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Gender, Country and Community: Exploring Safety, Trust and Empowerment Among Immigrant Survivors of Torture.

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GENDER, COUNTRY AND COMMUNITY

AMONG IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS OF TORTURE:

EXPLORING SAFETY, TRUST AND EMPOWERMENT

A Dissertation

Presented in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirement for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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part of my life has been part of this process all along.

VITA

The author is a long time activist and feminist who has used the international human rights framework to advocate on international and domestic issues for over 20 years. She received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1979; a Master of Science degree in Communications from Northwestern University in 1993; and a Certificate in International Human Rights from the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France in 1996. She received a research award for this study from the Society for Community Research and Action in 2006. In addition, she received an award from the College of Science and Health at DePaul University in 2010.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to explore how immigrant survivors of torture experience a

psychological sense of community. The community life experienced by survivors of torture in

their countries of origin and in the United States is examined. In particular, this study seeks to

understand how safety, trust and empowerment interact with community life similarly and

differently for the men and women survivors who were interviewed for this study.

This study thus begins with a review of these terms. The definition of torture is provided,

and how it is understood to interact with safety, trust and empowerment. The understandings of

psychological sense of community that have largely been shared through community psychology

journals are also examined. The issues of safety, trust and empowerment and their interaction

with psychological sense of community are described. Although the review of literature

conducted in preparation for this study revealed little information about gender differences in

these experiences, some foundational material is provided. The understanding of these concepts

within the academic literature has guided what questions were asked of participants, how the

data were examined, and in what ways the findings complement, conflict with and add to current

understanding of community life.

The research questions for this dissertation first explore in what communities participants

experience a psychological sense of community. Consistent with phenomenological theory, the

data were explored to understand the lived experience of the participants (Starks & Trinidad,

2007). This exploration helped determine, within the phenomena of survivors' descriptions of a

psychological sense of community, what contributes to the issues of safety, trust and

empowerment in community relationships. Coding schemes helped clarify relationships among

the elements to explain how a psychological sense of community was experienced. Gender differences are also explored.

The data upon which this qualitative study relies were collected in 2007 and 2008 for a research program that to date has included the author's master's thesis (Bothne, 2010) and now the present study. The Marjorie Kovler Center for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture, an affiliate of the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights, and the Torture Abolition Survivors Support Coalition, International (TASSC) assisted in conducting outreach to torture survivors in Chicago and Washington, D.C. Fifteen immigrant survivors of torture were interviewed; in addition, one family member of a survivor was also interviewed. At the request of a survivor-led community organization with whom the researcher collaborated, the study was cross cultural and included people from eleven countries. As was the case with the thesis, an advisory body was constituted to help develop the themes and understanding of the data throughout the dissertation process.

This study may contribute to how those who work with torture survivors may develop strategies to facilitate survivors' healing within community life. The ways in which community life was experienced before participants were tortured may also help understand the foundation of community life experienced before their torture, exile and subsequent path to recovery. Differences in how men and women experience community life may help understand how subcommunities may form, and together build larger communities. Finally, the study may aid in further understanding how safety, trust and empowerment contribute to a psychological sense of community. This next section provides a basic review of the issues that this dissertation explores. The concepts of torture and a psychological sense of community have multiple facets. This study is particularly concerned with the concepts of safety, trust and empowerment and how they

interact with and impact a psychological sense of community.   This study also examines how men and women who are survivors of torture may experience community life differently. Because this study examines community life in the participants' countries of origin and the United States, the issue of location and its contribution to a psychological sense of community is also explored. The review of all these concepts provides the foundation for the research questions that this dissertation examines.

In all ways in which we understand it to affect people, torture is used to destroy the human spirit. Torture has been used as a weapon to remove individuals from community life, and to dismantle their relationships with communities. Its impact is felt beyond the individual, and affects the family, community and society (Fabri & Portillo-Bartow, 2006; Gonsalves et al., 1993). Perpetrators of torture intend to dismantle social and political structures of community life in order to maintain their power (Gonsalves et al., 1993). Rebuilding relationships with others and reestablishing a sense of community are thus important components of many torture treatment practices (Larson, 1997). Exploring how a psychological sense of community is experienced among people who have survived torture may further add to understanding what compels people to live in communities. This study may help explicate the psychological benefits and challenges that survivors of torture experience in developing relationships with communities.

This dissertation explores elements of a psychological sense of community as experienced and understood by immigrant survivors of torture. The commonly relied on framework developed by McMillan & Chavis (1986) identifies the contributions and interaction of four components as essential to understanding a psychological sense of community. A community must establish who its members are (and are not); facilitate the exchange of influence with and among its members; fulfill a range of emotional and/or physical needs of and for one

another; and establish emotional connections among its members. Other forces may affect how people experience a psychological sense of community, however. A psychological sense of community may be experienced because of a person's sense of responsibility to the common good rather than in response to individual need (Nowell & Boyd, 2010). The salience of social identity may affect an individual's psychological sense of community (Obst & White, 2005). Also linked to psychological sense of community are opportunities for individual and community empowerment (Peterson & Reid, 2003); the experience of extended family (Brodsky, 2009); and likelihood to participate in politics (Davidson & Cotter, 1989). The view of this construct developed by McMillan and Chavis (1986) by itself arguably fails to accommodate the diversity of subgroups within a community and the complexity of what community means in a particular time and place (Wiesenfeld, 1996).

This study explores elements of a psychological sense of community that add to McMillan & Chavis' (1986) relied upon conceptualization and that may be experienced among immigrant survivors of torture. Of particular interest are the issues of safety, trust and empowerment within the bonds of psychological sense of community. These themes arose during informal discussion with survivor groups prior to the launch of the collection of data for an earlier study (Bothne, 2010).   The ability to feel safe, to trust and to become empowered is also important in recovery from torture (Fabri, 2001; Fabri & Portillo Bartow, 2006).

<div align="center">Torture</div>

This study relies on the definition of torture included in the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment (1987). Torture is intentional violence directed against a person by perpetrators acting under color of law in an official capacity. The perpetrator must have one or more of a number of purposes: to punish or coerce,

to intimidate, to elicit information or a confession, or to discriminate for any reason. The acts of torture range from witnessing acts of torture (sometimes as imposed upon strangers, more frighteningly on family members) to deprivation (of water, sleep, medical care) to physical assaults (Hooberman, Rosenfeld, Lhewa, Rasmussen, & Keller, 2007).   For the purposes of this study, a torture survivor must have experienced a particularly cruel form of psychological or physical injury by a perpetrator who acts intentionally under color of law. This definition limits the participants to those who have experienced state-sponsored injury. It also limits the study to those whose injury is not that which happens from the explosion of a random grenade or landmine; the harm must be intentional and it must be particularly injurious.

According to the Center for Victims of Torture (2005), there are an estimated 500,000 immigrants living in the United States who have experienced torture as defined above. Of those, 17,000 survivors of torture live in the Chicago area, according to a very rough estimate by the Marjorie Kovler Center for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture (A. Spevacek, personal communication, 2006).

Torture Undermines Safety and Security

Torture fundamentally erodes security of both body and mind, at individual, community and country levels. Torture and the fear it generates is used to control communities just as it has been used to control individuals (Green, 1994). In Guatemala, as an example, the Guatemalan army targeted particular communities as the focus of their terror tactics. Not all individuals within the community were tortured. The army's tactics were both arbitrary and systematic, intended to silence the community by torturing select individuals seemingly chosen at random. A silent community is unable to acknowledge the massive human rights violations taking place. Those who were tortured had no voice. The community was unable to recognize the trauma

being experienced. This dismantling of the survivor's relationship with the community fulfilled the government's goals to suppress speech (Ehrenreich, 2003; Green, 1994) and to strike fear into the entire community (Green, 1994). Torture destabilized and made insecure the community by shattering relationships, promoting terror, and physically and psychologically assaulting people.

Torture Inhibits Trust

The communities which torture survivors may have trusted to protest their torture often fail to do so. Communities also have the capacity to multiply the harmful effects of torture (Anckerman, Dominguez, Soto, Kiaerulf, Berliner, & Mikkelsen, 2005), further eroding what trust may be built between vulnerable individuals and communities. In some communities, for example, death is associated with solitude. Torture moves people into places of solitude and the community may view tortured people as the living dead (Peddle, Moteiro, Guluma, & Macaulay, 1999). Community members may avoid those who have experienced torture for fear of endangering themselves by association. Survivors of torture thus are driven even further from the comfort that a community might offer. Trying to rebuild even the possibility that a sense of community could be developed following these kinds of deliberate strategies to undermine trust poses challenges not only for survivors but also for countries as a whole. Recovering the ability to trust is a necessary early step in recovery from torture (Fabri, 2001).

Torture is Disempowering

Torture is designed to destroy the relationship of the target of torture with all others. It breaks down the connection between individuals and their social environments (Center for Victims of Torture, 2005). Torture is inherently disempowering; perpetrators of torture isolate the reality of the victim into one the torturer controls. Torture usually occurs out of sight from

the observation of others, in basement chambers or hidden cells. Individuals who have experienced torture may bear lifelong physical and psychological scars, reminders of their disempowerment. Communities are also scarred; perpetrators of torture intentionally try to dismantle social and political structures of community life in order to maintain their power (Gonsalves et al., 1993). As was the case in Guatemala, the army used torture to control the community, to inhibit organized political dissent and collective action (Green, 1994). Torture is so systemic in its disempowering impact that some liberation psychologists call for understanding torture as a "disturbance of society" rather than the experience of an individual (Ray, 2008).

Torture, Women and Men

There is greater recognition that torture and sexual assault of women are increasingly being used as strategies of war and armed conflict (UN, 2006). Men suffer from sexual torture (Oosterhoff, Zwanikken, & Ketting, 2004), yet women's sexual torture is exacerbated by the cultural and religious regulations that condemn any sexual practice by women outside of marriage, however violent or resisted the sexual attacks are (McKay, 2000). Young women and girls in Rwanda who were raped during the genocide found themselves without a social status. No longer considered virgin girls, the raped young women were also not yet married women (Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008). Rwandan social roles for young women offered no other choices, and their undefined social status kept them from being socially accepted.

The devaluing of women and celebration of male power within the military, government and community also reinforce the degradation and oppression experienced by women (Farr, 2009). Reconstructing relationships with communities that may continue to reinforce a

patriarchy which has continually devalued them may be particularly challenging for women survivors of torture.

<div align="center">Psychological Sense of Community</div>

Because communities are complex entities, their psychological meaning can be difficult to determine. If motivation, attitudes and personality explain individuals' behavior, as asked by community psychologist Seymour Sarason (1974), what explains *community* behavior? A community may be more than the aggregation of its individual members, as suggested by Hawe, Shiell & Riley (2009) in their study of community empowerment. Rather, a community exists over time, may be composed of individuals and subgroups (Wiesenfeld, 1996) and may include a variety of motivations for its existence (Sonn & Fisher, 1996). How might those whose torture severed relationships with others in the community seek to renew community lives? Their experiences may elucidate the complexity of recovery of communities.

The psychological experiences of safety, trust and empowerment have particular salience for survivors of torture. McMillan and Chavis (1986) believe that trust and safety are outcomes of understanding the boundaries of a community's membership. Members can experience emotional safety within the security of the boundaries from which their common identification derives. McMillan (1996) also describes the exercise of mutual influence within the community as a form of power upon which community members are able to rely, to trust. Torture survivors, however, are extremely sensitive about the ways in which power shapes emotional safety and trust in their relationships with others (Fabri, 2001). Fabri identifies these psychological mechanisms as having an impact upon a therapeutic relationship for which a therapist must devise distinctly nontraditional therapeutic strategies. These sensitivities to power, safety and

trust may also be highly salient as survivors of torture seek to understand and form relationships with communities.

