to be allowed inside its borders.

I believe this is an interesting fact that goes back to the what I have previous said about the modern understanding of the nation state. Working for the Migration Agency I felt that I was part of upholding this, what I believe is an illusion. I believe it is an illusion, since who gave anyone the right to decide that this land belongs to anyone, even though, we all live by that truth.

Me included, I call myself Swedish and carries my Swedish passport and show it every time I am traveling. I do obey the border controls all over the world and I do apply for visas for the counties were they ask me for it. Nevertheless, I do reflect over this and wonder how come nation states even exist.

Since the fall of 2015 the organization ’No borders’ (Noborder network, 2014) have received a lot of attention due to the huge number of asylum seekers
that came to Europe and all the work they have done for receiving them on a voluntary basis. Also they have been loud in their advocacy for letting all the people that are coming to Europe being allowed to stay.

I find the idea of no borders intriguing since I myself do not understand why we all live and uphold the idea of borders. The borders are only an idea that we all live by, but for the people affected, they are real. I wonder how would it be if we would stop living by this idea.

Interesting to point out is that for many people the borders do not really create any obstacles, like for me for an example. The borders controls are there but I am rarely not allowed to enter and for some people with economic power the borders become an even less of an issue.

However, for the migrants that are now trying to reach the shores of Europe, they risk their lives several times in order to hopefully reach. While I can just get on the flight and do the same trip in a safe way without risking my life or health, even paying way less money for the trip. The truth has been constructed that the people that try to come to Europe and Sweden are economical immigrants that only want to live on social welfare or that they are criminals or now lately that they are terrorists that are coming to conduct terrorist attacks in European cities.

This is a dangerous development on how societies can construct ideas about others in order to protect themselves and create a division between the ‘us and them’. but what happens if we try to deconstruct this images that have been constructed about ‘us and them’.
Mapping the Layers
Sexual family layer

As I am mapping the sexual family layer I get all warm in my body and feel a humbling and loving feeling. I feel at this moment tremendously loved and supported. However, it has to be mentioned that it has been a long and hard journey with a lot of sacrifice and hard work to reach these feelings.

When I was about to turn 18 years old my parents divorced. This was a huge chock for me since I had not seen this coming at all, maybe I was too naïve or maybe I did not want to see it, not even after it had happened. Since the divorce came at a time where it was natural for me to separate from my family and become independent, since I was turning 18, maybe this took an extremist form because of the sudden divorce.

I started to travel about the same time. I felt it was easier to be as far away as possible where I could pretend the divorce had never happened. As I
child I had been brought up and raised in the same house for 18 years, it was my whole world. When my parents’ divorce I felt that I lost my home both physical and emotional. My world got turned up-side down. I traveled as far away as I could, unconsciously I later realized that I was in search for something, which I way later understood was a feeling of finding home again.

Once I understood that the feeling of searching for something outside of myself would never lead anywhere, I started to search inside myself instead. I started to look inside myself, looking at what was painful. I started to realized how painful the divorce had been on me and how much I had a need of feeling at home again, with my family and with myself.

I started to transform the pain by understanding myself better and the root of my personal conflicts which then also transformed many of my relationships, especially with my parents and my brother. Previous I had projected a lot of anger in that direction, towards my mother especially, which did not deserve it. When I realized this I transformed and how I behaved and acted in my relationships, I was able to say I am sorry and why I had been so angry, which of course also changed the way she could relate to me. Me and mother started to work on our relationship and opened up and was honest with each other and today she is again the person that I trust and cherish and love so deeply.

Similar transformation happened with how I related to my brother and our relationship. We started a serious conversation on how we want our relationship to be and what we want or expect from each other. This has been painful and still is at times, however, now we are honest with each other and we
try to make requests in a NVC style rather than demands and the relationship is transforming.

Since the divorce the relationship with my father grew deeper. Since I fought so much with my mother at the time I spent most of my time living with my father. For me it was easier to spend time at his place since he did not want to talk so much about how I felt about the divorce. I just did not want to talk about it at all, most of all I just wanted it to go away.

I have always been my ‘father’s daughter’ so we got along well and he let me be. Since I had previous always turned to my mother when I had a problem, I now had to turn to him, since I did not want to speak much with my mother, he therefore came closer to me during the time we lived together my last school year at high school before I moved to Oslo, Norway.

Still today, I have a very close relationship with my father. He recently got sick and I am now in the process of understanding and accepting that one day he will no longer be with me. This is difficult and painful, but it makes me aware of how lucky I have been to have had such a beautiful relationship with my father, that have done anything for me. Now I just wish for us to have as much time as possible together and cherish every moment together.

This shows me how important life is and my family is since I can never know how long time I have with them; I know it sounds to cliché but it is true. When I was 18 I wanted to get as far away as I could from my family and did not feel that I needed them at all, I took them for granted. Now, I want to be as close as I can with my family and moving to Sweden, one of the reasons was to come closer to my family, since I want them close in my life again.
Also my ability to have loving and intimate relationships have been a struggle for me between the age of 18 until now. I have been afraid that the other part will leave me, which often have led to me leaving the other, before he could leave me. I was always on my way to another journey far away and I was never willing to stay for a man.

I was also afraid that I would give up my own dreams of traveling and seeing the world for being with a man that I knew in the end would leave me anyway. I was not aware of this behavior pattern of mine until I started to look inside myself and also taking a closer look at what the divorce had meant to me.

Today, I am living in a loving relationship since three years back. Also this relationship started with me believing that it would never become serious. When he showed me that he was serious, I left to the other side of the world, because I was scared. I was so in love, but I could not believe that he would actually stay, what a better way to find out then to leave to another continent for 10 months without seeing each other. I told him as well as myself that I had to do this trip in order to fulfill myself, which in part was true but also partly because I was shit scared of our relationship turning into something serious. Believe it or not he was still there when I came back more amazing then when I had left.

I got the job at the Migration Agency, but not in the same city that he lived in but a three hours’ train ride away. The first year when I was working like a crazy person, he came to me every weekend during a whole year. Then I finally decided that I wanted to come closer to him and I took part time off from work to stay with him part time and I took time to write on this paper. Now we have finally moved in together and live full time together.
It took me long time but I am happy that we are now finally living together fulltime and that I am now ready to have a fulltime and committed relationship and that I dare to trust him that he is not leaving.

What came up for me in the map was that I now have a very strong and vibrant family and sexual layer, where I feel deeply connected and in harmony. It makes me feel strong and confident. It also makes me able to come to my family layer and feel weak and afraid and find comfort and strength. I believe this is one space both mentally and physical that is needed for me to be able to work as an ECW. During the fall of 2015 I do not know if I would have survived physically and mentally if I would not have had this support.

Now, I have also created a physical home for myself, something I have not had since my parents sold my house when I was 18 years old more than 13 years ago. To have a physical space where I can come to collect myself and recharge is something I have underestimated for a long time now. This space is amazing and make me being able to give more from myself since I am aware that I have this space to come back to whenever I need it.

This brings me back to the voting in the parliament and how the Swedish parliament and government that day decided that the people that are coming here seeking protection do not have that right. Instead Sweden decided that it is better to splitter families since Sweden need a ‘breathing space’ in the Swedish reception system.

It means that the people that took the dangerous rout with boat over the Mediterranean Sea alone in order not to put their children’s lives in more danger and all the other dangers that wait on the road, will now not be able to bring their families here through the safe road of family unification, unless they get
refugee status. If they get subsidiary protection, their families will not be granted permission to come to Sweden, meaning that if they want to come to seek protection they also need to cross the Mediterranean Sea in rubber boats and put their children through the dangerous journey arranged by smugglers to reach Europe.

With the new laws many families have to do the dangerous journey with the help of smugglers to Europe. However, many times the family do not have enough money to pay for all the family members to come, therefore one of the members are sent so the rest of the family can come on unification, this is now not possible. Indirect are Sweden playing into the hands of the smugglers and forcing more people than before to use them. Sweden are also forcing families to bring their children over the Mediterranean Sea in hope to save them from war.

Several studies have shown that integration becomes more difficult for people which do not have the possibility to reunite with their family in the host country. My own experience, which was my own decision, of not being close to my family made me feel lost. I cannot even imagine how it must feel for people that are in a new country and knowing their families are still in a conflict zone, how are they on temporary residence permit being able to feel at home and integrate into Swedish society (Yle Nyheter, 2015).

How are people being able to concentrate and put focus and effort into integrating into the new country if they do not know if their children are safe. How is it possible to start a new life when you do not know if your family will live or die. How can you enjoy the protection received when it does not include your family?
Nevertheless, mapping this layer brought me the insight of how important family is and long lasting relationships, and they should be cherished. It made me realize that I have a solid ground to stand on where I can recharge and refill my batteries in order to conduct the work I am doing. I believe that it is important as an ECW to have this space and support in order to be aware of myself and staying true to myself.

The side of the map that got the most attention was my own close sexual and family layer. That these layer consist of so much love and support brings me joy and happiness and confidence to take on difficult tasks. Within this layer the fear of dying also came up again, however, not as present as before.

**SocioEmotional-Communal layer**

![Figure 23. SocioEmotional-Communal layer, Kristin Solberg in 2016](image)

Mapping the socioemotional layer, I found some imbalances. As the layer focus on bonding and society, this layer goes beyond the layer of family and focus on
the more communal layer. For me this layer feels imbalanced since I find it hard coming back to the Swedish community and especially working for the Migration Agency to find space where I can bound. I have a hard time to find my place and act accordingly as a case officer at the Swedish Migration Agency, especially since the new laws came into force.

For me, my working role as a case officer, I had to take the role of dominating other people’s lives, meaning the decision in my hands are life changing for the people it concerns. I have the feeling that the life of the asylum applicant is in my hands, which is not necessary true, but the feeling is still there of bearing the responsibility of that person’s future.

In the interview room s/he have to answer all the questions I ask and if s/he decided not to answer certain questions this might have a negative effect on his/her decision, since that might be seen as there is something the person is trying to hide from the Migration Agency. It is my role as a case officer conducting the interview, to decide what type of decision I would later argue for the decision officer, should the applicant be able to receive a permit or not.

The process is more complex and more controlled by the law than only the liking or disliking of the applicant by the case and decision officers. Nevertheless, the role of the case officer is here important and that the personal opinion of the case officer do have a large influence on the decision.

Since many decisions, especially when it comes to negative decisions, have to do with the question that the person's story have not been considered to be likely and/or trustworthy. The decision officer can choose not to believe the story even though the case officer does argue that the person is trustworthy, but more times than not, in accordance with my experience, the decision officer do
listen to the person that have actually meet the asylum seeker him/herself, which is the case officer as the decision officer do not meet the asylum seeker him/herself. This gives an enormous responsibility to the opinion and understanding of the case officer.

Early on, I had a feeling of not being able to fully take on this role, which gave me a hard time conducting my work. I was constantly questioning; how come I was given this power of arguing the future of another person's life, how could anyone have this power over another person's life. And who was I doing that, as my job?