Safety as an Element of Psychological Sense of Community

Incorporated within the term safety is the concept of security, of feeling accepted and that one belongs (Maslow, 1942). Also included within Maslow's idea of human security is the perception that the world is good, free of threats and conflict. McMillan & Chavis (1986) believe that communities provide emotional safety as an outcome of established membership boundaries, within which members feel that they belong to the community. Torture survivors may experience more challenges to experiencing safety within a psychological sense of community, however. Survivors may relate their physical safety to their emotional safety within community life. Survivors have reason to feel insecure, because the worst has happened; their physical and emotional safety was completely damaged and their worldview changed.

The relationship of safety to a psychological sense of community is not clearly defined. Several studies have determined that communities can have a psychological sense of community despite challenges to neighborhood safety (Cantillon, Davidson, & Schweitzer, 2003; Wilson-Doenges, 2000). A lack of safety can contribute to a negative sense of community in a neighborhood, however, as was experienced among women in a low income, crime-ridden neighborhood in Baltimore (Brodsky, 1996). The experience of multiple psychological senses of community may contribute to the emotional safety that can be experienced within communities. Wiesenfeld (1996) argues that microbelonging, participating in a broad, diverse community with relative safety by also belonging to a subcommunity within it, is a component of psychological sense of community that has been ignored.

Trust as an Element of Psychological Sense of Community

Ten years after the publication of the McMillan and Chavis (1986) article on psychological sense of community, McMillan (1996) addressed how trust is essential for a member of a community to reliably count on the community's authority structure, leadership, and symbols. A community member will cede power if there is the trust in those to whom the power is ceded. According to McMillan, it is through trust that mutual influence is facilitated. There may be more ways in which trust facilitates a psychological sense of community, however.

Trust may be the contribution to the finding that relationship-based communities have stronger bonds (Berliner, Dominguez, Kjaerulf, & Mikkelsen, 2006) than those based on geography (Obst & White, 2007). As has been true for wheelchair-bound rugby players (Goodwin & Johnston, 2009), immigrant Latinas in the U.S. (Bathum & Baumann, 2007), "colored" immigrants to Australia (Sonn & Fisher, 1996) and poor Chileans living in a settlement (Turro & Krause, 2009), the shared social identity created by oppressive ecological forces may reinforce the psychological sense of community experienced among the community's members.

Social identity created through group membership may signal to those within the group the idea of one's trustworthiness (Tanis & Postmes, 2005). Just as perceived differences in social identity may drive distrust (Tropp, Stout, Boatswain, Wright, & Pettigrew, 2006), perceived similarities may contribute to the development of trust. The trust that results from perceived similarities can be true even among heterogeneous groups. Trust can be established within a heterogeneous group (such as an interracial group) depending upon the way in which the heterogeneity is understood and enacted (Rudolph & Popp, 2010). Immigrant survivors of torture are from many different countries; their social identity as survivors, immigrants and/or human rights activists may be the basis from which their social identity is shared. Understanding

that basis may facilitate understanding of how trust can be developed and a positive psychological sense of community established.

<u>Empowerment as an Element of Psychological Sense of Community</u>

Communities may be motivated to form in reaction to the injustice of oppression (Fisher & Sonn, 2002; Long & Perkins, 2007). Fisher & Sonn (2002) describe how the ability to share and make sense of a common history forms bonds among community members. The psychological sense of community experienced by its members may vary in intensity depending upon how each member internalizes those bonds (Sarason, 1974). Likewise, the ways in which a community develops resistance to injustice and oppression may shape how an individual experiences a psychological sense of community, as was the case with members of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) (Brodsky, 2009). Brodsky examined how RAWA offered a positive psychological sense of community to women who lived in a culture where communal life with the family was essential, and where women had very restricted roles. RAWA worked to advance the rights of women, and did so in a way that relied upon inclusion of family members, consistent with Afghan culture. Likewise, men are also a part of RAWA, offering support and assistance to ensure members' ongoing security.

A strong sense of community contributes to political empowerment (Anderson, 2010). For immigrant survivors of torture in the U.S., understanding the oppression that results from torture facilitates bonds among members included in the communities found in a torture treatment center, Heartland Alliance's Marjorie Kovler Center, and the non-governmental organization Torture Abolition Survivors Support Coalition (TASSC), International (Bothne, 2010). Survivors come together through TASSC, in part, to challenge the practice of torture, to engage in political advocacy that condemns torture throughout the world (TASSC, 2006).

Women, Men and Sense of Community

Of particular concern for women who wish to participate in community life is the issue of safety (Calazza, 2005). Calazza's study identified women's perception that they are more vulnerable than men to crime as a specific barrier that prevents women's active participation in some community events. Community psychology literature has not thoroughly considered the ways in which gender may affect a psychological sense of community. Nonetheless, several studies have examined community experiences among men or women only (Brodsky, 1996; Brodsky, 2009; Reddin & Sonn, 2003).

In studies of low income women (Brodsky, 1996) and women from Afghanistan (Brodsky, 2009), the experience of a psychological sense of community was related to participants' identities as women. Low income mothers in Baltimore experienced a negative psychological sense of community, according to Brodsky's 1996 study. The mothers rejected the creation of psychological bonds with their neighborhood as a way of protecting themselves and their children. The neighborhood, explained the study's participants, failed to offer positive values and safety. In order to properly mother their children (a gendered role), these participants had to reject ties to the community in which they lived, went to school, and worked.

Brodsky's 2009 study of Afghan women identified many psychological bonds within the community of RAWA based on women's identity within the larger culture. The psychological sense of community with the country at large was rejected by women who defied the cultural expectations of women's roles. RAWA, on the other hand, offered a positive sense of community for women and their male supporters. The positive sense of community found among RAWA members was reliant upon collectivist and collaborative organizational processes that advanced human rights for all women in Afghanistan.

Reddin and Fisher (2003) studied how the creation of new expressions of masculinity in men's support groups facilitated a positive psychological sense of community. The men were constructing new social identities, rejecting the more macho manifestation of masculinity embedded in Australian culture. Within the men's support groups, they created a psychological sense of community through opportunities to enact new ways of expressing masculinity (e.g. hugging, sharing feelings).

Women and men are likely to experience torture in different ways (Hooberman et al, 2007). A psychological sense of community can be experienced in multiple ways even within the same community context (Brodsky & Marx, 2001), which may offer a useful way to examine how women and men may have experienced a psychological sense of community differently.

Country of Origin vs. United States of America

Although this study is not seeking to compare how a psychological sense of community is experienced within multiple countries, the locations of participants' community life may be relevant. Long and Perkins (2007), for example, identified place attachment as a significant predictor of a sense of community. Place attachment was experienced differently, however, based on race and depending upon the resources available to residents in a particular community. Their study suggests that understanding social climate of a geographic community may contribute to better understanding of a psychological sense of community.

<div align="center">Rationale</div>

Most studies of psychological sense of community rely on McMillan & Chavis' 1986 conceptual framework that includes establishment of membership boundaries, exercise of mutual influence, fulfillment of needs and community members' emotional commitment to each other. Those who have survived torture, however, have had experiences that undermine their capacity

to fully engage with communities. In very specific and long lasting ways, torture undermines physical, emotional, psychological and even cultural safety for individuals and communities. Lack of safety inhibits the ability to experience trust. Efforts to bond with others and to develop empowerment strategies to fight their shared oppression have been met with torture. Individuals and communities targeted for torture lose the power to resist; they become victims of torture. An ecological examination can uncover how safety, trust and empowerment facilitate or inhibit a psychological sense of community. Particularly in unstable countries, this examination may help understand the society-wide psychological impact.

This study also explores how a psychological sense of community may be similar to and different as experienced by women and men, and within countries of origin and the United States. Sensitivity to issues of gender are important; the sexual torture of women may be particularly exacerbated by cultural regulation of women's sexual identities, for example (CVT, 2005). The ways in which gender may affect psychological sense of community is little researched, and there are no studies that examine a psychological sense of community among survivors of torture. Participants in this study are likely to have social identities and relationships with communities that are very distinct in their countries of origin from those experienced in the U.S. The contrasts of experiences may offer a deeper understanding of the psychological sense of community.

This qualitative study will not seek to establish a determinative link between torture and psychological sense of community. Rather, the complexities of community life as experienced by torture survivors will be explored to understand how a psychological sense of community may be reconstructed when there have been challenges to it.

<u>Dissertation Questions</u>

I. With what communities do survivors of torture report relationships?

    a. How is the experience of being part of a community distinct for men and women?

    b. How is the experience of being part of a community distinct by location (country of origin vs. United States)?

II. What is the impact of trust, safety and empowerment on how community life is experienced by immigrant survivors of torture?

    a. How are the experiences of safety, trust and empowerment in community life distinct for men and women?

    b. How are the experiences of safety, trust and empowerment in community distinct by location (country of origin vs. United States)?

CHAPTER II

METHOD

This chapter describes the method used to collect and prepare the data for this study. The scientific philosophy of constructivism-interpretivism is described to lay a foundation for the subsequent decisions about the way this study was conducted. The detail on how the interview guide, recruitment of participants, and credible ties with communities important to survivors of torture were developed is also included.

This study is a qualitative exploration of the ways in which immigrant survivors of torture experience a psychological sense of community. Qualitative study methods facilitate understanding the context within which a phenomenon is experienced and may be particularly valuable for populations who have been marginalized and disempowered (Tischler, 2009). Torture may have had a significant impact on the way in which survivors understand their relationships with others, in communities. Qualitative methods thus allow exploration of the phenomena of the *sense* of community experienced by those whose relationships with their home communities have been deliberately destroyed. Such conditions are ripe for a qualitative research study (Patton, 2002).

The data for this study were collected in 2007 and 2008, for a research initiative that to date has included the author's master's thesis (Bothne, 2010). This chapter thus describes how the data were collected, as well as the additional steps needed to ensure the integrity of the methodological process.

Participants

Those eligible to participate in this study were immigrant adult survivors of politically-sponsored torture who currently live in the United States. The Kovler Center and TASSC sent

letters to their survivor lists seeking participants. The technique for recruitment minimized the risks of trauma to survivors. Recruitment strategies sought people who identified themselves enough as torture survivors to respond to solicitations seeking them. In addition, as part of the pre-interview preparation sessions, participants were told that the study was about survivors of torture and asked if they qualified.

Eight men and seven women were interviewed, with an additional interview of a woman from Zimbabwe whose husband had been tortured and who had been threatened herself when she took legal action on his behalf. Because she did not actually qualify as a survivor, her interview was excluded from the survivor results. Her interview, however, did help provide context for understanding the impact of torture on family and community relationships. TASSC strongly advocated for the inclusion of people from multiple countries, rather than one. Their belief that survivors are united by experience, across national boundaries, was determinative. Participants interviewed are from Albania, Angola, Cameroon, Chile, Congo, Eritrea, Gabon, Guatemala, Philippines, Rwanda and Uganda. A table describing the participants' pseudonyms and countries of origin is found at the end of this chapter, for ready access as the results are reviewed.

Patton (2002) has observed that the number of participants needed for a sample depends on the purpose. Generally, he says that a sample has reached its necessary number at the point when the answers become redundant. The sample must also offer enough diversity among the individuals to allow an exploration of the community-survivor relationship, and do so in a way that minimizes the possibility that each survivor's experience is impacted by idiosyncratic factors. Sixteen people were interviewed. The data they offered provide pictures of community life rich in detail. While the data from participants did not reach a stage of redundancy, there was enough similarity to identify consistent themes.

The difficulties of recruiting survivors of torture into this study were quite formidable. One man cancelled his appointment a half hour before it was scheduled, calling to explain that his family did not believe it would be healthy for him to share his story again. Others sought to volunteer who were family members, rather than those directly tortured. Yet another man disqualified himself, explaining that he was tortured because of his union membership and activism – making him no different from any other laborer in his country. All other survivors who wanted to be interviewed within the extended period of participant outreach were included.

The most difficult obstacle in recruiting participants, however, was in finding women who were willing to be interviewed. With one exception, the initial outreach into the community resulted in responses only from male survivors. One woman volunteered to be interviewed, and only at the encouragement of her therapist who thought to do so would be beneficial. It is only because of the diligent effort of a staff person for TASSC in Washington D.C. that so many women were recruited. Working with TASSC, the researcher was able to schedule nine interviews in one trip. Despite the reassurances offered to these potential participants by TASSC and the researcher, three women either did not show up for their scheduled interviews or cancelled them immediately prior to the scheduled interview time.

The data collected from this survey are confidential and is de-identified. Each completed interviewee was assigned a pseudonym and the identity of each participant is known only to the researcher and, where one was present, the translator. Translators were required to sign written pledges to maintain confidentiality of participants' identities and remarks.

<p style="text-align:center">Interviews</p>

Participants engaged in semi-structured interviews using a survey protocol with open-ended questions (Appendix A.) Interviews generally took about an hour and half. One interview

lasted a relatively short 45 minutes. Another interview lasted four hours. The researcher

conducted all interviews. The launch of the interview began with the protocol established by the

IRB to obtain informed consent. Because of the likelihood that participants would associate

signing an official document with their experience of torture, participants were not asked to sign

a document. Participants instead provided consent that was tape-recorded. Once participants

provided informed consent, the initial set of questions asked participants about themselves. They

were asked to describe their age and gender, where they were living, and their family.

Participants were provided the opportunity to share their stories of how they came to be in the

United States. Survivors were not asked to describe their torture because of concerns about their

well-being while doing so. Everyone was provided the opportunity to talk about whatever parts

of their stories about torture that they wished to share.

There were essentially three sets of questions that directly explored a psychological sense

of community. One set of questions elicited information about the participant's ideas about

communities based in their country of origin.   "How important was it to be a member of a

community?"; "and "What communities were you a member of in your country of origin?" are

examples. The second set of questions was virtually the same, changing the setting to the United

States e.g., "How important was it for you to be a member of a community in the United States?"

The third set of questions was based on two frameworks of a psychological sense of

community. The McMillan & Chavis (1986) framework offered four elements to explore:

membership boundaries, mutual influence, needs fulfillment and shared emotional connections.

In addition, questions based on the work of Cantillon, Davidson and Schweitzer (2003) were also

posed. Cantillon et al. explored how empowerment, safety and trust affect a psychological sense

of community within a socially disorganized community. Participants in this study were asked

to describe how they felt that these elements might describe their community relationships. The answers to these questions provided a foundation for the dissertation analysis.

Procedure

Because there is so little research with this population, proper methods for conducting ethical studies with torture survivors are not yet established (CVT, 2005). This study does rely on lessons learned by those who work with survivors in torture treatment centers. Research protocols from the Center for Victims of Torture (2005) and Survivors International (2006), as well as the Istanbul Protocol (UNHCHR, 1999) and the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki (Zion, Gilliam, & Loff, 2000) informed how to design this study. Feminist researchers' studies with rape victims and survivors have also been helpful in identifying participant-sensitive approaches to research (Campbell, 2002; McCullough-Zander & Larson, 2004).

Interpreters were used for four interviews, each requiring interpretation in English and French. Two of the interpreters were recruited through Kovler and/or TASSC. A third interpreter was found through networking. All of the interpreters were coached on their ethical obligations for accuracy and confidentiality. Techniques such as how to interrupt when there is a misunderstanding between the researcher and participant were also discussed. Many of the participants knew enough English to add to or correct interpretations as they heard them. In one interview, a participant answered several questions in Eritrean that were later interpreted from the tape. Several interviews conducted in English, as chosen by the survivor, might have benefited from an interpreter also being part of the interview. In two cases, participants were unable to thoroughly explain their thoughts and it appeared that an interpreter would have helped facilitate the interview dialogue.

The researcher used the interview protocol only as a guide and the semi-structured interviews were conducted in an informal, conversational style with the researcher prepared to respond to questions, direction and emphasis from each participant. Patton (2002) suggests that this approach may result in interview data with different emphases, depending upon the participant. Given that this study seeks to understand the phenomena of community relationships as understood by survivors, the differing emphases helped yield valuable data, particularly in understanding psychological sense of community in country of origin vs. the United States, and in understanding differences between men and women.

The interview format was intended to encourage interviewee story-telling by building rapport between the researcher and participants. As advised by a member of the Thesis Consultation Group (J. MacLean, 2006), asking participants to "share stories," rather than answer questions would be more likely to put them at ease. The Istanbul Protocol (UNHCHR, 1999) admonishes physicians engaged in documenting torture to note that listening is more important than asking questions. Asking questions only results in answers, it explains. The researcher was sensitive to these admonishments; at the same time, the interview guide was relied upon during the course of the interview to insure adequate coverage of topics of interest.

The researcher was prepared to listen closely to identify survivors' preferences about how to conduct the interview. According to Survivors International (2006), that means that survivors must be free to leave, and to refuse to answer questions as they wish. As recommended by Survivors International (2006), the researcher tried to listen with emotional detachment but with sensitivity to the stories shared. This negotiation was very difficult. The clinical staff of the Marjorie Kovler Center warned the researcher that to promote too much disclosure of the torture event could result in serious harm to the participant, of which the researcher was fearful. While

conducting the interviews, the interviewer also did not want to be overcome by her own emotions when sharing the pain of those being interviewed. This dilemma had been raised by a torture survivor in a Thesis Consultation Group meeting. There is a delicate balance required in how an interviewer can experience and share emotion without overwhelming or being overwhelmed by the interviewee. According to Campbell (2002), an interviewer must seek to remain focused on the participant and try not to offer any response that shuts down the interviewee's participation. None of the interviewees indicated a desire to terminate an interview and it did not appear that any survivor was distressed by their participation. In one case, the interviewer asked to terminate the interview because of her inability to remain focused following four hours of conversation.

Neither DePaul University nor the Heartland Alliance for Human Rights and Human Needs required IRB approval for the dissertation. Both institutions' IRBs had approved and monitored the prior collection of data and were assured that the participants had been de-identified. The researcher worked with the Dissertation Advisory Group and the Marjorie Kovler Center to ensure that ethical considerations throughout the study are consistent with best practices of working with torture survivors and of academic research.

<div align="center">Settings</div>

With one exception, interviews took place at the offices of TASSC, International and Amnesty International USA in Washington, D.C., and at the Kovler Center in Chicago. The TASSC office is located in an often sunny basement of a building at Catholic University. There are numerous private offices, and a large meeting space. Staff, volunteers and survivors regularly trek in and out of the office. The other Washington, D.C.-based setting in which interviews took place was the office of Amnesty International USA. The researcher is a former

staff person of Amnesty International and, through ongoing collegial relationships, secured their permission to host interviews. TASSC and the interviewer thought that participants might be familiar with Amnesty, which did turn out to be the case with several of the participants interviewed. One interview also took place at DePaul University's service learning center on the Lincoln Park campus. The interview was in a small classroom. All three locations were accessible by public transportation.

The Marjorie Kovler Center is located in an immigrant-friendly neighborhood of Chicago. The building is a former seminary and is large enough to provide space for various kinds of meetings. Kovler also provides opportunities for social interactions among survivors, through special events and shared meals scheduled irregularly throughout the year. The local chapter of the Torture Abolition Survivors Support Coalition International also meets at Kovler. The Chicago-based participants did not offer great distinctions between their perception of TASSC and Kovler, with the exception of acknowledging the staff roles in Kovler.

The interview rooms were made as comfortable as possible. Water for the interviewee, as well as a candle and box of Kleenex, were made available. A suggestion that participants bring with them something that offers comfort was made to those who seemed a bit apprehensive. As the participant related experiences of the past, this object was sometimes used to recall the present (personal correspondence, M. Songasonga, 2006.)

<div align="center">Community Participation</div>

A Dissertation Advisory Group (DAG) has helped guide the research process and evaluate the results. The DAG succeeds the Thesis Consultation Group which was created to aid in the development and analysis of the research conducted for the thesis (Bothne, 2010). The Dissertation Advisory Group includes torture survivors, abolition activists, academic advisors

and people who can help facilitate group interaction and monitor the well-being of the participants in the advisory group. The names of Dissertation Advisory Group members are listed in Appendix B.

Most correspondence with the Dissertation Advisory Group occurred in the four meetings that were scheduled throughout the dissertation-writing process. We also communicated via email and telephone conversations. In addition, I had one-on-one discussions with several members when I was seeking clarification or insight into the behavior of the survivor community. The Dissertation Advisory Group participated in reviewing research questions for the dissertation and aided in understanding the results. Meetings occurred in the Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning at the Lincoln Park campus of DePaul University.

This study is complex in its breadth and scope. The Dissertation Advisory Group made numerous suggestions about where the focus should be directed and how to organize the results. The group offered keen insights about how life in the United States is negotiated by this vulnerable population. There were frequent debates about which was more important among survivors: safety or trust. Both are considered very important to survivors recovering from torture.

Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center

Two organizations have been crucial to this research study, the Kovler Center and Torture Abolition Survivors Support Coalition, International (TASSC). The preparation and design of the recruitment strategies, interview instruments, protocols for interviews and approaches for interviewing torture survivors were done with the close cooperation of the Marjorie Kovler Center for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture, a program of the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights. The Kovler Center is a torture treatment center

established in 1987, making it one of the early pioneers for this kind of work in the United States. The staff of the Kovler Center reviewed several versions of the interview protocol and made necessary suggestions based on their experiences of interviewing torture survivors and their concerns for their clients. They sent out a letter to all clients who received services from Kovler to inform them that the study was being conducted, and provided contact information so that interested survivors might contact the researcher directly. Kovler staff continue to provide information and advice, and one staff person is a member of the Dissertation Advisory Group.

Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition (TASSC), International

Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition (TASSC), International also participated in this study. TASSC brings together torture survivors from over 60 different countries and ethnic groups who work together to expose and eradicate torture, and to hold accountable those who have perpetrated torture (TAASC, 2006.). TASSC is a Washington, D.C. - based, non-governmental organization that advocates for survivors. A chapter of TASSC also exists in Chicago. The TASSC organization in D.C. includes staff people who assist in making referrals for services, organizing special events for survivors and engaging in torture abolition advocacy with Congress. They also host a major event for International Day of Victims of Torture, which many Chicago members attend. Several of the staff of TASSC in the District of Columbia are survivors of torture. There are no staff in Chicago; volunteers meet irregularly and may receive support from interns offered through the Kovler Center. Two of the members of the Dissertation Advisory Group are members of TASSC in Chicago.