What made me even more frustrated, irritated, furious at times and tremendously sad many times, was that, too me, it did not seem that my colleagues were asking themselves the same questions. I felt, that many of my colleagues took this authority for granted and expected that respect and the submission from the asylum seekers automatically since they were in the power position of being the case officer. I tried to bring this topic to the attention in order for us all to discuss it and what it meant in the job we were doing but without any luck. This made me even more uncomfortable in my professional role and I could not feel that I did belong in that role or amongst my colleagues.

I am also aware that many of my colleagues might share my frustration and feelings but decided not to speak up or bring it to the table. Something I, myself, was also not doing. I believe that many of them did understand that I am questioning the whole system, but I could not be totally open about it since I feared what consequences it would have for me at work. Maybe my boss would see me as unfit for the job since I had signed the contract of supporting the
mission of the Migration Agency, which mainly consisted of taking these decisions.

What complicated things further was my private life outside of work. Before I got the job at the Swedish Migration Agency, I had been giving legal advice to asylum seekers and to people which had already been denied asylum from the Migration Agency. The stories and the lives of the people that had been denied asylum, because the Migration Agency did not believe their story, was devastating. Therefore, I wanted to start to work for the Migration Agency to really understand the system and the law. To see it from the inside in order to understand why the decisions looked the way they did.

This did not happen. What I saw on the inside of the Migration Agency and how decisions were made was horrifying. The case officer having a lot of power to argue the case for rejection or approval, which of course could be highly influenced on the personal opinion of that person. I also experienced, and it was commonly known at my unit, that it depended on which decision officer the case was brought if it would be a negative or positive decision. Some decision officers are known for being generous in their application on the law, while others were known to be strict.

Before I started working for the Migration Agency, I had believed and had trust in Swedish institutions, that they were applying by the rule of law and were all very professional. Now, I have lost all of that trust and hope, after all the arbitrary decision I have seen during my relatively short period at the Migration Agency. What brings me to tears is that the things that have been done and are still being done and the tragic tragedy of the lives that become destroyed due to
the lack of respect of human lives, when decision can be taken depending on the opinion of the individual case officer and the decision officer.

This also had its positive points that my individual opinion of letting people to stay often was possible as I argued the case, but also makes me devastated when I know that some had received negative decisions which could have been positive decisions if they would have had the luck of a more generous case and decision officer.

So for me being part of the community in Malmö were many of my friends had made bad experience with the Migration Agency I felt more belonging to them than to my colleagues at the Migration Agency. Even though some of those friendships also became conflictive due to my work at the Migration Agency. Somehow I felt that I could not be myself in any of this spaces any longer.

I felt at work that I had to hide the side of me that was sympathizing with the people that came to Sweden in order to seek protection. I felt this was not accepted at my work place since I should be objective. Nevertheless, the way the asylum seekers was treated with disrespectful and with submission which was accepted. I would not consider this to be the rule of law that Sweden pride itself with.

For my friends in Malmö that I had got to know during my time of giving legal advice to asylum seekers and undocumented people, many saw the Migration Agency as the biggest enemy, the devil. I got the feeling when I started to work for the Migration Agency that many of my friends from this community saw me as having sold my soul to the devil, switching side. Some decided to withdraw their friendship from me. Others showed that they were true friends and tried to understand why I had made the choice I had done, nevertheless
questioning my choice of work. Some even understood the potential of being able to gain more knowledge, understanding and learning the process from the inside the Migration Agency.

For me it was hard to loose and be questioned from my friends. I felt that I could not take part in many of the activates that I had been active in before. I was not allowed, since I could not do anything during my spare time that went against the interest of the Agency, I was allowed by my contract not to do so. This broke my heart. Since so many things happened politically since I stated to work for the Migration Agency I was not allowed to stand up and publicly announce what I felt about it.

I could not take part in any of the demonstrations leading up or following the voting in the parliament about the new law. That made me feel that I had sold my soul to the devil, since I could not make myself heard, I had to be quiet, I felt bought. The feeling of not having a voice came up so strong in the maps, not only in this layer. This broke me on the inside and I started to not recognize who I was anymore. I was no longer the person that stood up for myself or others in really a time of crisis.

It felt like all I had studied and believed in was just an illusion and now I was caught in the ‘real’ world which was dark, scary and cruel. I was no longer allowed to speak up about what I believed in and I felt that the world went in the opposite direction from what I believed in. Again I felt like I was suffocating.

Wolfgang argues that

As persons, we naturally aspire to gain a recognized position in a community, which lies beyond the immediate circle of the family and sexual partners and stretches to include being seen and respected, to belong. If for any reason a person were
deprived of social interaction, cooperation and recognition, this would lead to emotional harm, wounds and sickness of the persona in her ego-aspects (Unesco, 2015)

I feel that with the work I have I am not able to gain recognition from my colleagues since I feel that I am not able to truly show who I truly are, since that goes so much against what the Migration Agency expect from me. Also among my friends in Malmö, those who see the Migration Agency as the devil, I am not able to show them why I am doing what I am doing, maybe because I am a bit ashamed about what I am doing.

I feel that by working for the Migration Agency I have isolated myself, from my colleagues since I do not want them too close in order to find out who I truly are. I also isolated myself from many of my friends in Malmö since I felt ashamed of my work and/or was not able to participate in demonstrations against the new law or the migration Agency, which also made me not always able to join my friends.

I do not allow myself to take part in many of the activities in Malmö which concerned refugees, since I am afraid it would become public and someone at my office would get to know and become more suspicious about me. I have signed the contract of not performing in any way actions that could reflect negative on the Migration Agency or goes against their policies.

This made me even more isolated and made me feel more like a person which more fully supported the new laws and the stricter asylum laws, since I did not voice my resistance. This constantly brings my thoughts back to the history of Europe and in what spirit the Refugee Convention came to be.
In the preface of the book *Drömmen om Sverige* the author Niklas Orrenius tells a story about a discussion he had with his grandmother during the 80ths. He is at the time doing a school project about the Nazi time. He asks his grandmother how it was to live during the time of the WWII. How much did she and his grandfather know about what was going on in Europe and the genocide of the Jews. The grandmother answering that she did not know too much about what was going on.

He then reflects on what his own grandchildren will ask him in the future about what is happening now? what did we not wanted to see during our time? And he is telling the compelling story of the horrific and dreadful ways Europe have closed its borders and what refugees have to go through in order to hopefully arrive alive in Europe. Something that is on the news and all over the internet every day. He imagines the questions from his grandchild in the future asking;

- Did you know not know what was happening in Syria, Grandpa?
- Yes.
- We read in school that you put up fences with razorblades?
- Yes.
- Were you really poor in Europe at that time?
- No.

The answer for the future we are creating now (Orrenius, 2014, p10-11.)

This imagined conversation really caught my attention and touched me deeply. Because even I as a child had to study the Holocaust in school. It was

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7 The Dream about Sweden free translation by the author
8 Free translation of the author
called *Om detta måste vi berätta*, so it should never be forgotten and not repeated. And how will I be able to answer my grandchildren in the future, why we did not do more or even worse how I could be part of the system that was sending people back to countries were they might die.

So how come we can treat the people in the way Europe are now doing? Have we already forgotten our own past? So how can I bound in a community which stands for this denial of other people’s scream for help.

What came up strong in the mapping was the community that I do have in Malmö, which is accepting me and see me where I do have the feeling that I do belong. However, the work I had did not allow me to live that life out fully. Maybe I have a very naïve and romanticized picture of the community I live in Malmö. Mostly I am surrounded by people which had recently come to Sweden. I found my place amongst them and have felt a strong feeling of belonging. For me just coming back to Sweden after been traveling for 12 years and living abroad it was hard to find the way back to the Swedish society, I believe that also affected the feeling of belonging I feel amongst people that have newly arrived.

I felt that the people that had also just arrived experienced a kind of culture chock, which I also do feel and experience. Important to point out is that my feeling is very different from theirs since this is supposed to be ‘my country’, which is not foreign to me and I do know all the social codes, the culture and the language and my legal status to stay in the country is not contested.

Nevertheless, I feel and experienced more acceptance and understandings from my friends with foreigner background then from supposedly ‘Swedish’

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9 About this we have to tell, free translation by the author
people around me. For them I need to behave in accordance with the social norms and by the culture, with my other friends I can relax and be who I am.

I feel with people, which have newly arrived or came some years ago, they understand how it is to be in a new culture, how it is to not to be able to follow all the cultural norms. I feel the main difference between us is that I know all the cultural norms, since I had grown up with them, but I do not necessarily want to follow all of them since I have got use to not follow some of them. Another huge difference is that they have to be here and I did not and this was the country where I could enjoy all the rights as a full worthy citizen which they cannot.

Even there is many differences I felt I belonged and I feel at home amongst this community. However, I felt that the bigger community or society of Sweden tells me I do not and also the community of my friends make me understand I am not one of them from times to time. When people saw me in town I experienced as I was seen as a ‘Swede’ and nothing else. I feel like all the traveling I have done and all the experiences I have are not visible to other people, which have changed me into another person, making me struggle with coming back to Sweden.

Many times I feel that I am expected to behave like I have never left Sweden. Since I love to meet new people and learn about new cultures and languages and new food I also felt that the community of newly arrived brought me this, right here in Sweden.

But at work this felt like a burden, I felt that the close relationship I had with people that had recently come to Sweden was nothing that should be shared, since I should be an objective professional without any personal ties to the ‘subjects’ we meet every day. This would have made my life as a case officer
more bearable since I would then not see the people we meet every day at work as human beings with their own lives and histories, families and sorrows. I would not have seen firsthand what happens to people lives which gets a denial but cannot return to their country of origin and find the option to live in hiding in Sweden as the better one. During the time I worked at the Migration Agency I felt like a double agent and it ate me from the inside.

**Mental-Societal layer**

The mapping of the mental-societal layer brought up a lot of feelings and emotions inside me. It became a very dark map with lot of feelings like confusion, hate, feeling stuck, pain, anger, panic and fear of dying.

As the layer stands for the potential of reason and consciousness it is also within this layer that the capacity for reason and abstract ideas lies. Coming back
to the idea of the nation state and that all borders have first been created as an idea, an idea that we now live by as real physical borders.

The capacity for abstraction also gives us the possibility to have ideas such as ideologies, religions and such. This is a potential cause and trigger of conflict as well as for peace.

From my map of the mental-societal layer I feel that the idea of the nation state brings me a lot of challenging and painful feelings. I feel that I am stuck within the box called the nation state. I feel that by the world being organized around the idea of nation states, where I am from sets a lot of conditions on my life. I also feel that there is no way to escape that box. That gives me the feeling of not being able to breath, to suffocate.

As I see it, Sweden has since the fall of 2015 been closing itself for people that have made their way here to seek protection. Sweden have closed its borders and are no longer willing to accept as many people as came in 2015 seeking protection.

At the same time as Sweden are closing their borders for others to come inside, I feel more trapped inside its borders. I do not know why, since it is not necessarily true, as I can still move and travel freely over its borders and other borders. Nevertheless, I do feel that it is threatening my possibility to move freely since it feels like the world are becoming more closed and controlling of its borders. And I ask myself, will my possibility to move freely be threaten in the near future?