Community consultation contributes to an informed consent process that, particularly in non-Western cultures, has often relied on community decision-making to inform personal and family decisions (Molyneuz, Wassenaar, Peshu, & Marsh, 2005). In many ways, TASSC

performs this function. Once TASSC in Washington D.C. came to support this study, they conveyed that endorsement to others. TASSC was particularly helpful in recruiting women participants, whose reluctance to participate could have undermined the study's breadth. In addition, the support of Sister Diana Ortiz, founder of TAASC and with whom the researcher had worked in the past, was crucial to further relationship-building with survivors and survivor groups.

The researcher met with TASSC members in D.C. and Chicago who contributed to understanding the results reported in this study. In Chicago, only two TASSC members participated in the review. A subsequent (better publicized) meeting will be held following the conclusion of this report. Chicago TASSC will use this study as a recruitment device. The meeting in Washington, D.C. was attended by 33 members. Most of those present were Ethiopian; there had been a special consultation about Ethiopia prior to the meeting. Over half of those present were men. At this meeting, the findings were presented and TASSC members were asked to comment and contribute their thoughts. The men present disputed several findings about the women. Several men declared that women could not have been detained with men, not in any cell in Africa, they claimed. The men also said that women who described constrictions about what they could do given their roles in the family should not seek assistance to change those constrictions outside the family. During the men's comments, the women remained largely silent. Following the formal presentation, lunch was provided. At that time I met with women in groups of two to five. They confirmed the findings.

<u>Researcher</u>

The identity of the researcher is important in understanding the results of qualitative methods of study (Brown, 2010; Frost, Nolas, Brooks-Gordon, Esin, Holt, Mehdizadeh &

Shinebourne, 2010). Researchers may have insider or outsider perspectives; relationships with participants may affect data analysis (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). It is thus important for the researcher to offer identifying information through which the researcher perspective may be understood.

I am a committed human rights activist who has worked to abolish torture and to promote human rights for over twenty years. The collaborative nature of feminist and human rights work easily influenced the research process used in this study. My activism and advocacy through work with the Farmworker Justice Fund, American Civil Liberties Union and Amnesty International also helped establish my credibility with this population. Indeed, three of the participants interviewed in this study indicated that they had met me prior to the interview in my capacity as regional director of Amnesty International USA.

Throughout the course of this study, I had occasion to interact with survivors as a participant observer. I attended events celebrating June 26, the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, in Chicago and Washington, D.C. I worked with the Kovler Center as a consultant for a short period of time, and was able to interact with survivors in the course of that work. I also facilitated a survivor focus group that reviewed Kovler Center operations. I have facilitated learning circles and partnerships between students and survivors as part of a class I co-teach with a Kovler Center clinician, Dr. Mary Fabri. The results and discussion of this study rely in part on the connection to and rich understanding of community life that such participation affords.

In the course of the interviews, it became clear that participants had various methods of trying to ascertain my trustworthiness. One woman called me repeatedly before the interview and later disclosed that she was trying to see if I would become cross with her. Another man

challenged me to offer any information I might know about his country of Congo. Several

people remarked how important it was to them that I was affiliated with Amnesty International

and was an activist. That I opposed torture unequivocally was also key to developing

relationships with the participants. The personal interactions with the participants is necessary to

building trust in research-based relationships with refugees (Miller, 2004). Miller also indicates

that this strategy of trust-building with research participants is little discussed.

<div align="center">Data Preparation</div>

Each interview was recorded and transcriptions were prepared by undergraduate students

who were supervised by the researcher. Several of the undergraduates spoke Spanish and

English, which was helpful in understanding the tape recordings of participants for whom

English was not a first language. Spanish-speaking students were more sensitive to the French-

influenced pronunciation than those students who only spoke English. Because some interviews

were difficult to understand, each transcript was reviewed by a second student to ensure it

captured what was actually said. The researcher also reviewed tapes and transcripts to check

undergraduate students' transcriptions.

The analysis was conducted using the scientific paradigm of constructivism-

interpretivism. Constructivist-interpretist methods recognize the interaction of the participant

and researcher to make meaning of the data (Ponterotto, 2005). Constructivist-interpretist

methods guide multiple facets of how research is conducted; they constitute a paradigm that also

includes phenomenological theory (Ponterotto, 2005). Phenomenological theory was used to

create units of meaning for analysis (Wertz, 2011). For example, in the analysis of the data it

seemed that there were differences in how community life was conducted within countries of

origin and the United States. Likewise, differences were noted between men and women. As the

team sought to understand the phenomena, we began to understand differences in the empowerment experiences of men and women.

The data were explored further using inductive analysis methods. This required review of the coding scheme that had been used for the thesis to code the same data (Bothne, 2010). A research team of students from the Adler School of Professional Psychology assisted in the review of the coding scheme. Consistent with the phenomenological and inductive approaches of Bulmer (1979) and Wertz (2011), data and theory were explored to explain the psychological concepts of safety, trust and empowerment. This approach assisted in identification of the sensitizing and definitive concepts necessary to understand participants'' experiences. The coding of data were then adjusted accordingly. Particularly problematic was the coding of data into either the categories of "safety" or "trust." The Dissertation Advisory Group and the Research Team participated in thorough reviews of the differences between the two concepts. The code book from the original study is attached as Appendix C.

The final stage explored how the participants' experiences are meaningful, and what about them is significant (Wertz, 2011). This phenomenological approach identifies how survivors interact with and in communities, and what about those experiences is meaningful. The data on safety, trust and empowerment within these community experiences were then reviewed to determine the results reported in this dissertation.

<center>Trustworthiness</center>

Qualitative and quantitative research typically offers different approaches to understanding phenomena. Quantitative research usually tests hypotheses, for example, while qualitative research examines questions. Williams and Morrow (2009) suggest that all qualitative studies should be evaluated regarding integrity of the data; understanding of how the

shared participant-research construction of meaning is created; and whether the findings are relevant and coherent.

Integrity of the Data

Understanding how the data were collected and the strategy for analyzing the data facilitates a study's trustworthiness (Williams & Morrow, 2009). This method section offers the detail suggested by Williams and Morrow (2009). In addition, participants for this study were solicited through three related but independent partnering organizations, TASSC International in Chicago, TASSC International in Washington, D.C., and the Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center. Themes common to participants from multiple sites were identified. This cross-site identification of themes diminishes the possible influence that any one site might have had on participants' responses or experiences.

Participant and Researcher Meaning-Making

Constructivist-interpretivism relies on multiple meanings of phenomena, and the understanding of data as a construction that results from the interaction of researcher and participant (Ponterotto, 2005). I have been a participant in many community events that required interacting with survivors of torture. This engaged approach contributes to the authenticity of the analytic approach used to interpret the data, but also requires the reflexive interrogation of my understandings in contrast to what the participants might have intended (Williams & Morrow, 2009). The Dissertation Advisory Group, as well as consultations with staff of the Marjorie Kovler Center, contributed to this process.

Articulation of the Findings

The trustworthiness of a study can also be reviewed through the clarity in which the findings are communicated, and how the study describes its approach. As outlined by Williams

and Morrow (2009), there are three main strategies to ensure clear communication. First, the study must define its social importance, identifying its value to the stakeholders who are likely to be interested in its results. This is addressed in the beginning of Chapter I. Second, the study must also be readable and logical, answering the research questions and supporting those answers with direct quotes from the participants. This strategy is fulfilled in Chapter III, the section reporting the results. Finally, the study must also be related to the literature reviewed to support the aim of the study. This strategy is incorporated into the final discussion, Chapter IV.

Table 1. Information about Participants Identified by Pseudonyms

Women	Country of Origin	Age at Time of Interview	Approximate Year of Arrival in USA
Anamaria	Guatemala	42	Before 1997
Angelique	Rwanda	27	Est 2003
Claire	Cameroon	55	2002
Farai	Zimbabwe	33	2004
Francie	Gabon	42	2004
Joelle	Cameroon	Est 49	Est 2002
Kharen	Philippines	54	1986
Kiki	Eritrea	49	2003

Men	Country of Origin	Age at Time of Interview	Approximate Year of Arrival in USA
Eddie	Albanian from Kosovo	34	2003
Evrard	Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville)	58	2001
Felizardo	Angola	48	2004
Japhet	Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville)	47	2000
Marcelo	Chile	59	Est. 1976
Okello	Uganda	34	2006
Rodrigo	Chile	60	Est 1979
Simon	Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville)	40	2006

CHAPTER III.

RESULTS

The results of this study are reported in two main sections, about experiences of participants in 1) countries of origin and 2) the United States. In each of the sections, the results are again divided between the experiences of men and women. At times, the experiences of men and women are contrasted. This study examines how safety, trust and empowerment interact with and are a part of a psychological sense of community. Within each of the sections divided by country and gender, these elements are discussed. The discussion of these elements may include the negative and/or positive influences on community life, depending upon participants' experiences.

Each section includes an introduction to the question being asked, and is then followed by a report of the results that emerged from the data. The data were explored to identify the breadth of how immigrant survivors of torture described psychological elements of community life. The results that are reported are intended to illustrate that breadth.

Community Experiences in Countries of Origin

This section of the study responds to the research question seeking to identify which communities participants indicated were important to them. The communities discussed are located in participants' countries of origin. The first part of this section describes the community lives of men; it is followed by a description of the community lives of women. After the identification of communities important to the men and women, the elements of safety, trust and empowerment are discussed. At the end of the combined reports of men and women's community lives in countries of origin, there is a summary.

Communities Men Survivors of Torture Report as Important

The relationships of survivors with communities in their countries of origin were quite complicated, even before they experienced torture. The following provides an overview of the communities that participants described as important to them. The communities are categorized into family and ethnicity; community group and neighborhood; and country and culture. These categories represent the micro (family); meso (neighborhood and community group); and exo (country and culture) levels of Bronfenbrenner's (1977) scheme of ecological analysis. Participants did not always share experiences of community life in every category. This ecological scheme is used throughout the results as a tool to categorize which communities are important.

The experiences and descriptions of participants' torture are not included in this study. Nonetheless, participants' experiences of activism and the threats to their safety affected their experiences of community life and may be noted in that context.

Family and ethnicity as community.

The men frequently described their families of birth as a source of learning about community life. Japhet of Congo said, "My family was the first community that I lived in because they were the people who showed me how to live basically in a larger community or in society. It really was the beginning of a community for me." He went on to say "the first thing you learn in a family, especially in Africa, was that you really have to respect the people; whatever you become later in life, you still have to respect the people born before you." Eddie, an Albanian from Kosovo, described his family as the "baseline" community. Rodrigo, too, spoke of the concept of Latin American family, how in Chile he was "always around aunts, uncles, cousins, grandfather, grandmother. It was always activity with them." In many ways, family was a building block of community life.

The men participants also described how others defined them as part of a community because of their ethnicity or family connections. Okello described how "in my community (in Uganda), when you mention your name, they define you, how you are born, where you grew up or who was your father, where you come from, what clan.... When you are done with the six generations, everyone around you knows someone within that line of generation."

One male participant made a distinction between community and family. For Simon, "Family are people that are directly connected to you, that are very close to you, whereas community is more like people outside." Simon also felt that ethnicity did not define the extended family. Said Simon "in Congo they have so many ethnicities that they have different communities that are defined by what language they speak." Simon points out that even ethnic groups were subdivided, and that those subdivisions may not have formed the bonds that distinguish community life.

Neighborhood and community groups.

As the men described the community groups in which they were included, they also described what they did and how they established the bonds of community life. Many of the groups were formed based on shared values. In discussing the sense of community with the socialist group in Chile, Rodrigo explained, "you have to think why you can define your community or where you can feel more identified." Rodrigo made that identification based on shared political values. He said, "The community in Chile was mainly, besides family, was the political movement." Marcelo also joined the socialist movement in Chile, explaining how he became part of a community that created "what the country needs, not for my own gain." Felizardo described how war had ravished his country of Angola, how "I didn't want to be a part of those two parties that were opposing each other, that were in war." As an alternative to the

divided political movements, Felizardo was trying to create a community "to be a way of ending the war." In Congo, Evrard was also trying to create a community of those who worked on behalf of imprisoned people. He said that he created "a group of friends that we used to work for the prisoner. So it was also a community."

The men's involvement in local advocacy groups also connected them to international community groups. Okello said, "Somehow I was involved in human rights work as a journalist and as a person…. I met so many people … who are part of many communities." Felizardo, too, described how his community relationships extended into international communities. Felizardo explained, "I was basically part of those two (international and local) communities. But that as far as the international community is concerned, it's their name that had the influence—you know, the influence of the name." Felizardo benefitted from the interaction of local and international members of his human rights community. This benefit is described more fully in the section on safety.

The men also described how community relationships formed when they were targeted by the government, and tortured. Marcelo experienced a strong sense of community with those detained with him. Marcelo described how those detained together bonded, "We advise what to do, what not to do, what to say, what not to say…. I feel somehow comfortable, comfortable to being there….There was a community there." Rodrigo said that he felt "loved by the people [other detainees] inside the camp." The community relied on each other to help survive the deprivation and torture they were experiencing. This experience is in contrast to that of the women, several of whom indicated that they were detained in cells with men, of whom they were afraid (detailed in the section on women).

Overall, in countries of origin the men generally did not describe neighborhood-bound community life. The one exception was Eddie, who described how his neighborhood signaled to others his ethnic identity. Eddie said that, "In Kosovo there are two main communities, Serbian communities and Albanian communities." Eddie explained that Serbs and Albanians identified him as Albanian based on the neighborhood in which he lived.

Country, culture and community.

All of the men interviewed for this study were activists who were engaged in liberation movements for their countries. Beyond the actual members of these activist groups, however, the men formed bonds with the unmet and unknown others in their countries who shared the need for liberation. Said Felizardo of Angola, "For me, even Africa in itself or Angola itself, it's a big community. Angola has a specific history as far as like Angola itself is a community." Marcelo described the history of his country as a basis for community, tracing the country's roots back to the Spanish settlement of Chile much as one might describe the family genealogy. This love of country and kin generated the connections to other people that shared the country's history. Those connections formed the basis of a sense of community among the men.

The relationships that men formed in their countries of origin began with their immediate and extended families. For most of the men, that also included a community bond with members of their ethnic group. When choosing communities in which to belong, the men described how the commitment to join with others to advance human rights and political independence motivated them. The commitment to human rights also bound them to people in their countries, with whom they shared a psychological sense of community. The next section examines how safety, trust and empowerment affect the interactions of the members of communities with which the men participated.

Safety, Trust and Empowerment in Men's Community Life

The components of a psychosocial sense of community that this study examines include safety, trust and empowerment. Each of the elements is defined and described in the sections below. Although all of the elements are experienced at an individual level, this study explores how safety, trust and empowerment contribute to the psychological bonds of communities. The experiences of safety, trust and empowerment may facilitate negative and positive experiences of community life.

Safety experiences of men in countries of origin.

As safety is discussed below, it is in reference to the physical and psychological states of the participants. All of the men were physically threatened and tortured. Their physical safety was jeopardized. The threats to the men affected how and what the men feared, as well, challenging their psychological safety. Eddie, for example, offered his view of safety emphatically, "As long as there is freedom and safety and conditions for life," he feels safe.

The safety of the men participants was endangered in their countries of origin by their activism and work with advocacy and political groups. The men described the threats to their safety in their countries of origin in chilling terms. Marcelo explained that when the Chilean police found him on the street, "they put a gun machine in my mouth. They said you are going to leave or you are going to die." Rodrigo's reason for leaving Chile was because the commander in charge of all detention camps told him "to leave the country or else you are going to suffer." Evrard described how "they [soldiers] raped my daughter because of my involvement in this NGO." Eddie said that after the war he began working with the Serb community, to try to rebuild a sense of community between Serbs and Albanians. There were

those in both communities who wanted to maintain their enmity. Explained Eddie, "I was not safe being home because of the way that … I was approaching the community."

The endangerment of the men often prompted advocacy by the communities in which they had been involved, although not closely. Felizardo explained that once the local people found out he was detained, "they did as much as they could to get me out of jail." They pressured the government "little by little." Local people were not very effective, however, and "the international connection helped me not to be killed." Felizardo said that if he had been "a simple somebody with no connections outside, they would have tortured me to death." Because Felizardo was active within Amnesty International, the organization pressured the detention authorities to release him. (In the section on women, Joelle also describes the association with Amnesty International and how it contributed to making her safe.) Okello offered few details on his escape from prison, saying only, "I got assistance for it, and my friends got me out." The assistance the men received was from neighbors and other members of the community groups in which the men had been active.

In their countries of origin, these men were community organizers and political activists. Their activism compromised their safety as governments responded with detention and torture. Although torture often severs individuals from communities, neighbors and community members which whom participants worked advocated for their release.

Trust experiences of men in countries of origin.

The definition of trust suggests an expectation in the integrity of a person or thing. Social trust may include belief in the integrity of an authority structure of a community or organization. Trust is an important component of community life for the men. Felizardo stressed that trust is

"very, very important." It is what makes his community "strong", that they are able to trust each other. Simon added the same emphasis, that "without trust, you cannot live together."

The men described conditions in their country, offering examples of how the actions of their governments shaped the culture in which people developed the ability to trust (or not). When Evrard described how he was targeted by government agents because an opposition leader was a member of Evrard's same tribe, he was describing the erosion of trust in a fair government. Marcelo described how misuse of power could undermine trust, how "the rich was controlling the country. They were taking advantage." Okello described how people might be on a curfew 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "Without explanation somebody would say you were going in house at midnight. You can't question their power."

Okello also described how the culture of fear in his country led people to distrust each other. People in his country of Uganda would inquire about his profession and say, "Oh, you are a journalist? You are anti-government." Their conclusion, said Okello, is "to justify what happened to you because politically, you got what you deserve." Okello describes an example of blaming the victim. Because of his association with those journalists who might defy restrictions on speech or who might investigate government corruption, Okello is responsible for the torture he experienced. The government that perpetuates these human rights violations is not blamed because to do so then potentially victimizes the blamer. People in Uganda are unable to trust those who criticize government because to do so makes everyone vulnerable.

The political divisions within the country severed the sense that trust could be developed in their countries. Simon described his country as "divided north between the south." He described Congolese people as having a "mentality of division" that fractures a possible sense of community among people from his country. Rodrigo, too, described how the division between

supporters of Allende and those of Pinochet also divided families, and the country. Says Rodrigo, "we're still polarized. We cannot get along as we were before." The experiences of Rodrigo's family are mirrored in relationships of others throughout the country, says Rodrigo.

Marcelo and Rodrigo were both imprisoned in the same concentration camp in Chile where those detained learned to trust each other. Rodrigo described his experience with other men, "We had a great appreciation among ourselves and what was happening and the way we could relate to each other there." These trusting connections contrasted to the women's experiences, who described feeling very vulnerable when they were detained. Although the two participants from Chile did describe a sense of community with others similarly situated with them in detention, they also described how the authorities undermined the ability to trust even others in lock-up. Marcelo described how when the food came "people (were) crying and begging, trying to get there first." Yet Marcelo recognized that this was the goal of their torturers, that "they want to make us really weak with this kind of reaction."

As described above, the men's focus in their countries of origin was on how trust was undermined by the misuse of power, and the fear that generated among people in the country. The men described divisions within families and friendships that were related to the erosion of trust in government. When men were detained, the men described how they built trust with others also jailed with them. As happened in the community, while in detention, the men resisted the power wielded by government authorities.

Empowerment experiences of men in countries of origin.

This section identifies how power shaped and defined the men's relationships within community life. For the purpose of this study, empowerment is defined to include how communities with less power sought more influence with those who had more power. It also

describes how power of communities and people are undermined, and the effect that has on relationships and community life.

The men described the impact of their activism on their wives and children. When men began describing the families they created, they described the life decisions that had to be made in order to flee the repression and torture, repression that would likely continue were they not to flee. Rodrigo described how his wife and son planned to leave their country "because of the repression, mainly against me." As Marcelo was leaving the country, he tried to break up with his then girlfriend explaining, "You go your way and I go my way because I don't know (but) one day somebody is going to shoot me." Marcelo's girlfriend insisted that they marry. This jeopardized the political asylum Marcelo was seeking, since two visas would now be required. The repression of the government against these activists affected major life decisions within their marriage and families. It effectively undermined the roles of men as decision-makers, whose authority to choose was replaced with the rules and regulations of asylum and flight.

Two men described the torture of members of their family in their countries of origin, with one making it explicit that the rape of his daughter was due to his own activism. (This is also referred to in the section on safety above.) Another described how he left his wife back home. Felizardo said that when he left his country (to find asylum), "my wife in Angola didn't want to come here. She didn't want to come to the United States." She stayed in the country, as did Felizardo's two sons. The vulnerability that men experienced from dictatorial regimes was extended to their families. The men were powerless to protect their families. Forced to flee for their own safety, the men were also powerless to ensure that family members could come with them. The men were denied their roles as protective fathers and family decision-makers. The empowerment that the men had sought through their activism had, when countered by the power

of torture, disempowered the men and endangered the family unit. The men and their families became effectively marginalized from each other.

Beyond the torture they experienced at the hands of their governments, the men also talked about how colonialization, poverty and government corruption disempowered their countries. Felizardo described how dependent his country was on those who had colonized his country. He said, "The economy was concentrated in the hands of white, Portuguese colonizers. And African men started complaining, saying that it wasn't fair and that they wanted the economy to go back in the hands of the African people. So we started a movement…." Marcelo spoke of the increasing divide between rich and poor in his country, sustained by a corrupt government supported by the United States. He said that the political movement of Salvador Allende, of which he was a part, "denounced the rich. And when the army of the United States wanted to jump over the (pro-equality) government, we say… what's going on? Why don't you understand that we have to … defend ourselves? "

The disempowerment experienced at the hands of government motivated the formation of advocacy groups and movements, often led by the men. The men joined movements that challenged brutal government policies, and advocated for appropriate remedies. Their activism helped fuel the empowerment of themselves and others. Simon explained this as "The community starts with people that are physically strong enough to be individuals themselves." Working for themselves and others, "we actually create a community." Marcelo described how satisfying it was to work for human rights and equality in Chile. "It was very emotional; it was our life. I worked, I attended school, and then at night we went to the countryside. I was teaching reading and then doing the political stuff. We would then … go home take a shower and sleep. We survived, it was beautiful to me, it was very beautiful." Rodrigo's perspective

sums up the thinking common among many of the men, wondering how "distribution of the land, reform of the education, reform of the economy in general … would be more fair to people that never had an opportunity before. So my mind and my community everything was there with that. …. There was something unfair that we had to think about and try to do something." The shared commitment of members of these groups and movements knit together to form a sense of community.