At the same time, I am coming back to the preface of the book _Drömmen om Sverige_, we do see and know what is going on at the borders of our countries and the border of Europe. We know what is going on at sea in the Mediterranean
and how people are freezing to death at the closed borders of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and other countries in Europe. It is not a secret and no one, no one, that live in Europe can say when our grandchildren ask that we did not know what was going on. We all know. The question is what we do about it today.

Nevertheless, we let the ideology, religion or any other abstract idea about how we should take care of ourselves and our own nation states standing in the way for helping the people that are in need, blaming it on that those people have a different idea of the world.

From what happened during the fall of 2015 and how the Swedish government decided to change its policies 180 degrees in matters of months, makes me feel such a fear of dying. If it was so easy for the Swedish government to decide that we should no longer be a state that is standing up for the refugee rights, then how do we know that there will not be another target group the next time the law change so drastically.

Stefan Löfven said in his speech in September “my country is not building walls” and then two months later he changed the policy and close the border. He is not building a physical wall, but an abstract wall, which is physically protected by the border police and the police, in cooperation with the transportation companies making sure that people, which do not have valid id-documents, are rejected before they even reach the border.

To legitimize the move of closing the borders Stefan Löfven proclaim the right of Sweden to have control of whom are let into the country. That idea is sprung from the idea of (in)security. The government argue that they need to know who is coming to Sweden in order to keep its population safe, buying into the argumentation that amongst the refugees are the people that are coming in
order to commit terrorist attacks in Sweden and elsewhere in Europe. This brings about a society of suspicion and fear, I would argue.

My feeling when mapping this layer is a lot of fear. Fear of when will this suspicion and denial of entrance be turned against me. But also, how can the people doing this not realize that it could have been we that had to seek protection in another country and how would we have wanted to be treated? How can we not see that the exact same thing could have happened to us, the people of Sweden, that we would have had to flee because of war, or is that too farfetched to most Swedish people.

As I see the world from a more energetic perspective I do believe what we do to other we also do to ourselves. So by keeping people out, forcing them to risk their lives, we also do that to ourselves. This makes me afraid. Really afraid. I am not the individual that are targeted by this policies, but I will have to live in a society which treat other human beings in this manner. I might be going to raise my children in such a society in the future. Children that might have a father from a country which is one of the countries which produce a lot of refugees coming to Sweden to seek protection which have been rejected at the border since their old passports are not considered valid.

For me, it is within this layer I feel the most of imbalance and blocked energy is coming from. Much of it is connected to my hopelessness in being able to escape the ideas in this layer. It feels to me that these ideas are beyond me, suffocating me.

I am also realizing that this is one of the reasons why I took the job at the Migration Agency in the first place. It was my conscious and unconscious conflict within this layer that pulled me towards the job. I felt I had to come close to this
layers in order to transform it. I had a need and maybe naïve idea that the way to transform what I did not like with the immigration policies in Sweden would be to engage on this layer, that it would be possible to transform it from the inside.

After been working inside the system for 17 months so many things have happened. I thought I could have an impact. Instead after only a couple of months the government announced that they wanted to change the immigration laws to become even stricter, the total opposite to what I wished to accomplished. Months later the new law was passed in the parliament and a few months later it was implemented as law and I was sitting in the office ordered to obey it, as it was my job to do so.

I have never felt more part of the devil than I did at that moment. This made me too seriously reflect upon what I was doing and if I should continue. If I could continue. The feeling of dying was also here present. It felt like pieces of me was dying day by day and that I was losing more and more who I believed I was.
After mapping the Mental-Societal layer I felt blocked. Starting to map the Spiritual-Policity layer became difficult. What came up in the map was a strong feeling of blockages and disconnection. I felt that this layer had become blocked due to not accepted as a valid layer in the environment of my work. I felt it was a taboo and a discharged layer which should never even be mentioned.

Even though, I know how important this layer is for me on an interpersonal level but also how important it is on an intrapersonal level in order to stay balanced. Even though, I blocked this side for myself during most of my time at the Migration Agency. I felt that it was too hard to be in touch with myself as I am working at the Migration Agency. I did not want to confess this to myself, that I did not wanted to be connected with myself but I wanted to stay numb not feeling anything. I knew all the time that staying numb and not wanting to be in
touch with myself was only a destructive self-defense mechanism, which would not work in the long run.

However, I did feel that I needed this while I am working for the Migration Agency, because deep inside I know that I am not happy about the work I am doing and that it does not feel right in my heart and in my gut if I am totally honest with myself. This is too painful to look at and will force me to take some hard decisions that I am not sure I am ready for. Even if I did not want to become in touch with myself this thesis made me look at myself again, even though it was hard and painful.

During my training as an ECW at the MA in Innsbruck I learnt how important it is to have your internal observer switched on, but in the midst of everything going on at work I tried to switch it off, since it was too painful to have it switched on. At times I switched on the judging observer instead, judging everything I was doing at work and shaming me for being part of the Migration Agency. It was not really helpful but made me feel bad as I believed I should feel, because I was ashamed of what work I was doing and what Agency I was part of, I felt that shame and bad was the feelings I deserved. So somehow it was easier to live with the judging observer than an internal observer which would observe the dance of my persona in a loving fashion without judging, since I did not believe I deserved that.

The feeling of not having a voice is also dominant in this map. I feel like I am screaming so loud but not a sound comes out. Also the feeling of suffocating came up again, suffocating by the words that are not coming out, words that is painful to swallow without being heard. Making me feel sick to my stomach, making me feel like I have to throw up something dark, deep inside me. I feel the
urge to purge out something very deep that is now ready to come out, something that have been inside me for way to long.

I also have a feeling that all the voices of all the asylum seekers I have meet is still inside me vibrating wanting to get out, since they are not mine. All the terrible stories of terrible life stories are going through me and inside me and echoes deep in me, which also makes me wanting to throw up and make me feel like I can no longer breath but suffocates of all these stories, all these voices.

Mapping this layer made me aware of how important it is for me to find balance again on all my layers and how important it is for me to do self-care and heal myself from all that is affecting me in this conflict.

The spiritual-policity helps me to find balance in the other layers. I realized that the notion of breath, in various forms, have been present in all my maps. The training of Holotropic breathwork was also the training during my student time at the Ma of Innsbruck that marked me the most. So, coming to the map of the spirituality-policity layer brought me back and reminds of the importance of awareness and that I find more balance when I work with my breath in order to realize my own traumas and how great of a tool it can be also working with others.

So slowly I am finding my way back into the importance of doing my daily practice of being aware and switching on my internal observer and intrigued to go deeper into the different practices of breathing.

**Mapping the Levels**
The ECM levels draws from John Paul Lederachs’ (1997) pyramid, consisting of Top, Middle Range and Grassroots level. When Lederach developed his pyramid in 1997 peace building had been mainly about top-down or bottom-up approach.
Lederach (2005) adapted his theory of the pyramid, since he saw the increase of the Grassroots affecting the top leaders about the atrocities affected the civilian population. In his book the *Moral Imagination* he emphasized the importance of a non-mechanistic way of interpreting the pyramid. He then argued that all actors influenced each other in what he saw as a spider web with constant feedback loops.

The spider web suggests that in each level we can find another pyramid that are all influence interactions on all levels. Wolfgang Dietrich later took this one step further by introducing the understanding of the Sri-Yantra, which alludes to many, many, pyramids reflecting on the even more complex of inter-relations and feedback loops on all levels in various ways (Wolfgang, 2013).

In order to map the different actors at hand I will start mapping the different pyramids I can see within in the conflict, in order to later see how they all play out in in the Sri-Yantra understanding.

**First Pyramid**

*Top-level*

In my first map of the levels I put the government, the parliament and the prime minister at the top level, as I see them as the top leaders. From my perspective they are the one that was in charge of the voting in the parliament, that approved the new law. It was the government that proposed the new stricter rules. It was the government which put the new law proposal to the voting in the parliament and it was the members of the parliament that finally voted for the law to be passed. For me, this is the ultimate example top level leaders, which are few having power of the many.
**Middle Range-Level**

In this pyramid I put the Migration Agency in the Middle Range, which mean that I also put my-self within the Middle Range. Being in the Middle Range means to be able to have access to influence both the top-level as well as the Grassroots, to be the link in between. The Migration Agency’s top do have direct contact with the government and have the possibility to communicate what the Migration Agency experience is happening amongst the Grassroots (the asylum seekers).

However, it is not such a direct link in between the pyramid in this sense, the distance between the asylum seeker and all the way to the top leaders of the Migration Agency and to the Government goes through many levels, I would argue.

As a case officer I did not feel that I had the possibility to influence neither the top leader of the Migration Agency and even less the government. I am meeting the asylum seekers on a daily bases and the decision that I am part of do highly affect them and they do highly influence me. However, the cases I am involved in do not influence the top leaders of the Migration Agency and would make them to do something in another way.

**Grassroots level**

Putting the asylum seekers in the Grassroots level do somehow feel a bit odd, since it is far from a homogenous group. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this map they have to be brought together as a group called the asylum seekers in order to make the map less complex, but remember the map is not the conflict it is only a map of the conflict.

This group consist of people that are directly affected by the decision of the government, the parliament, the prime minister, the Migration Agency and
then finally the individual decision of the decision officer and the case officer in each individual case, which is based on all the previous decisions.

The asylum seeker is communicating and are at large the purpose of the work of the Migration Agency. However, the only contact the asylum seeker have to influence the Migration Agency is the case officer. All the asylum seekers, from the age of 0 to whatever age they are, meet a case officer to whom they have to tell their story. They have to put forward the case, on what grounds they are claiming they need protection. They do this by themselves or through a lawyer. In all the cases where there is a possibility for a denial of the asylum application, the asylum seeker has the right to a lawyer, which is paid for by the state.

In most cases the asylum seeker only has one individual meeting with their case officer in order to orally put forward their case. Other than that the case is decided on the orally story, whatever evidence the asylum seeker is presenting, the legal statements issued by the Migration Agency’s Legal Counsel and any country information about the specific country of origin of the applicant.

For the individual asylum seeker, it is not easy to make his/her voice heard all the way up to the management of the Migration Agency or to the top-level of this pyramid. Even though, the decisions on the top of the pyramid is affecting the individuals lives on the bottom.

**Second Pyramid**

After more reflection I feel that more maps of the actors on the different levels is needed. Especially, since I do not fully feel myself and how my role plays out in the previous pyramid.
In this pyramid, I put the management of the Migration Agency at the top, wanting to show that there is also a pyramid within the previous pyramid. To explain I need to clarify what mission of the Migration Agency.

The government in Sweden together with the parliament do have the democratic power of Sweden, which proceeds from the people. The Swedish government have the assignment to execute what the parliament have decided (Regeringskansliet, 2014).

The Swedish government then have institutions which has the mission to implement the politics into society. In my case the Migration Agency are working with implementing and uphold the migration policies made by the government and the parliament (Migrationsverket, 2016b).

Every year the government gives the Migration Agency something called Regleringsbrev\(^\text{10}\), that gives the directions of the work for the Migration Agency for the upcoming year. It announces what is excepted by the Migration Agency to have done throughout the year. The Migration Agency is not ruled by a minister, known as ministerial rule, but have the responsibility to decide by themselves on how they should achieve the results stated in the Regleringsbrev (Migrationsverket, 2016b).