The sense of community experienced from shared activism and the pursuit of empowerment strengthened the movement of people and communities seeking empowerment. Okello from Uganda, described how important the community solidarity of journalists was in developing a strategy to exercise free speech rights. Okello is a journalist, and with others from his country was challenging the anti-terrorism laws. Several individuals had already sued the government, and "there was a limit of the Constitution as to how many lawsuits one individual could file." The journalists identified who would bring challenges as different parts of the strategy to challenge the limitations of their advocacy.

The men were disempowered by their countries' evisceration of human rights and democratic participation in government. In response, the men also developed strong community bonds as they sought to challenge government corruption and violence, empowering themselves and others.

Conclusions about Men's Community Lives in Countries of Origin

The experiences that the men reported illustrate how complex and interrelated community life is. The original communities of most of the men were family-based. The strong bonds with family members were jeopardized by the men's activism. The safety of family

members and the men themselves were threatened by the men's activism. Yet the men continued to participate in community life that perpetuated those threats to their safety.

These men were committed to human rights for all, and to political independence. The men expressed keen distrust in the values and policies of their government. The values they shared with others generated the formation of communities to challenge those policies. Working with others to empower themselves and other marginalized people, the men built strong psychological bonds with those who shared the same motivation. Trusting relationships developed among those who shared the same vulnerability and helped each other sustain the threats to their safety. The relationships they shared with others in the community offered some protection once the men were detained by government authorities. The men's safety was finally so threatened that they had to flee their homes. Their departure undermined men's empowerment within the family, as the need for safety and the options available became the overriding authority on family decisions.

A further summary is offered at the conclusion of the section on countries of origin. This summary addresses, compares and contrasts the experiences of men and women.

<u>Communities Women Survivors of Torture Report as Important</u>

The following section describes the communities that emerged as most important to the women. This section intends to cover the breadth of community experiences women have had in their countries of origin. It is organized in the same way as was done for the men, making distinctions about various categories of community life. The discussion of the elements of safety, trust and empowerment follows the descriptions of the communities.

<u>Family and ethnicity as community.</u>

The women described their families of birth as the place where they learned about community life, and experienced the emotional bonds that form family and community ties. Many activities were shared among family members, bringing extended families together. Claire described how in Cameroon, "(we) cook together, share together, talk to anyone. I know your children, my children know your children, everyone knows so the family goes on for generation and generation." Speaking of her family, Anamaria of Guatemala said, "It was a great community for me because we were almost always together. I think that was one of the teachings in my family—that we would be together united in the sense of being together when we were sick, when we were happy, when we were sad, when we had problems. I would say that was since we were born. It was always in that way." One woman, Francie, captured how ethnic identification contributed to her sense of family as community. "I am Fang and my ethnic is from the north." Francie detailed how her ethnic group in Gabon would start to teach the kids the "traditional thing at the first level, the first age. All they teach you, it's going to help you when you become an adult."

Like one of the men, Kharen of the Philippines did not believe that family was community. She said, "Well, I don't think about it as a community, I think of it as family.… I just never thought of my family as a community." Two women were also raised in orphanages, and did not describe family as community. Nonetheless, like the men, family life offered most women a building block for how community life was formed.

Neighborhood and community groups.

Several of the women described relationships with others in their neighborhood or local village as being important sources of their community life. For Claire, that community life was expressed in a microloan group of which she was a part. She described this as an important

community to her, where through shared lending, "each one (had) to try to tie yourself together"

to the other. She described that "sometimes people are poor; you no have no money to put on the

ground or anywhere." It is then that "the community… put it (the money) together" for those in

need. Joelle also described a similar group in Cameroon, that included only women. Joelle

called this an "injungi group." She described how important it was that her microloan

community group focused "especially for women, because we are being treated as second hand

citizens back home." Joelle repeatedly described the lesser status of women and her efforts to

change that. (Joelle's comments about women's status are frequented throughout this report.)

Francie also described how important the community of women was to her. Francie involved

herself with women to assert women's rights, to declare, "We have the right to say no."

Several women also described their religious community as important to them.

Angelique described how important it was to her, after the genocide in her home country of

Rwanda, to be part of the church community and "put the people together to share, to have and to

help." Francie felt it was important to be part of her church because there she felt love. Joelle

talked about church in much the same way that others talked about family, as being the source of

values. Joelle was an orphan and said the church, "teach you respect, they teach you honesty….

And that helps me to be what I am. That gave me a sense of direction."

The women were active in nationally-focused political movements in their countries.

Unlike the men, they did not describe the activists with whom they worked as bound together in

a community. Kharen disclosed, "I've pretty much done the work independently from any of the

political parties which makes it a lot harder." Claire offered that "I was in STF democrat party."

Joelle only said, "I am representing SCARM." Their activism was important to them but their

affiliation with the activists was not described as offering the sense of community that the men had experienced.

Country, culture and community.

The national group with which the women identified was that composed of others like themselves, viz. women. Francie said that "the first community I belong (to)… is disabled people, people that are like me, in particular women." Claire said that the rights of women started in the family, teaching children and husbands that "mothers have rights." Joelle talked about how she was taught "the man is the head of the family." Joelle worked in the community to change that perception, educating village people that "the woman is the shoulder of the family." She would approach village leaders and remind them that "the head should not forget that it is the shoulder that is carrying it. If the head doesn't agree with the shoulder, the head will not get its position. So for everything, we need dialogue. We need to sit and discuss."

Like the men, the women's relationships with broader focused groups embraced issues of collective empowerment. The men focused on the vision of a more equitable society. The women focused on a more equitable society as well, particularly one that included women as equal to men. The women, however did not rely on the vision of what was possible to create a sense of community. Rather, the women more readily described the shared disempowerment that they experienced with all other women.

Like the men, the women also experienced family life as a building block for community life. Women were more likely than the men to describe the local community groups as offering the bonds of community. In most examples, the local microloan and church groups offered a sense of community with other women. The culture of the country also affected women's desire

to create a sense of community with other women. The women participants expressed strong

bonds with other women in their countries throughout their interviews.

The following section examines elements of community life of women in their countries

of origin. These elements include safety, trust and empowerment.

Safety, Trust and Empowerment in Women's Community Life

This study examines how the psychological elements of safety, trust and empowerment

are experienced by women within the community life that they describe. The elements are

defined in the same ways they were defined for the men, and are described in the sections below.

Although all of the elements are experienced at an individual level, this study explores how

safety, trust and empowerment contribute to the psychological bonds of communities.

Safety experiences of women in countries of origin.

Torture survivors by definition have experienced extremely severe threats to their safety.

The women understand safety to include threats to physical and psychological well-being.

"Safety is to have no harm," said Kiki (from Eritrea).   She went on to explain, "Safety is nobody

can get you; safety is you can walk down the street and you are not afraid. Safety is when you

are not afraid." The consequences of a lack of safety, said Kiki, is that "I will not be able to

discuss freely with you because when I see a shadow, I will be distracted to see who is that

person, why is here?" Safety is not just physical safety. "Safety is when the past will never

come to me again," said Francine. Yet, when asked what psychological elements of community

life are most important, safety was not the most important element as reported by women

participants. Perhaps the explanation for that came from Kharen. She indicated "safety is really

important," but "we are living in a very unsafe world." She acknowledged that she understood

the risks to safety that occurred through her activism. Nonetheless, Kharen was willing to risk her physical safety, but "it should be at least a calculated risk."

When talking about the importance of safety, the women described their vulnerability during their detention and torture in their countries of origin in frightening terms. Claire described how totalitarian her government was, how totalitarian many governments in Africa are. She described how, if someone in the country had views contrary to those of the government, "the government would take the community… and kill you because you are not in their party." Joelle chillingly described how the government of Cameroon "wanted to kill me, and they have attempted several times." She described in detail her interaction with a prison doctor who confessed he had been ordered to kill her, but did not to do it "because if I should know what is going to kill you and I do it, your blood will go on my hands." He worked with her to protect both of them, saving himself from killing her but also relying on her to keep secret their plan. Angelique is from Rwanda and like all of her country's people, had to recover from the genocide. She described how "back home in our country, we saw different things like the genocide…" As a result, "everyone was afraid to meet someone." According to Angelique, when Rwandans did not know who they were encountering, they were afraid.

All of these participants did survive their experiences, often with help from the community of other local activists. Claire said, "People gathered me and helped me, helped to survive." Like the experiences of the men, the intervention of international allies also helped the women. Joelle believed that the intervention of Amnesty International protected her, saying, "they gave instructions that within fifteen minutes they will be calling back. If they hear that I am still with those men in the room…."

As was the case with the men, the women experienced grave threats to their safety in their countries of origin. Also like the men, the women were helped by local community members once they were detained. The intervention of Amnesty International helped protect one participant. Nonetheless, the threats to safety experienced by everyone in the community undermined the capacity of community members to experience trust among each other. This next section describes how trust was experienced in countries of origin.

Trust experiences of women in countries of origin.

The definition of trust within a community is belief both in the integrity of decision-making, and in the reliable participation of others in the community. Trust is the ability to believe that others in the community may be open to the needs of other members. Kharen said that "trust would not be betraying, no betrayal." Anamaria said that with trust "I can go knock on the door of my neighbor and I know I will have that help." Anamaria frequently referred to a metaphor, implying that to have trust was to be able to knock on the door of a neighbor and ask for an onion. Claire insisted, "You have to find somebody where you trust… so that you can form different ideas, form the community." Like men participants, women indicated that trust was the most important element in community life.

The women generally described trust in their countries of origin at the family level, or in community organizations close to home. Claire described how family members could rely on each other, and trust each other to offer help when it is needed. Claire said "I cannot leave you in the street if you are my family. If you have a problem, you take it to the family. I'll share with you, whatever…. You share together." Anamaria described a close, loving family, "that we would be together united in the sense of being together when we were sick, when we were

happy, when we were sad, when we had problems." This describes the reliability and dependability of others with whom the women shared their lives.

Despite the trust experienced within their families, the women also described how trust within the family was undermined by country politics or culture. Anamaria described how her family reacted after her father was disappeared. She said, "When my father disappeared, my favorite room was the bathroom, and it was because I can lock the bathroom and I can go and cry and yell or whatever.... We would take turns to go to the bathroom…. We needed to use it just to hide." Unable to share with each other how they were feeling, her family members sought relief the same way.

Joelle described the distrust she experienced with her husband. Joelle sought to educate her daughters, similarly to her sons. Her husband opposed it, asking, "Why should I send my daughter to a nursery school?" Despite his opposition, Joelle sent her daughter to school. She said, "When he sees that the child is going to the school, he will again turn to accuse me of being hating because he refused that the child should now go to school." Joelle did what she wanted, but this undermined her relationship with him. The women's references to family life described strong bonds of community. Nevertheless, cultural influences about the value of women and how to express emotion affected family life.

The women also described their imprisonment, often detained in cells with men. In contrast to the men, the women failed to experience the trust in others with whom they were locked up. Joelle described how humiliated she was that when she was detained, "I am still with those men in the room, the dark room, no window, no lights, a bucket in the middle of the room where we had to urinate and defecate." Kharen said that when she was in detention, "There were men and they tried to put us together … there was the gossip that I was the "wife" of everyone

there." The women did not say whether or not they were actually assaulted. Rather, the women reported that they were uneasy and did not trust what men with whom they were detained might do. The reputation of the women would be jeopardized were others to know that they were detained with men. Indeed, when this finding was shared with a group of torture survivors in a feedback session about this study, the men in the group indicated that women would never be detained with men "in any country in Africa." With one exception, the women did not want to contest that women actually did share detention cells with men. The women were clearly uneasy and did not want to speak up. The inability to trust that the group would not condemn the women silenced the women.

Two participants also described micro-lending associations formed by women as examples of how trust worked in their communities. Members contributed regular dues and when someone was in need, the group voted to extend to a loan. Even so, there was some regulation of how the loans were to be used. Said Joelle, "Members… will go with you to pay the child's fee (for school) and bring the receipt and put in the file. Because some women do have funny men…. The man will beat you up, until you give him the money."

When the women described their experiences of trust (or lack of it), they frequently described their experiences in terms of the relationships that men and women have in their countries. Women were of a lesser status, and so felt vulnerable to men. This vulnerability occurred in family life, in community experiences, and in detention and at times made it difficult to trust men in those contexts. The issues of gender also affected how the women experienced empowerment in community relationships and is described in the next section.

Empowerment experiences of women in countries of origin.

A great deal of how the women discussed empowerment was within the family, and of people within a country. The issue of empowerment was discussed both positively (in how women were building power to create a more equitable society) and negatively (in describing the challenges found in the inequities of their cultures and countries). Unlike the men, however, the women did not describe the work they were doing with others to empower women as a foundation for forming community. Rather, the women expressed a sense of community with all women who shared their same disempowerment.

The women generally described the disempowerment they experienced within the family. Claire claimed that, when a woman married, "Your whole family doesn't have to talk to you anymore because you are a woman." Joelle described her husband's resistance to the education of their first-born daughter, "Because the man was still 500 years behind civilization; he never knew the importance of education." Kharen described her family "pressuring me to my grave." She described her relationship with her parents' family by saying that "there's a very feudal relationship going on with my family and me." The women experienced challenges to maintaining family relationships within the culture of disempowerment they were experiencing.

Most of the women participants in this study described how they learned to negotiate the power dynamics of the family, and to reclaim the empowerment of women. When her husband showed up at night, Joelle described how the expectation was that, "you put in food in a tray, you set it on a table, and you sit there until he finished eating. You clear the place and then you can go back to bed." Joelle struggled with this expectation and said that she will not, "stay and collapse because I'm waiting for a man, because they will not respect time." Rather, Joelle instead bought a food flask to keep the food warm. "When (you) come in at 5 a.m. or at 12, don't expect to see Joelle around that table." Within their cultures, women were expected to

suppress their own wills to those of their husbands and fathers. This disempowerment was countered by strategies that the women used in their families to alter their own power and worth. Claire described how she promoted greater appreciation of women. Claire explained that she taught the children within her family to respect her and each other, "If you didn't know to respect your mother, you cannot respect someone (else's) mother."

The women resisted the disenfranchisement of women within their families and culture. Said Francie, "women's rights – they don't have nothing, zero in Africa…. With the women, I was working to tell them… you have a place in this world. You cannot accept if someone tells you this place is not for you." Joelle, too, described how women in her country were thought of as only "tools of producing children. They don't have any other contribution."

The negotiations of empowerment within the communal nature of the family also informed women participants' relationships with neighbors and villages. The women interviewed were active in their communities, often organizing others into a political effort that would advance the empowerment of women. Several women were leaders in political movements whose goals were to redistribute resources, and to facilitate the realization of human rights for all citizens, men and women. Kharen was fighting against the continued presence and degradation of the environment of the Philippines by the U.S. military. She describes being "colonized too many times and we were subjugated and being pitted against other(s) with the foreign power." Anamaria was working to build a hospital in an impoverished community in Guatemala. Joelle described the disempowerment of so many in her country of Cameroon, "We (people in her country) have the oil. We have cocoa. We have rubber. We have palm oil; we have cotton; we have these things they use to make tiles on the floor. We have everything. But

they (private corporations supported by the Cameroon government) use it for their own benefits without giving us our share of the kick."

The women were significantly involved in communities as organizers, often advocating for empowerment of women, people with disabilities, the poor and those without power. Said Kharen, "The whole point in me being an activist is for democracy to flourish." Francie described how she taught women "you are able to say no to this, and you are able to say no to that. It's your right." Joelle described how she approached the chief of a village in order to get access to women, so that she could educate them on their rights. Joelle wanted women included in village meetings because, for example, "it is a good thing for you to discuss with your wife before taking certain decisions. Because she might have some good ideas that you have not known." The rights of women were being advanced by the women participants in this study.

In countries of origin, women had few rights but were actively seeking to empower themselves. The women had to negotiate family life and culture to become so engaged in community life. As the women sought their own empowerment, they also tried to promote the empowerment of others. Unlike the men, however, their activism did not contribute to the formation of communities. Women, instead, described their relationships with all disempowered women in their country in terms that suggested it is with all women that they feel a sense of community.

Conclusions about Women's Community Experiences in Countries of Origin

As was the case with the men, family life was a foundation for the community relationships that women formed. Unlike the men, the women described a stronger sense of community with the more local community organizations. Yet the women were also involved in human rights and independence movements in their countries, albeit less so than the men. Many

of the women focused specifically on advancing the status of women. Their activism interacted with their roles within the family, sometimes causing tensions that the women had to negotiate with husbands and parents.

The issues of gender, and women's vulnerability to men, affected the negotiation of safety, trust and empowerment within community life. Women described negotiations with family, community and culture based on the lesser status women had. The negotiations that all women had to use in order to challenge their lesser status formed bonds that led to a sense of community with all women.

Conclusions about Experiences of Community Life in Countries of Origin

For both women and men, family and ethnicity were the foundations of learning the etiquette of community life. The men and women who participated in this study were motivated to participate in community organizations and alliances that sought to protect human rights of people, and advance democratic government. For women in particular, the advancement of those who shared their social status – that of women – was important. The women expressed a sense of belonging with other women, all women, who, like them, were disempowered. The men did not describe strong bonds with other men based on their shared gender.

As is expected from a study of survivors of torture, the issue of safety was relevant to how these participants described their community life. Both men and women described chilling threats to their safety. The men focused more on the threats to psychological safety that result from denial of the right to speak freely. The women described the threats to their physical beings. For both men and women, their involvement in human rights movements, particularly those with international connections, helped bring them to safety.

The way in which trust affected community relationships was distinct for men and women. Women focused on how the lesser status of women in their communities and culture eroded trust among family members. Although both men and women talked about political divisions, the men discussed more frequently how they eroded trust within families and among people in their countries. Women also reported less identification with the national movements in which they were active. This may be because the movements' leaders are likely to have been men, and may have reinforced women's lesser status.

The ways in which power affected community relationships for women and men were also distinct. Men described how, as a result of threats to their safety, their family members were threatened. The men's role as family decision-maker was also undermined as the men fled to safety. Several men left their countries without their wives or children accompanying them. The women, on the other hand, described how their empowerment within the family and community was eroded throughout their lives because of the lesser status of women. Women were not the family's decisionmakers; their flights to safety were not disempowering in the ways that the men described.

The descriptions of community life in their countries of origin are rich with details about family life, and the activism in which these participants engaged. The move to the United States occurred following their torture. These immigrant survivors of torture came to the United States for their own safety. Their experiences of community life changed greatly upon arrival in the U.S.

<u>Community Experiences in the United States</u>

This section explains how immigrant survivors of torture developed and experienced relationships within communities once they arrived in the United States. All of the participants

are from countries other than the United States. All of the participants in this study were tortured

in their countries of origin. Relationships that participants created in the U.S. have been

developed following their experiences of torture.

As was the case in the section about community relationships in countries of origin, this

section regarding community relationships in the United States is divided between men and

women. First, the communities in which participants have (or have rejected) relationships are

described. Following that, the elements of safety, trust and empowerment within community are

explored. The first part of the U.S. section describes the experiences of men, followed by

descriptions of the experiences of women.

Communities Men Survivors of Torture Report as Important

This section describes the communities that the men considered as important, either

because they have tried to assimilate into them or because they have rejected them. Many of the

participants in this study arrived to the United States alone, without family and often without any

friends. For some participants, the United States was not the first country in which they found

protection from the torture in their countries. All of the participants now live in the United States

and at least two have done so for over 20 years. The median length of time that the men have

lived in the U.S. is 16 years.

The men described how important community life in the U.S. is to them. For many of

them, living in the United States has meant that they needed to learn a new language and a new

culture. Forming relationships with communities in the United States was one way of learning

how to restart their lives in this country. The importance of community life in the U.S. was

perhaps captured best by Felizardo. He described how, "if you are alone here, it is difficult to

advance because you learn about the country through your interactions and relationships from

other people." Felizardo's comment about the need to build relationships with communities in the U.S. parallels an earlier statement from Japhet. Japhet said, "My family was the people who showed me how to live basically in a larger community or in society." For Felizardo in the U.S., the interactions of people from the U.S. model community life. For Japhet in his country of origin, the interactions of his family model community life.

The following describes how the men think about the interactions of community life with family and ethnic group, neighborhood and community organizations, and country and culture in the U.S. These categories are also used to describe the communities with which participants identified in their countries of origin.

Family and ethnicity as community.

The men's relationships with their families were significantly changed as they moved to the United States. The family of origin, into which the men were born, remained in the countries of origin. In many cases, the men's wives and children also did not accompany them. Felizardo explained of his wife, "She didn't want to come here." Felizardo also explained that he was trying to have his sons immigrate here, but "I'm fighting the immigration. It's very difficult. They (U.S. immigration authorities) won't let them come here." When asked about his family, Japhet said, "I am alone here." Evrard was in the U.S., meeting with Torture Abolition Survivors' Support Coalition, International (TASSC), when it became clear he could not return to Congo.

Some of the men were accompanied to the U.S. by their wives. Marcelo married his girlfriend shortly before coming to the U.S., explaining that his marriage was "a big problem" for the United Nations handling his immigration, as his new wife also had to get a visa to the U.S. Rodrigo did not come directly to the U.S. from Chile, but when he did reach the U.S., his wife

and two sons also accompanied him. Eddie indicated that his wife and children lived here with him. Although Okello arrived alone, his wife was expected to join him shortly after the time of the interview. He expressed some fear about her arrival, saying, "I'm talking to people here of relationships (within the family) and there's been some really hard things…." He hoped that "maybe I'm worried for nothing. It might be much better." The men did not speak as much about their extended families' presence in the U.S., except for Simon who said that he had a sister and nephew living in the area.

The interaction with others of one's country or ethnic group was complicated for men and women. One man described how helpful it was for him to become a part of the Congolese community. Said Japhet, "The first thing is that they helped him find was Kovler. The Congolese community helped with the process of asylum and where to find a lawyer and things like that." Another man, from the same country, declared his unease with the Congolese community, saying "I don't feel free to go there and I never go there; we have a Congolese community, I never go there." Rodrigo also voiced reluctance to be part of his ethnic community of Chileans, describing, "an antagonism in the community of Chile - those that were in exile for their political activity against the government and those that were supporting the government." Several women expressed the same sentiment, as is explained in the section addressing women and community in the U.S.

The relationship with families remains a dynamic one. Several of the men have been able to return to their countries of origin for one or more visits. They have been able to reestablish links with extended family members. Most participants, most of the men and women interviewed for this study, have not returned to their countries of origin and have challenges maintaining relationships with their extended families. The challenges to maintaining

relationships also occur among members of the participants' ethnic groups. This complexity will be explored more fully in the write-ups on safety and trust.