This gives the management of the Migration Agency a great deal of self-authority. In this manner I am putting the management of the Migration Agency as the top-level in this pyramid. In this pyramid I see the management of the Migration Agency as the top-leaders which have the authority to affect the rest of the pyramid.

\(^{10}\) Appropriation directives freely translated by the author
The management set the rules for how the work should be done. The Migration Agency have rules and regulation and foremost the law to obey, but the procedure and the operation of the work are to be set out by the management of the Migration Agency. In this area the responsible minister does not have any authority. The top-level management are led by a Director-General and its management team.

It means that how the work should be committed is decided by the top management. It is also the Legal Counsel that have the power to issue legal statements that the decision and case officers have to follow when applying the law. The legal statements called Rättsligtställningstagande\textsuperscript{11} that clarify how specific legal issues should be interoperable and/or in what order the issues should be considered when looking at specific cases (Migrationsverket, 2016b).

The management are also in charge of which cases should be granted priority, for example, during 2016 the Migration Agency had the mission to finalize the decisions in 108 000 asylum applications, before the end of the year. In order to fulfill this assignment, the management decided to prioritize asylum applications from persons having Syrian citizenships. The reason for this seemed to be that the Swedish government had promised to grant Syrian citizens asylum in Sweden due to the war in Syria. Because of that promise all people that could make it likely that they were Syrian citizens was granted protection in Sweden, unless they were not excluded from being a refugee see 4 chapter 1(2b)§ and 4 chapter 2(2b)§ Swedish Alien Act (2005:716) (Justitedepartementet, 2005). Since all Syrians that applied for asylum in Sweden was granted protection, those

\textsuperscript{11}legal position, free translation by the author
cases became faster in the procedure then for asylum seekers with other nationalities.

All Syrians that have been granted asylum in Sweden have had their own individual trial of their case in order to determine on which ground the protection should be issued and also to rule out that the persons should be excluded from the right to protection. The procedure of cases that are granted protection does generally not take as long time as for a rejected asylum claim. This might have been the reason they were prioritized as the Migration Agency had the challenge to take decision in the highest number of asylum application ever made in Sweden.

Alongside the management is also the Migration Agency database for country of origin information, Lifos. Lifos is the organ which provide the decision officers and case officers with relevant country information about the country of origin of the asylum seeker. Lifos produce reports or collect reports from other sources such as the UNHCR or other reliable sources which provide information on how it is on the ground in the countries from which people are fleeing. They are also conducting lectures and responding on specific questions that comes up in regard to specific cases (Lifos, 2017).

Since what the asylum seeker is explaining are checked against the information that the case officer can find about the country, the reports that Lifos produce is of highest relevance and influence the decision tremendously. In the procedure of the asylum case any kind of evidence is allowed to be used. The asylum seeker can hand in any kind of country information that s/he feel is relevant for his/her case. However, from my perspective it is often hard for an asylum seeker to claim a situation in his/her country which cannot be confirmed
within the information that Lifos produced. Never to say it is not possible. Therefore, I would argue that what happens on this level is top decision (or reports) that affect the people in the lower levels.

*Middle range leaders*

In this pyramid I put the decision officers as the middle range level. I would argue that the decision officer in the specific asylum case have the outmost power, however, regulated by the top management. I would argue that in most cases there is more than often that a case can be argued both ways, protection or no protection. If the decision officer decide to believe the story of the asylum seeker, believing that the person fear persecution is his/her country of origin, it is possible to argue for giving that person protection in Sweden, with support in the law.

It is often the possibility to not believe the story of that person and denying him/her the possibility to receive protection in Sweden. I would argue that this gives the decision officer a tremendous amount of authority, responsibility and power. S/he have the outmost responsibility to decide over that person’s life. It is also the decision officer’s decision that will let the person stay or have it tried in the court, since all negative decisions can be tried in the Migration Court if appealed. Some of the decision officers argues when they run into a difficult case that if there is a negative decision it might be better to give a negative decision in order to have the court to make a decision on what should be the outcome.

*Grassroots*

Here I want to put the case officers on the bottom of the pyramid. This is where I find myself in my working role. In this pyramid I feel that the naming of the level being the grassroots level might be a bit miss leading. The case officer is in no
way the grassroots in the way I understand Lederach original pyramid. Even though, I feel in my work that being a case officer I am on the bottom of the pyramid, having to follow what have been decided on the top and middle level.

Being on the bottom I do have a huge impact of the decision and the decision officer. It is me that actually meet the asylum seeker, it is also me that prepare the case and present it for the decision officer. What I am saying, how I am arguing and what I suggest for outcome do affect the decision officer and finally the decision. It is the responsibility of the decision officer to go through the entire case before the decision is finalized, making sure that all have been brought to the attention before a final decision.

It is also the case officer that are conducting the interview with each individual asylum seeker. Depending on what have been asked so are the answers, therefore, what you ask for is important and what you not ask about will also affect the outcome. For an experienced interviewer it is possible to follow up and ask the right questions in order to get out as much information possible in order to take as correct decision as possible. To my experience, it often takes a lot of time in order for the asylum seeker to feel enough comfortable to tell their most horrible experiences, for the case officer, even though telling this might be the very reasons that person is granted protection, or not if the experiences is not brought to the attention of the case officer.

If not the right questions have been asked or not enough time have been available the applicant might not have had the chance, courage or possibility for different reasons to tell, what could have changed the decision from subsidiary protection to refugee status or from a denial of protection to a granting of protection. So the case officer have an important role, especially conducting the
interview, since the decision will take the story as one of the cornerstones on what grounds protection should be granted or not.

During 2016, the time available for the interviews became shorter and shorter at the same time I had the same main topics that had to be covered during the interview. This for me, meant I could not go to the same depth in the interviews that I had previously been able to do.

I felt the struggle of having enough time in order to create a safe space for the asylum seeker to really tell me why s/he had left his/her country of origin. When individuals had been through enormously difficult times, for example on their way through Europe during the winter of 2015/2016 and had an urge to tell me about this, I had to explain the person that this is not relevant for the asylum application, which was hard to in a dignifying and respectful way explain why we did not have time to talk about what had happened in Europe but only had to focus on what had happened in the country from which they seek protection.

At times I could argue to the decision officer that I needed more time and had more questions to be answered before we could go to a final decision, but it was ultimately the decision of the decision officer if I was given more time to conduct a second interview. From the management of my department this was not appreciated since they wanted high numbers on final decisions and not more time spent on one individual case. In accordance to my experience it was quantity before quality.

In this manner, I feel that the case officer does fall within the bottom of the pyramid, but not necessary as grassroots. The case officer has a high level of
influence but only to the middle level. The case officer does affect the outcome it will have in the individual case for the asylum seeker.

Continuing that argument there could also be a pyramid where the decision officer is on top the case officer on the middle range and the asylum seeker is the grassroots that will be affected by the decisions taken above them in the pyramid, but in the ECM understanding there is numberless possibilities of pyramids that are part of the whole, since we are all relational. Instead of mapping another pyramid, I will see what comes up in the Sri-Yantra understanding of my ECM.

Sri Yantra
In according to the understanding of the Sri-Yantra the pyramids of the conflict I have at hand can be extended endlessly and showing the complexity of how we are all interrelated in one or another way into the conflict. From my understanding this is why the issue concern us all, because the few pyramids are only showing the top of the iceberg how we are all affected.

I believe that the voting in the parliament regarding stricter immigration law do affect people that do believe that they have nothing to do with immigration. For me it is obvious that the way we treat others also reflect how we treat ourselves and other people in the community. For example, the stricter immigration laws are also making it harder for Swedish citizens to bring their families here in case they should marry someone that do not have Swedish citizenship.

Another example, is the hunt for undocumented immigrants which might led to that people becomes more suspicious about others. We (the people) start to become suspicious about who have legal documents and who have not. Even
though the police argue that they are not racially profiling when they are checking id on the train, it is clear when I am not checked for id but friends of foreigner appearing are. Similar happening in the society, at work places, social service centers and public places where the police are searching for undocumented immigrants. How can the search not be racially profiled, when they are looking for foreigners and that will affect even Swedish citizens which do look foreign.

Juan Amaya Castro argues in his articles that the government creates an ‘illegality regime’, where the undocumented immigrants become by their person illegal. He is also arguing how common citizens are given the role of controlling who does have legal papers and who does not all from landlords to teachers and like. This off course affect the common citizen of indirect doing the job of the border police inside of the country, which creates an even more suspicious society and deeper division between ‘us and them’ (Castro, 2011).

I would also argue that the stricter laws with only temporary permits and no possibility to claim family unification will lead to that the people that have come to Sweden will have a harder time to integrate and also mentally suffer more, which will cost the society more money in healthcare and other services that will be needed.

It will also cost the society more money if people that have newly arrived are not motivated to learn the language since they do not know if they are going to be allowed to stay in a couple of years. Since the way to be granted a permanent residency after the temporary have expired is a job which fulfil certain criteria’s. This will lead to that many of the newcomers will not have the possibility to go to school, learn the language or getting a better job since they
need a job to get permanent residency and to bring their families, which creates the feeling of second class citizens. Those are just some examples on how we are all affected by the new laws in Sweden and that the pyramids extend limitless.

**Analysing the Result of the Many Maps**
Before I start with the analyzing of the many maps I would like to share the bodily experience I had during the workshop when we danced with the maps. I feel that the dance and feeling the work I had done in my body helped me to come to interesting observations. I feel that the experience of the dance helped me to start the analyzing of the many maps and the conflicting landscape.

**Dancing with the maps**
The last evening of the workshop we danced again, this time we danced with all of the maps in front of us.

I put all the maps on the floor and sat down with them. I was sitting with the maps in front of me and I felt so tremendously touched by the map of my family sexual layer. It was so much strength, love and heart there, that I had not been so explicitly aware of before. It made me feel warm and humbled, a feeling of feeling loved for who I am.

Looking at the mental-societal layer brought me tears to my eyes, I started to cry. What I saw was pain and suffering. I felt goosebumps on my skin, it gave me chills of fear. I had to cry. I stood up and looked at it from a distance. It helped me to feel that I could distance myself from the pain that was on the map. It gave me a feeling of empowerment. A feeling that when I looked at it from a distance, even though, I am in the middle of it, it gave me the first glimpse of hope.
I heard Josefina’s voice in my head and I tried to make it reach my heart. “Accept what is in order to see new perspectives”. I tried with my whole heart to fully accept what ‘is’ in the map, even if my whole body tried to fight it. I tried to accept it not because I liked it but because denying it is not where my energy and fight should go.

I felt it helped me to start to open up the door to see possibilities in this layer instead of fighting and refusing to accept the current state. My body started to move and open. I felt my stiffness starting to become softer and I could make my moves bigger, knowing that if I could not accept there can be no transformation. Acceptance is the first step, to become fully aware of the situation and the facts, are already a beginning of transformation.

To step on the map of the mental-societal layer was hard. It gave me chills of fear and a tremendous feeling of sorrow in the bottom of my belly and a pressure over my chest. There was pain, sorrow, fear and anger. But as I was standing on the map looking up, slowly accepting, I realized there was also a lot of potential in the map. I started to consciously breath deep breaths all the way down into the bottom of my stomach and I felt stronger. If I just accepted and opened my eyes I could broaden my view, this was liberating but painful.

As I stepped with one foot on the sexual-family layer and the other foot on the mental-societal layer I felt supported and ready to accept what was at the mental-societal layer in a deeper way. I felt more at ease and stronger. As I continued to dance I felt my energy grow and my body starting to become softer and more relaxed, filling up with energy, energy that I thought I had lost.

As I started to move away from the maps and started to dance around them instead of on top of them, my body became excited and a feeling of hope
spread all over my body, coming from inside. I felt possibilities were about to come to me. I felt in my body that acceptance was important in order to see possibilities that can open up, as my body showed me. Moving away, moving around the maps letting my body and mind open to see and feel new possibilities.

As we took the maps away from the floor, still dancing the conflict complexity, I felt new possibilities and energy returning to me. Dancing close to the maps I dragged my feet’s after me but when I took the maps away I felt there was more space. I started to flow and I felt light and a feeling of flying over the dance floor, still grounded and in touch with the floor.

During the phase when the music went into chaos, I started to let my body lead me and go wild. I felt that something was stuck inside of me, something big and dark, heavy in the bottom of my stomach. It made me feel sick and I needed to get it out. We all gathered in a circle still dancing and we were invited to leave behind what we did not need any more in the circle supported by the group.

I took the invitation and got into the circle. I had to get out what was in my stomach. Hold by the group I screamed and purged what was stuck so deep inside me. I felt it got out and left a big space inside me.

I got the feeling like something released inside of me and my body could finally breath again, after have felt the feeling of suffocating throughout the workshop. I felt my lounges started to fill up with air again all the way down to where the dark and heaviness had previous been. It was such a liberating feeling but also scary to realize how my breath could go so deep and fill up my whole being, something I had not felt for such a longtime.
Aaaaaahhh!! Finally, I could take a deep breath and fill myself up again. It was like coming out of a dark mountain cave and taking the first breath of the fresh crisp winter nature air. The life force was finally reaching my whole being. I was no longer afraid to die, since I was so alive. I was dancing in lyrical and was fully alive, present and aware.

In the end of the dance, I danced with another participant, which was also struggling with finding her place in the world. I felt that we connected heart to heart. As we did, I realized the cosmic joke of life, I felt it with my whole body. That most people struggle with finding their place and accepting what is. I realized, I am not alone about this and neither is she. We are all in this together but we are putting so much energy, feelings and emotion into finding our place and ourselves and the conflicts we create within our minds. Somehow, it is all fine and I will all be fine because I already are fine and will always be, liberating insight.

This was my experience of expressing the maps with my body, which helped me to get distance and see new possibilities. It also showed me how important it is to include the body and use it as a tool for transformation. Throughout the dance I draw a new map.
Analyzing the many maps
Using the voting in the parliament of the new law as my episode helped me gain an entry point into the conflict complexity that I wanted to map in this paper. By mapping all the themes, layers and levels, it helped me to gain a deeper understanding of what was my conflict and how it plays out in my life and at work. I am here going to bring forth my most important discoveries, which will help me to develop strategies in order to transform my conflict.

Looking at the themes I found that the theme of justice is the dominating narrative in my conflict mapping, while the others are playing their role explaining the conflict in the background.

Justice
Justice also brought to my attention to the fact that I am also deeply influenced by the moral understanding of what is right and wrong when it comes to the issue of immigration. Since I am pro-migration and do fully believe that it is the
right thing to do, to help all the people which are coming to Sweden in order to seek protection.

I do believe that the international legal documents are important tools in order to protect people which have to leave their country of origin. However, I want them to be generously interpreted in order to give as much protection and rights as possible safeguarding people which are already in a vulnerable situation. Not using the legal documents in order to restrict and divide people, for example to split families.

I also believe that laws should be foreseeable and not made affecting people and their lives in retrospect, in the case the new law are now affecting the lives of people that have already applied for asylum in Sweden believing that they would be able to reunite with their families.

I also see the issue with the law within the Migration Agency giving room for arbitrary interpretations, much influenced by the personal opinion of the individual case and decision officer, leading to arbitrary decisions. This makes me issue the legal certainty of the decisions that are made by the Migration Agency, which also makes me doubt how sure the Migration Agency can be that people are not sent back to a place where they might face what Sweden have committed itself to protect people from. Being a case officer putting my name and being partly responsible for the decision makes me feel uncomfortable as I do not feel that I can trust the system.

Security
The map of the theme of security brought me to the insight that the, what I believe, illusion of the nation states create both mental and physical borders between people. The laws around migration control builds on that illusion and
deepens the division even further between people as the laws institutional division between people.

The new law was also sprung from the notion of fear. Fear of too many people coming to Sweden. Since the border was reinstated it also adds to the narrative of fear, needing to have control of who is coming inside the Swedish borders. Fear is also created around that that the social services that Sweden has is not enough for all the people that are coming and therefore have to be safeguarded for Swedish citizens, turning people against each other.

Working for the Swedish Migration Agency, I am also part of upholding this system and applying the laws on people's lives. I am part of making decisions of who can stay and who have to leave, who can bring their families and who cannot. For me this is an uncomfortable position since I feel that the laws should be there to protect and not deport people back to countries where they do not see a future. How can I, living in a country that have so much, deny others to have the same possibilities.

Truth(s)
In the narrative of the truths building on the previous themes the construction of the nation state, borders and the term of refugees got challenged. Starting to work for the Migration Agency I wanted to challenge the construction of the term of refugees into as broad understanding as possible on the term.

In despite of my aim the politics surrounding the laws changed and it instead became even more strict. I realized how much politics play into the construction of the term. I wonder if it is possible to go back to the generous asylum politics that was previous existing in Sweden or it is forever lost? Is it
possible within the work I am doing at the moment to challenge and broaden the term again or do I need to find another position where it is more possible?

Another topic that was dominating the question of truth, was whose truth are we talking about? Is it ever possible for a state official to determine with certainty if another person is telling a trustworthy story or not? How can I work within the frame of determine who is telling the truth or not, when I do not believe it is possible? Can I be comfortable with the role I have as a case officer, since I recognize that what is true for me might not be true for others and vice versa.

*Harmony*

Dominant in the theme of harmony was the importance of breath, to survive and to live. A feeling of getting suffocated appeared for me but also the drowning of people in the Mediterranean Sea has been dominate in the narrative of the immigration discussion, as an argument to help people to stay.

Prime minister, Stefan Löfven, bringing up the drowning of the three-year-old Syrian boy as an example of what happens, but should not happen, on the way to Europe at his speech in September. Interesting enough he later in November draw the argument that Sweden need a ‘breathing space’ from the reception of asylum seekers for some time, forcing him to put forth the new law, which will limit the possibility for people to gain residence permits in Sweden.

As a result, more children like Allan will be forced to take the dangerous rout over the Mediterranean Sea in rubber boats since family unification is no longer available for many. Making me feel that Sweden need a space to breath at asylum seekers’ expense.

By mapping harmony, I got clear on how I see the world through the lens of energetic peace. A perspective that is not recognized at my job and not
appreciated. I believe that becoming aware helps me to also realize, become aware and accept what limitations the role I find myself in at the Migration Agency.

I believe that my world view being so conflictive to the world view of my job contributed to me feeling at conflict with myself. By working in an environment which does not appreciate or recognize the way I consider the world was one of the factors which got me out of balance, leaving me with the feeling that it would be easier to change my world view in accordance to the environment where I spend most of my awaken hours. By doing so I also unconsciously denied important pieces of myself, making me feeling more lost and confused. Becoming aware of this will help me in order to find balance again and acknowledge my own understanding of the world and that there are many ways to perceive the world.

**Layers**
Looking at the layers I became more aware of myself and what triggers me and why this topic is so important to me.

*Family-sexual layer*
I have never before so explicitly realized how much support and love I have from my family and close relationships. How important this have been and still are for me in order to be able to take on the work I am doing. It also reminds me of how important it is for me to be balance and have a space where I can recharge and find support in order to be balanced also professionally, not doing harm to the people I am working with.

It pains me that Sweden, and me, are denying this important part of other people's life's, by splattering families in accordance with the new law. By doing so it also affects the whole society I live in, when people will be denied to being
their families to safety. It will create a society which will become more and more divided that will affect everyone that lives here. This makes me feel scared of what kind of society I might have to raise my own children in.

Socio-emotional layer
This layer brought to my attention the struggle I have had to come back to Sweden and to its society. How I feel the division between people and how we live divided in the society. Making me feel uncomfortable in the community that are supposed to be mine and have been drawn to a society where people come from more diverse backgrounds, making me feel more at home, but struggling to feel belonging anywhere.

By having the job, I do, I have maybe made it even more difficult for myself, since I am professionally in a role that I am not feeling comfortable about but more ashamed of most of the time. It has also made me not able to express my personal opinion as freely as I wish, making my private life more complicated that might be necessary.

I realize how important it is to feel belonging and being recognized for who you are. Something that I also believe is often an issue for people that come here. It is not easy to be recognized for who you are when you have left all you know in order to come to a new country, where you do not know the language, cultural norms and social codes.

It has also become clear to me that in order to be able to work as an ECW I personally have to believe in what I am doing. It becomes very complicated if what I am supposed to do at work goes against my inner believes. I cannot be genuine, aware, balanced and congruent in my communication if I do not believe what I am doing is contributing to the world I want to see. What I have
experienced that my self-defense mechanism of becoming numb kick in after being working with something that does not feel right to me for an extensive time.

*Mental layer*
What is clear for me after drawing maps, all the maps, are that it is here where the epicenter of my conflict comes from, it is here that the conflict gets its energy. I feel a lot of fear, anger and frustration in regard to this layer, it feels like it is beyond me and impossible to transform.

Fear of living in a society based on the fear of others. Fear of the way we are treating others in our society. Fear that the treatment will create what we fear others today, will create cold, angry, frustrated, distrusting and hating people that we will learn to fear tomorrow.

Fear that others cannot move freely today and what that does to people. Fear of me not being able to move freely tomorrow. Many around me do not consider this and take it for granted that they can move freely and are not concerned that the tighter border regulations might target them tomorrow. As I value the possibility to move freely I do not wish that my possibilities will ever be threatened, so how can I deny this to others or not be concerned when others do not have the same rights as me.

*Spiritual-policty layer*
Since at my work this layer has been totally denied I have also unconsciously tried to suppress this layer of myself also outside of work. Since I have felt that my work is conflictive to my personal believes and ideals it has been easier to suppress my spiritual layer than to listen with what my conscious and gut is telling me.
Now, retrospective, I do realize that suppressing this layer I have become even more imbalanced and not being able to heal and integrate what I have experienced. I might even have done it worse to the people I have meet since I have not been aware or in balance with myself.

In order to be an ECW and denied this layer have not been healthy or helpful. Maybe I have managed to stay at work and not leaving due to the fact that I have not listen to myself. however, this is not advisable since it also makes me not able to practice the ABC, being aware, balanced and communicating congruent. By doing the mappings I have become aware again, helping me to come in balance in order to communicate congruent again.

**Levels**

Coming back to the pyramids and the different levels I have become aware of the systemic constellation I have found myself in.

Working as a case officer I do find myself as a grassroots member at the top-level. I felt that decisions were made over my head on how I was supposed to work. It is not much space for me to have an influence on the laws or the general procedure of how the work is going to be executed. What I did found was that I do have to some extent of influence on the individual cases that are on my desk.

Since I am the one asking the questions I can make sure, in most cases, that I am asking the right questions in order to be able to argue for the person to be able to stay. I am digging deeper if I feel the claim is not so strong, in order to make it stronger. I also have the intention when I go into the interview room that I have no reasons not to believe the person in front of me, as long as s/he do not give me a reason during the interview. If that is the case, I take time for the
person to explain any part of the story that is for me not clear. Many times this
have been enough to straight something out and made it clear.

I am also considered with making sure that the person sitting in front of me in
the interview room is meet with dignity and respect in order for that person to
be able to trust me enough to tell me all the grounds for his/her asylum
application.

I also have influence on how I argue the case for the decision officer
convincing him/her that the person should be granted asylum in Sweden.
However, I am no saint and there have also been times when I have not been able
to argue for granting asylum, when there has been no ground for protection. I do
wish that I could have argued for residence permit even in these cases when
people have come only to get a better life, escaping poverty. Since there is no
room in the law to argue for such a permit it has not been possible, even for me.

Even though, I do believe that if you put yourself and/or your children in
a rubber boat over the Mediterranean Sea and risk your life and theirs for a
better future, I do believe, from my perspective, that that should be reason
enough for you to be able to achieve a residence permit to try your luck for a
better future in Sweden.

Because who are we of not sharing what we do have in Sweden. I might be
naïve, but I wonder if all that we have in Sweden only for me to enjoy. And how
come we do have everything we do have in Sweden, is it because other countries
have been exploited by countries like us.

Being in the position of case officer my only way to influence the system
by each individual I am meeting, I feel frustrated in not being able to influencing
the bigger system as a whole. I am aware that from the perspective of the Sri-
Yantra I am part of the small which is embedded in the bigger. I do understand that in order to transform a huge institution as the Migration Agency it does not happen overnight but takes time, patience and maybe a lifetime. Not to mention transforming the immigration politics of Sweden.

What makes me discouraged is the way the politics turned on the top-level during my, relatively short, period at the Migration Agency. I feel that I came in with the feeling of wanting to make a difference and hopefully have an impact in regards to loosen up the immigration laws. Now the totally opposite happened, it turned 180 degrees towards stricter rules. This also means that I am part of applying the law stricter on the asylum applications on my table. It also means that I am signing my name on decisions were the person will not be able to bring his/her family safely to Sweden and only receive temporary permits if receiving them at all.

To be honest, this becomes more and more difficult for me and I am feeling that I am not able to bring this up to the people on the top-level. Being a state official I have found myself to not act in a way that can damage the interest of the Migration Agency. In this manner I feel that I am not able to even privately voice my concerns in the public debate, because I am always to be considered a state official as long as I work for the Migration Agency. The discussion in Sweden about the large amount of asylum seekers that came in 2015 have been a hot topic. It has been discussed in all forums and are still a very present discussion.

Daily there is reports on how the new laws are affecting asylum seekers and especially unaccompanied minors. Several unaccompanied minors have committed suicide and even more have tried. It has now become known that
there are some that have planned to commit collective suicide due to the new law and Migration Agency's arbitrary decision on their age.

Being a state official representing the Migration Agency I have not been allowed to take part in this discussions and voice what I do believe and know about the issue. I feel I have been silenced due to my work. I do not even dare to take part in demonstrations or manifestation in order to influence the politicians to change the laws, since that would not be considered of valuing the mission of the Migration Agency.

This brings me back to when I was a child in school and learnt about the Holocaust. I am not comparing what is happening now with the Holocaust. What I want to have said is that I at that time learnt that even the silent by standers were part of committing the crime. By being silent on the side, looking another way, let the acrostics to continue. In order to not voice what have to be said, this will continue (Bruchfeld & Levine. 1998). I cannot stop asking myself if that is what I am now doing, or if I am even more part of the crime than a silent by stader as I am going the errands of the Migration Agency and the politicians, which I do not believe in or stand for that is far from where my heart is.

In the Sri-Yantra understanding I am transforming the system by being in the system in whatever role. At this time as an active role within the Migration Agency I am affecting the system. However, I cannot stop thinking if I would have more possibilities to act in a different role. Another role where I am more free to speak my mind. Since the Sri-Yantra is a holistic way of looking at the system, I believe that I could affect and transform the conflict in a different role and position, a position where I could be more me, be more true to myself and closer
to where my heart is. Could this possible transform certain blockages in me that I am now experience in the conflict?
Chapter 4 Strategies
When having analyzed the result of the conflict mapping I feel that I have gained a better understanding of my conflict. In order to use the ECM to its fullest extent I have to, based on the insights gained from the maps, find at least three different intervention strategies that I can use in order to transform my conflict. As mentioned in the first chapter, three options gives me a real possibility to find an intervention strategy that I can work with and feel comfortable with.

Intervention Strategy 1
The first intervention strategy that comes to my mind after the in depth analysis of the conflict maps comes out of the frustration of having the feeling of not influencing the system enough. I realized how deeply it has affected me to not be able to publicly raise my voice and be part of the debate concerning the new laws.

Therefore, I would like to focus on how I can influence the system from within. By doing so my focus will be on the individual level of the cases that are on my table. How can I argue their case and influence the decision officer in order to take positive decisions. In many ways this have been part of what I am already doing.

However, I would like to do this in a more organized and structured way, seeing which decision officers are most suitable for me to work closer with. I am not saying that I am going to argue the cases were not even I am convinced that the person has an asylum claim in accordance with the new laws, but in the cases that I believe there is a claim, I will argue them constructively with a decision officer that I know have a more generous approach.
Not only do I want to be able to influence the decision officers into having a more generous attitude but also my case officer colleagues. I would like to organize a workshop where the topic ‘trustworthy’, and what that really means, could be discussed amongst us.

In addition to having a dialogue on the topic and how we will find out if a person is trustworthy or not, I do believe that more knowledge about ptsd is needed. Since many of the asylum seekers we meet suffer from ptsd, we as case officers need to have a better understanding that one symptom of ptsd is that that person does not remember and cannot tell about that event in a chronological order. This is of importance when we are interviewing and making decisions.

Further workshops can be held were me and my colleagues have the possibility to discuss the new laws and give our point of view on how we experience they affect us and how we experience it affects the asylum seekers we meet and what might be problematic with the new law. During the workshop method like active listening and non-violent communication could be useful tools.

Another useful method would be to use the ECM as a tool, where me and my colleagues could be able to map what the new law means for us and for the asylum seekers the way we experiencing it.

The outcome of such workshops could be brought together in writing and be handed over to our local management and the top management of the Swedish Migration Agency. Even though we have signed the contract of standing behind the role of the Swedish Migration Agency I do believe that it is important for the top management to hear from the grassroots within the institution what
affects the new laws have, so they can transmit this to the government in their talks.

To implement this intervention strategy, I need to get it accepted by my boss and a willingness from my colleagues to participate. It would also take a lot of planning from my side in order to hold the space for these talks and making sure that there would also be time to reflect and integrate what has been discussed and learned during the workshop, together with my colleagues.

I believe a better alternative would be to invite a facilitator to conduct the workshops. Since I am new at using the method of ECM, I believe that a well trained and experienced facilitator would be a better option in order for the work to be more professionally conducted. In addition, the understanding of transrational peace and ECM are new to my colleagues, which would also have to be explained in order for it to be properly implemented in the work strategy. The power dynamic and blocked energies that I am feeling at my workspace might make it more complicated than necessary if I am hosting the workshops. I believe an outside facilitator might be taken more seriously than if I as a common colleague would hold the space, which also means that I could be more involved in the group process as a participant if not facilitating.

Problematic with this intervention strategy would be to be given enough time to make this happen. Inviting an outside facilitator would demand some sort of financing of the workshops. At work there is a lot of pressure all the way from the government and down to the case officers to produce as many decisions as possible, in shortest possible time. Working on the wellbeing of the staff or giving space for the staff to express itself and work out their opinions about the new law might not be in the interest of the management, since it is not directly
resulting in more decisions. The measurements of good work at present are the number of decisions that are produced.

This time pressure has been constant since I started in 2015. I believe it might be difficult to convince my boss about the value of making a side project in order to strengthen his staff. I do believe that the importance of such a training where we discuss the topic of trustworthiness is not a primary concern for my boss. What is always brought up as an issue by my boss is the possibility to raise the number of decision that are being made per week, not what is the outcome of the decisions or the process used to make them.

Nevertheless, I do feel that this topic is important to discuss and might help me and my colleagues in how we should look at this topic, which might even in the long run make it easier for us to later make decisions at a faster pace, but most importantly in a more informed manner.

**Intervention Strategy 2**
Analyzing my experience working as a case officer and trying to be an ECW I realize the importance of being in balance and being aware of myself in order to be present with the people I am working with.

One important part of the work I am doing as a case officer, is to have a space where it is possible to talk and express all the heavy information we hear from our asylum seekers. Since our main work as case officers is to listen and question the asylum seekers about his/her most tragic and traumatic events in his/her life.

The case officer is also the person which directly meet with the asylum seeker and have her/him to tell their story in person. This becomes heavy on the case officer and some stories are so awful you wish you would never have to
hear them. In addition to listening to all these stories, as the principal task of the job, we also have to argue what should happen to the person in question, and determine whether or not s/he should be allowed to stay, or in the worst cases, sent back. Both the decision itself and the interaction with the asylum seeker and his/her story can easily become overwhelming.

I would like to focus on this part of my work for the next intervention strategy. I would likewise plan to invite outside psychologists that could work with me, and my colleagues, as a group and individually. I believe that the possibility to have a safe space to speak about these issues, ruminate on the core problems and learn how to deal with all the stories we hear in a constructive way is very important.

Most of us working at the office are young and have not had much of work experience before this job. Making it even more important to learn early on how to deal with all the traumatic stories we hear. Since, if we do not have proper strategies to handle all the information we get, it can be easy to just switch off the emotions and become distant and apathetic or become overwhelmed and burned out. This can become a defense mechanism, since the emotions and feelings of the work can become too much, especially if you are as personally invested as I am.

I have myself experienced this occurrence when I had to switch off my feelings in regards to the stories I heard, in order not to drown in the sadness and feelings of ineffectiveness. This is not a long-lasting healthy way to deal with the problem, but since I felt there was no space where I could deal and work with the feelings and emotions that came up, I had to find my own coping mechanism, in order to be able to do my job. Nevertheless, if I am switched off then I am not in
balance and not aware of myself and cannot be aware of the other, the asylum seeker, when I work.

In addition to the psychologist working with us and guiding us on how to handle our interactions in healthy ways, I believe that active listening among colleagues could help a lot. It could be just ten minutes each morning and that would still have a tremendous impact. The guidance of the psychologist will demand quite some time, and active listening in the morning could be a good complement to that. Active listening is not a demanding practice, does not require a lot of time but is still very effective.

The simple act of being heard for five minutes every morning will help immensely. Doing this in combination with receiving the proper guidance on how to deal with the stories constructively will help each individual in staying more balanced. Active listening in the mornings will be helpful to everyday performance, as having a moment to let go of the things that we do not want to take with me home. It is also a great exercise which strengthens the relationships among colleagues and creates a feeling of trust and support in the group. To feel safe in the group and maintain a trusting relationship with colleagues will also help to keep us more balanced and knowing that there is people that will support me if I have had too much, which prevents burnouts.

This intervention needs the local management at my office to be willing to try and implement this method. They need to be willing to set aside time for all the staff, let’s say, once every two weeks for a common group discussion and guidance. It also demands the financial possibility to pay for an outside psychologist to come in and work with us for an extensive period of time. The active listening in the mornings will not have to cost any more money than our
time for ten minutes, which might lead to a more balanced staff with less sick leave. Similarly, also my colleagues need to be willing and open to trying out the method if implemented.

I believe that this would be well invested money and time. Becoming more aware and be given tools in order to handle the work we are doing in a more constructive way and having the space to discuss what we experience, I believe, would lead to more efficient and balanced staff that would decrease the numbers of sick leaves, absenteeism and people quitting their job.

During my time at the office, a few people have been burned-out and left on sick leave, having a long way to heal and get back to work. A few people have also decided to leave the work since they do not feel that it is a healthy work environment. I believe that this can be stopped, or at least to some extent diminished, if we had professional help from a psychologist.

My experience is that the work climate after everything we have gone through since 2015 has heavily affected me, and my colleagues. We have had no space or time to deal with what we went through. In my opinion people have turned against each other and chosen their own individual defense mechanisms in order to deal with their emotions and feelings, in order to be able to continue working. We have not done this as a group, which might be the reason why the group has become so divided. I do experience a lot of distrust, competition and suspicion amongst colleagues, instead of trust and support.

Therefore, I think that bringing in help is crucial for my office for us to deal with the internal issues among colleagues. However, I do believe that a lot of the problems amongst colleagues are rooted in the lack of space and time to
actually talk with each other. The total lack of being able to work together with how we can deal with the stories we hear.

Therefore, I hope to be able to convince my boss about the profit and advantages of setting aside time and money for this intervention, which might lead to more inspired, balanced and mentally strong personnel, which will be able to conduct the work more efficiently and in a healthier way.

**Intervention strategy 3**

As the last intervention strategy I will use the opportunity of this thesis as a strategy to transform my own conflict. As I felt that the mapping of the conflict helped me to see the conflictive landscape in a clearer way I assume that the writing of this thesis will give me a clearer picture and deeper understanding of my conflict, and as said before, to realize and accept what is, is the first steps toward transformation.

I will use the thesis writing as a way to express my innermost feelings and be totally honest about my feelings. This means being true to myself even in the times where I do not want to stay true to myself. By writing about my work for the Migration Agency I need to look at all the aspects of the work and of me that I have tried to avoid. I need to use the method of NVC and Active listening on myself and my text to see what lies behind the conflict and what I am feeling. I also need to practice to switch on the internal observer trying not to judge myself but to observe what I am experiencing. Using writing as a way of healing, transformation and becoming true to myself.

The time frame of this intervention strategy is the timeframe of the thesis work, from September 2016 until June 2017. I use the writing as a strategy to transform my conflict.
In comparison to the previous intervention strategies, this one does not need any involvement and engagement from my boss or any of my colleagues. This intervention strategy only involves me, but will affect the others as well. This intervention strategy will be a lonely project since it will be me sitting alone and writing about myself. However, I do believe in the transforming power of writing and believe that it might just be the right intervention for myself to become more true to myself and find a balance.

**Choosing an intervention strategy**

Even though, I have three different options for intervention strategies they became difficult to implement. I proposed the two first options to my boss several times and was willing to modify them in order to accommodate the main mission that we have, which is to make as many asylum decisions as possible.

My boss was interested in the second option of inviting a psychologist in order for my colleagues and I to have a space to ventilate and discuss how the cases affected us as case workers. He agreed that this is an important point. He has a background working as a police officer and made the comparison to his previous work, commenting that working with traumatized people does affect the employee. Even though this was brought up time and again under a period of one year, this never came to be realized, as the time pressure to produce more decisions than we managed to already was always present.

The simple activity of active listening in the mornings was not possible as my boss and team leaders did not feel that the morning meetings could be extended by ten minutes. In addition, my colleagues were not open for the activity. My understanding of why it was not regarded as a helpful tool is the lack of trust that was present within the group.
For me personally, it has also been difficult to bring up how I feel about the cases and how they affect me personally. Since, I have never felt the support from the management team or my colleagues. When I have not felt the support and willingness to share, I have also kept my feelings to myself. I do not know what comes up if I were to share. Therefore, I have shared with my family when I have had the need to express my feelings. However, the main strategy used during my 17 months at the Migration Agency, was to spend more and more energy to suppress my feelings with regards to my work in order to be able continue to perform at the necessary level.

This brings me to the third intervention strategy. The longer I have worked the more I have started to shut down my feelings in regard to the people I meet, the asylum seekers and my colleagues. I have even distanced myself from me in the sense that I have stopped meditating, which for me had been a form of practicing the internal observer. It has become too uncomfortable for me to try to keep in touch with myself as the feelings in from my work have then been very strong and made me angry, frustrated and tremendously sad.

By taking the opportunity to write this thesis about my inner conflict and the experience of working as an asylum case officer at the Migration Agency I have become aware of so many layers and levels of the conflict I was not aware of before. It gave me the frame and time to go deep into the conflict and analyze it using the tools I learnt in Innsbruck, such as ECM and ECW. It gave me the time to attentively listen to myself and my feelings and where I had been hurt. By listening I felt that my voice was heard and I felt the feeling of redress and healing of the wounds I had received during my time at the Migration Agency. The process of writing was painful but healing.
The more I wrote, the more I really listened, the more I heard the calling for the same action.

**Making a decision**
The further I delve into this perception into my thesis writing the clearer the picture became on what I had to do. The longer I worked at the Migration Agency the more I felt forced to become distant and objective, but most of all apathetic to the plight of the asylum seekers, and reducing me to just producing decisions not seeing the persons behind the file, applying a law that I cannot support.

Since the proposal of my first two intervention strategies have not been fruitful I have tried the third intervention strategy. I have, over the 17 months I have worked, maybe more unconsciously than consciously, more or less tried to follow the methods that have been encouraged by switching off and become as detached as possible. Nevertheless, I believe that this strategy has been part of why I am feeling that working as a case worker has become more and more conflictive for me.

Using the intervention strategy of writing my thesis as a way of transforming my conflict I feel I am becoming more and more true to myself and starting to find balance in who I am and what I stand for and what I cannot stand for or accept.

Having written this thesis, the ECM and analyzing all the maps I have to listen to myself and to what I have found in my maps. Therefore, I do not feel that I am able to conduct my work in the way that is expected from me. I feel that if I continue to do so I will lose myself entirely. Having become explicitly aware of this throughout this thesis project I can no longer look away from that.
When I am actively listening to myself and hear what I have been saying throughout this thesis I have to be honest and true to myself. I have to dare to become aware of myself and who I am and who I want to be, so I can find balance and be congruent in my communication. This is not only important for me but also for the persons I am supposed to work with as well as to my employer and my colleagues.

After months of working with the thesis, having had the time to reflect, I have found that I have to quit my job, come back to myself, and find another way to work with refugees from an approach where I can be myself and fully stand behind the work I am supposed to do. Finding a job, which does not conflict with my ideals, the work I want to do and thoughts of myself.

**Taking responsibility**
As I have come to the decision that I have to end my job as a case officer at the Swedish Migration Agency, I feel relieved but also have some feelings of fear and shame. I feel relieved that I will no longer have to feel that what I am doing for a living is something that I am not in agreement with and can stand behind it with pride and respect. Relieved that I will no longer be afraid of saying what I feel deep inside about the new asylum politics that Sweden are promoting and that I will no longer be a part of upholding that system.

I also feel fear for what I should do next and what is in front of me in the now and the unknown future. There is also a fear of how I am going to be able to pay my bills and will I be able to get a new job or will I become unemployed. In the possibility lies the feeling of shame. I have grown up in the understanding that you have to have a job and be able to support yourself and you should not
only quit a job because you do not like it. Having the feeling that if I do not have a job I am worthless and a looser.

Even though, these are strong feelings, and the fear feels very real for me, the feeling of relief and pride of having made the decision to quit, outweigh the fear and shame. I feel that this is what I had to do. I feel that it means so much more for me to be true to myself and my ideals and who I want to be that I just have to trust that I am now opening up for something much better to come.

**Standing up for myself – Raising my voice**
Having made the decision for myself, it was time to let my boss know. I was nervous but also excited. I wrote my resignation on the piece of paper that would end my contract. I printed it out and I felt how my hands got sweaty and shaky. I felt I got red in my face as I approached my boss. I asked him for a short meeting and he said we could have it right away. My stomach turned. We went into a small room and sat down. He asked me what he could help me with. I looked at him and told him that I wanted to end my contract.

He looked at me and seemed a bit shocked. He asked me if I had gotten another job offer. I told him; no. He asked me why I wanted to resign then and end my contract. I told him; I feel that I am not supporting the new laws, which makes it difficult for me to implement them. I do not want to continue work as a case officer as I do no longer believe in the laws that we have to apply. He looked at me even more shocked. It took some time and then he said that he understood my decision and thought it was a courageous thing to do and that he respected me for my decision.

We talked a bit more and I had the opportunity to express my concerns about the way we conduct our work and the pressures involves with focusing on
only completing decisions as fast as possible affect me and the asylum seekers. I worry for the quality of work we are doing and the real consequences it has on the asylum seekers' lives and their families. He listened and said he heard my concerns.

Even though my boss was not able to express his personal opinion, I felt that he had heard me, maybe for the first time. I had raised these feelings and concerns before, but never so clearly and in such a direct manner. I felt that I finally could express all that I had kept inside for such a long period of time. It was an empowering feeling. At the same time, it also meant that I have told him that I was no longer suitable for the work as a case officer, as I could no longer uphold the system I did not believe in.

**Unexpected transformation**

After it became public at work that I had quit my job and the reason why, many things changed. Many of my colleagues came to me in private and told me that they understood me and that they wished they could do the same, as they also felt uncomfortable at work. Some of them told me that they were equally uncomfortable applying the new law, since they also did not support and believe it was the right way to manage the high number of people seeking asylum. Temporary permits were not the answer.

My colleagues that were uncomfortable with the new law expressed that their biggest concern was the stricter laws would make it impossible for family unification. Many expressed the fear that it is not so easy to determine between refugee protection and subsidiary protection and that this has such an impact on the person which are giving the decisions, if s/he can bring his/her family or not.
Many felt that they were uncomfortable that they had to apply the stricter law making it so hard for people to bring their families.

It felt like my decision to quit due to not agreeing with the new law gave others the opportunity to share with me what they felt about the new law. I realized how many of my colleagues have been struggling with similar feelings as me, just that none of us felt free enough to talk about it with each other previously.

People told me that my decision inspired them and that they were now also looking for other job opportunities. Important to point out is that it was not only the new law that my colleagues expressed as the problem when working for the Migration Agency. They also experienced a lack of support in the workplace. Both dealing mentally with all the stories, but also the constant time pressure of not producing enough or having adequate time to thoroughly work on cases and make informed decisions based on in depth investigations. They had similar feelings to me, that the time pressure created the feeling of working in a factory producing goods and not making decisions that had an immense impact people’s lives.

In addition to my closest colleagues, the more senior colleagues in the other departments, that I had been working with during the chaotic period of reception of the many people that came in 2015, came to me and told me how proud they were of me taking this decision. It strengthens me in the feeling of having taken the right decision for myself. They did understand how difficult it had been for me and also understood that the pressure was problematic and that the new laws made it even more demanding for us as asylum case officers.
Also senior managers came to me and said that I should be proud of having the courage to stand up for what I believe in. They wished me all the best and wanted to be my reference for any upcoming work. Having all these people approach me and wanting to express their own concerns about the new situation inspired me and that they felt inspired by me was humbling.

I felt that I could finally breath again and I started to regain myself and my voice. Even though, I had to continue to work for another two months before I could end my contract and leave, I felt it was a good time. I felt that I was able to speak up and speak my truth about the situation both concerning the work environment but also about how the new law affected me during my time as a case officer. During this time, I also had the chance to reflect and integrate what I had experienced during my 17 months as an asylum case officer at the Migration Agency even more. The last day at work, I had never before felt so sure, so determined and satisfied that I took such a decision.

Even though, quitting my job was not meant as an intervention strategy per se I believe that for me this was the best intervention I could do, for myself but also for those around me because of how it affected and inspired them. I do not however believe that this decision could have the far reaching transformation needed for the entire asylum procedure of the Swedish asylum politics.

Even though, I know for sure it has affected and made the people working with it at my office to think and reflect about it in a different way than before. I feel that my decision made my colleagues to see that there are also other options. It made people reflect over their own role in the system.
Some may have agreed with me, while others though I was just crazy, but at least they thought about it. Maybe the first day I was not there anymore they forgot all about it, but for the period I was there it was a topic that was discussed and brought out into the light. I also do believe that it also got the management to think about how the work actually affect the staff and I hope that they take that serious and hopefully take another look at the possibility to work with the staff on how to handle all the stories of the asylum seekers and maintain their own personal balance and well-being.

At least, I feel that this was what I could do to transform my own conflict. In order to transform myself and wanting to stay more aware, finding balance and having the possibility to be congruent in my communication with the world. I am feeling so happy.
Chapter 5 Concluding my thoughts, wishes and dreams – answering the questions

Coming to the conclusion of the thesis I start to understand that it was inescapable for me to not do an ECM of my situation working at the Swedish Migration Agency. Having been trained and drilled to become a ECW at the Ma program in Innsbruck it would not have been possible to not search for the deeper meaning and locate answers to the frustration and conflict I felt in my working role as a case officer. This thesis has given me the possibility to do this in an in-depth manner.

The possibility of using my work situation as the case of my thesis and being able to analyze it by using the ECM have been very helpful for me both privately and professionally.

How can the ECM be a helpful tool for me in my work as an asylum case officer at the Swedish Migration Agency?

Using the ECM have helped me to gain important understanding of the conflict I have been having in regard to my work. I believe that the ECM helped me to untangle the complicated relationship I had towards my work and the feelings and emotions that it brought me. The dominating feeling of frustration, anger, fear and shame became clear to me, even before I started doing the mapping. However, going through the different steps of the method I understood more of what was behind those feelings and why I got out of balance and got burned out.

Realizing that my fear and feeling of suffocation came from the fear of seeing a society treating people in the way we do, brought me the fear that I could be treated in a similar way. Also realizing that my own searching for home and belonging and the importance of being close to my own family brought me
into resonance with the asylum seekers and their fates made it somehow personal to me.

In combination with my fear of being treated the way I feel we are treating the people that are coming here, I am also sympathetic to them not having the possibility to bring their families over. Understanding how important my own family is for my own wellbeing, and myself, I do not want to be part of a system, which denies this to others. As I have argued previously in this paper I do understand the world from a more energetic way that when we are treating others in a harmful way we are also treating ourselves in the same way, since we are all one.

The ECM methods have really been a helpful tool in order to untangle my own story with the people I am supposed to work for at my work. I have understood that when I am resonating with their stories I need to be clear of what is mine and what is theirs. It is important for me to understand what is motivating me to do this work and why it touches me so deeply.

To find out that I have such a deep fear of not belonging to a society and to not be accepted both physically and mentally are so real to me, to understand this was for me important. Even though my existence in the Swedish society have never been questioned by the state, did not make this feeling any smaller. To see the way, we are threating people that do not belong to the Swedish society brought my own fear to the surface. To become aware of this was an important step for me in order to understand what might have brought me into this work. It brought me awareness of what brought me into the work of the Migration Agency.
Seeing the fuller picture of my conflict with the asylum politics of Sweden for what it is, made me take the first steps to accept what is, instead of fighting the facts. When having accepted what is, I also have a better possibility to start to work of transforming it.

Seeing the fuller picture of the conflict I also realize what could be possible intervention strategies in the system I was in. I decided to take the steps that was necessary for me after having seen the fuller picture of what had brought me such frustration, fear, shame and anger and even burn outs.

The decision I made to quit my job did not come out of the feeling of wanting to give up easily. It grew out of the willingness to transform and influence the asylum politics in Sweden into more generous ones. I tried and worked hard to do so for the 17 months I was working for the Migration Agency. However, after mapping and analyzing the maps I also realized the limitations of working inside the prescriptive system and the importance to stay true to myself and my beliefs.

**How possible is it to work as an ECW being an asylum case officer at the Swedish Migration Agency?**

From the training I received at the Ma program in Innsbruck I have become convinced that I do want to work as an ECW. I want to be aware of myself which helps me to stay balanced and allowing me to communicate congruent. I want to take all the aspects of the different peace families into consideration when I look at the world. I am convinced that the proposed way of working with conflicts that have been developed by Lederach and Dietrich is the way I want to work and believe in, an elicitive way and not prescriptive. I have realized the
importance of taking care of myself in order to being able to be present and authentic with the people, both privately and professionally.

Being an asylum case officer during the time that Sweden dramatically, and rapidly, changed its previous generous asylum system into stricter asylum laws did put my questions about my own role as a case officer on the edge. After doing the mappings it became evident too me that I cannot continue to do work aiming to create a society I do not wish for. I would not be able to stay aware of myself and being balanced, privately nor professionally.

Since the asylum system in Sweden am inherently a prescriptive system, where it is believed to be possible to define people into fixed terms, the possibilities to work as an ECW seems far. As I understand the system from a prescriptive approach, I have been working of being the solution to the asylum seekers issues.

They are coming to the system asking for help. We will provide them a juridical term to, defining them as refugees, in order to ‘fix’ their problem. Before being given the juridical term the asylum seeker has to fit into the term itself otherwise s/he will be deported and not considered to have any problems that need to be ‘fixed’ by Sweden providing protection.

Being a case officer upholding this system it is also expected from me to be objective and apply the law accordingly. There is no room or understanding of the importance to work together with the asylum seeker in order deal with the situation differently. In addition, the case officer is expected not relate to the asylum seeker and his/her stories or having an awareness to work with how that influence the case officer having heard their stories. Neither is there any
understanding or awareness of what the forced sharing of one's story of traumatic events do to the asylum seeker him /herself.

The lack of awareness and willingness to recognize these concerns made me feel tremendously disappointed with my employer and the system as a whole. Also the total lack of wanting to understand the consequences of the decisions that are being made on other people’s life’s. For me it became clearer and clearer that working as a case officer did not allow me the space I needed in order to be an ECW to the full extent I want to be.

I even felt that trying to be as aware of myself as I could, authentic in the meetings with the asylum seekers during my interviews with them, made my ability of doing a good job, in the eyes of my employer, more difficult. The conflict of wanting to do a good job in the way it was expected from me, objectively and distant and wanting to be an ECW being present, authentic, aware and balanced seeing the person in front of me as another human being with a full life around him/her became almost impossible. Being torn between the two ways of working threw me out of balance repeatedly, and eventually I burned out.

I was trying to do more than my work expected from me and at the same time taking decisions and making interviews at the same pace as my colleagues. This made my working situation not sustainable. It was difficult for me not to care for the people that I met and the cases that were on my desk, feeling that their destinies were in my hands. Feeling this and not having any type of professional guidance of how to handle all those emotions was another reason to my rapid burn out, not being able to express myself and in turn feel heard and recognized.
In addition, being part of the historic changing into stricter asylum laws added onto this stress. Finding myself in a system of applying laws that I no longer felt I could support and not even being able to express my feelings in regards to the new law made me feel that I was losing what I believed in and who I believed I was. This made it even harder for me to stay aware of myself since I felt that each day at work I was diminishing who I was by upholding something I strongly disbeliefed in.

Having the feeling that the work I was doing on a daily basis was actually working against the world and society I believed in and wanted to fight for. I believe that having that feeling automatically creates blockages in me, which pushes me out of balance.

Answering the question if it is possible to work as an ECW being an asylum case officer for the Swedish Migration Agency I would say; no. To a certain degree it was possible to use some of the training that I had received but for me it created an even more conflictive situation in my life.

I do believe that I was able to influence the system to a certain degree by challenging some of the otherwise unquestioned ways of dealing with the asylum seekers. I know that the people I meet in my role as an asylum case officer I treated with dignity and respect. Making my greatest effort to creating a safe space as possible for them to share their stories and trying my most to make sure that there were no additional reasons that they did not tell me what could help them in their application for asylum.

Even though, I do know that having left my work as an asylum case officer gave me a broader spectrum and freedom to work as an ECW. I am now free to
finally speak my mind again in regard to what society I do want to live in and how I want it to treat other human beings that are coming here.

I am now free to work with something that I do believe in and can stand behind fully. Already, with this new won freedom I feel that I am finding more balance, as I am becoming more true to myself, for each day that is passing.

Writing this thesis have made me aware again of what I believe in and who I want to be and how I wish for our society to treat others. I am feeling that by using the ECM on my own conflict of wanting to be an ECW and a case officer, brought me back to myself again. I feel that this thesis has helped me to heal the wounds that I acquired, hurting myself by doing something that I felt was harmful to others and hurtful to me. I have learnt to accept the system that is now in place, but I have also gained valuable information on how the system works which will help me to influence and transform it, this time not restricted by the limitations of working within the system.

Being able to raise my voice and write this thesis and being honest with myself has helped me to accept what I have done and what made me do it. I feel that this thesis has given me the space I needed in order to accept the fact that I was working for the Migration Agency. I did work with the system and upheld the asylum law and I did write negative decisions. I did sign my name on to decisions resulting in some not being able to bring their families to Sweden. I accept that and I forgive myself. I am now dealing with the consequences and my responsibility by leaving that job.

I am now free to find a new way to express myself about the issues I find with the asylum system and laws. I am now in search of ways that I will have the freedom within the frame of a job, where I can be an ECW. I promise myself to
not let a job make me feel that I am loosing who I am again. I will stay true to myself and find balance.
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