Neighborhood and community groups.

Negotiating relationships with what participants refer to as "American," U.S.-based communities has been very challenging for participants. Felizardo said, "I don't really know my neighbors. I wave at people, say 'hi' to people—but people don't really come to make friends." Okello reported that he has become acquainted with some potential communities, such as his church community, and U.S- based journalists. Nonetheless, there are barriers that inhibit the close relationship that community may offer. Okello says that "When we talk about issues of human rights, how they apply selectively, it was very disappointing…. We may differ on some definitions, but I expect you to be flat (meaning flatly opposed) on what is torture."

The men in this study were active in political movements in their countries. They are largely unable to find and relate to other communities in the U.S., in addition to TASSC and Kovler, that share a commitment to human rights and the political liberation of their countries. Said Simon, "it's because Americans don't get involved in such subjects. They are involved in business and economics, but political things like that – they're not interested."

The communities with which participants expressed strong bonds were formed with other survivors affiliated with TASSC and Kovler. Their appreciation for being part of a community where their experiences of torture were the basis for their relationships was expressed by most participants. Said Rodrigo, "when I talk to survivors, I feel I am in the process of healing. Even if we don't talk about what really happened - we could." Evrard said "TASSC is my first community here. I feel free with TASSC." Okello described "when I come

to TASSC, it's so different that you get to understand each other. To live in a place where people understand you."

Even within the Kovler Center and TASSC, however, relationships among members of the community could be complicated. "I talk about this with other fellows of different countries; you have to be so careful sometimes depending on the culture, religion, the way they would feel," said Rodrigo. There are other challenges as well; these are discussed in the sections on safety, trust and empowerment. Despite these challenges, however, the men maintain relationships with other survivors through Kovler and TASSC. As this study has continued over several years, I have been able to participate in events sponsored by both organizations in which the men (and women) are present and engaged.

Country, culture and community.

Although the men describe difficulty in developing relationships with community groups in the United States, there are elements of the culture in the U.S. that suggest that participation in community life in the U.S. may be possible. Japhet offered the idea that the United States might be more accommodating of diversity than Africa. He stated, "When you look at the United States and Africa, they are about the same size but each has about fifty territories. What is different is in the United States, these fifty territories have the same, basically the same, language and history and therefore more or less the same culture." Japhet contrasted this with Africa where, "the fifty-two territories became separate states." The culture of the U.S. contributes to the feelings of safety that men seek in their community relationships, and is explored more fully in the following section.

None of the men expressed a sense of community with the United States as they had done with their countries of origin. Rather, as indicated above, the men felt that the U.S. culture

offered some opportunities, especially that of building a sense of community with other survivors

of torture, although the challenges to building community life in the United States remain. That

the United States offered safety provided men the idea that community life in the U.S. might be

possible. This is described in the following section.

Safety, Trust and Empowerment in Men's Community Life

This next section examines the ways that safety, trust and empowerment are manifested

in community relationships experienced by the men in the United States. Each section includes a

definition of the elements of safety, trust and empowerment. The ways in which these elements

are experienced are then described. There is a summary of men's experiences at the conclusion

of the section before the section on women begins.

Safety experiences of men in the United States.

Torture is used as a tool to harm people. The threats to safety are physical, as often

evident by the scars that survivors of torture bear. The threats to safety are also psychological,

albeit not visually evident. The issues of safety experienced by men in the United States were

vastly different from those experienced in their countries of origin. Nonetheless, because the

men arrived alone in many cases, their isolation was a source of uneasiness about their safety.

Okello described how scared he was upon arriving in the United States. A friend of Okello

provided him an apartment, but did not live with him there. Said Okello, "I was already scared –

of my physical needs and who would care about me…. If I fell asleep, who would care about

me." Okello needed relationships with others to feel safer.

All of the participants in this study were at least familiar with the community of survivors

at TASSC or the Kovler Center. Although most of the men (and women, too) trusted (and so

presumably felt safe among) other survivors, one man expressed a loss of psychological safety

when interacting with TASSC members. Simon said, "I don't appreciate the intention that as a person who has gone through torture, survived it and everything, has lost parents because of that, I don't want to get together with other survivors and talk about this again. What for? It's just too much pain." This loss of psychological safety greatly limited Simon's ability to be a part of the survivor community.

The overall freedom in their new country provided some reassurance of safety. This freedom was captured in several narratives. In the United States, says Eddie, "your mind is free so you can do whatever you want with your life. You can say whatever you want and you can think however you like." Simon contributed the idea of how important freedom is, saying "The greatest torture is not being able to express yourself and scream what you have on your mind."

At the same time, the men also experienced some feelings of vulnerability about their physical safety. Eddie described how he "did not feel good" in what he characterized as an unsafe neighborhood. Okello described how he was scared the first time he came "face to face with white people and racism." At the time of our interview, "Minutemen" were threatening to shoot immigrants illegally arriving from Mexico across the Arizona dessert. Okello said, "When you see guys come with guns and say we are going to protect, even if the government can't do it. I've seen it back in my country and I know what they can do." Okello also described how vulnerable he felt from poverty. He went to the hospital to treat an injury and described how he could, "see how people are being treated, how bad the services are…. The public hospital in Uganda was much better."

The men expressed appreciation for the political safety in the U.S. Nonetheless, they continue to express uneasiness. That is sometimes related to the fear of becoming retraumatized by other survivors' stories. It also encompasses fear about their own well-being and that others

care about and are able to assist them when the men are in need. One man expressed some fear for his physical safety in the neighborhood in which he lived.

The men recognized that relationships within a community could strengthen the feelings of safety they sought when they came to the United States. The men evaluated the contexts in which they began to reach out to others to begin community life to ascertain threats to their safety. The freedom experienced in the United States was reassuring. Men continued to experience apprehension about safety as they ventured into community life, however. This next section explains trust and the way in which trusting relationships affected community life.

Trust experiences of men in the United States.

Trust, as defined in this study, is to believe in the integrity of decision-making, and in the reliable participation of others in the community. Members of a community may trust each other enough to share their hopes and their resources.

In most cases, the men did not find a sense of community among others from their country. When Evrard described his reluctance to be part of the Congolese community, he stated the reason was "because they talk."   This gossiping talk was of particular concern to Evrard because his daughter had been raped. He explained, "She cannot get married… and when people talk about this rape, it will be something shared."   In speaking about people from his country of Congo, Simon also expressed a lack of trust. Simon said that people of his country came to the U.S. "bringing with them this mentality of division. They are still even here trying to keep on with the division. And this is not good. This is not the way to do things."

The men also had a hard time developing trusting relationships with U.S. communities. Eddie described how in the United States, "it's really important what you do here and if you do something good, then people treat you good." His job as a painter was of low social status and

undermined his ability to relate to communities of people from the U.S. Eddie described others

reactions when he told them what he did for a living saying, "that was a really bad experience in

this community for me." Okello talked about the levels of distrust he experienced with people in

the U.S. who might protest his torture, but not that of others. They may say, "Some people

should be treated that way. Not you, but some." Okello specifically references police torture in

Chicago and explains that if people in the U.S. "want to condemn that in Sudan, you can do the

same in Chicago." Okello also talked about the conditions of life in his Southside community.

The food in neighborhood grocery stores is substandard. He identified the meat he was

purchasing as expired, saying, "I wouldn't even take it if I was in Uganda."

Another obstacle to building trust in communities within the United States is because of

how little people in the U.S. know about the countries from which these participants come, and

vice versa. Japhet is uneasy about forming relationships with others because "a lot of Americans

did not even know about the war in Africa." On the other hand, Marcelo described how his

expectations of the U.S. were undermined by the realities of life in the U.S. "The picture we had

was of a blond guy and Coca-Cola in his hands, and a blonde girl and beautiful car" said

Marcelo. "When we came here to the U.S… for some reason we went to where the black people

live and there was a difference." Marcelo's picture of the U.S. was one of prosperity. Only after

he visited a black neighborhood did he realize the inequities that exist in the U.S. based on color

of skin. Marcelo's trust in the prosperity he hoped for in the U.S. were undermined by its

unequal distribution.

The common community men participants formed was that with other survivors. Said

Eddie, "they made me easier… allowing me to be myself, and they appreciated me. I just felt

like this is the place I want to be." Rodrigo described how survivors in TASSC "constantly see

each other and we give big hugs…. We are brothers and sisters from this kind of community of

survivors. You feel you are working together, it's part of the process of healing." In contrast to

the lack of trust he felt with his ethnic community, Evrard described the trust he felt with TASSC

members . He shared with TASSC members the story of his daughter's rape "because … the

only place I can go and I can share what is my feeling, what I enjoyed and knew in my country,

it was Kovler and TASSC."

There are many obstacles to experiencing trust and safety with communities in the United

States. Within the survivor community, however, most participants experienced both safety and

trust. The exception to this was experienced by Simon, who described the pain of hearing of

other survivor's torture. His sentiment was also experienced by a woman participant and will be

described in the section on women.

Empowerment experiences of men in the United States.

The experience of torture is inherently disempowering. The meaning of empowerment

following torture includes reclaiming power over and choices about one's own body and mind.

Empowerment also includes the collective pursuit of power in order to protect oneself and

influence others.

The disempowerment experienced by participants in their countries of origin is not

mirrored in their U.S. experience. Nonetheless, survivors of torture have significant obstacles to

regain the political empowerment they once exercised in their countries of origin. The difficulty

in providing for themselves; navigating their environments; negotiating with neighbors,

employers and others in a language other than that of their birth; and recovering from torture are

challenges to individual empowerment that survivors of torture cannot easily overcome. On the

other hand, the men interviewed for this story all provided evidence of their journeys toward

individual empowerment. They spoke of their progress in healing from torture and how other survivors contribute to their paths of recovery. What is more complicated are the journeys of empowerment that help strengthen a psychological sense of community in the wake of the destruction of community they experienced in their home countries.

The men talked about how decisions about their families are now out of their control. Japhet described how the embassy of his own country denied the application for his sons to immigrate to the U.S. Said Japhet, "The embassy says no, it's not my children." Because the country is so disorganized, it's been impossible to find birth certificates for his sons. Marcello disclosed that "I didn't want to get married, formally married." Yet , he said "I had to leave the country right away… so we got married." By marrying, his wife was able to get a visa to accompany Marcelo to the U.S.

Despite these obstacles, there are some opportunities for empowerment in reshaping decision-making within the family and community that are offered by U.S. culture. Evrard described how his relationship with his family, particularly his children, changed. He said, "I learned here to talk to my kids…. Here I learn to talk to them and learn to encourage them and I show them that I love them. In my country, you cannot say I love you…. But here I learned to say it…. It is healing for me." Marcelo described how his children and those of another survivor became empowered by the arrest of Pinochet, saying "it was beautiful. We had some kind of community there. We were the older ones; they (the kids) call us the comandantes." The political empowerment that had been advocated by the fathers for the people of Chile is recognized, and respected, by the sons.

Some of the men were active in political communities in the U.S., although they were not U.S.-focused. Felizardo participates in a pan-African organization that helps provide support for

Africans in the United States who need to return to their country. Rodrigo denied any support

for U.S.- based political parties, but said "I feel more that I belong to the human rights

community than to the politically active (community)."

The men described their participation in TASSC and the community life at the Kovler

Center as empowering. Rodrigo in particular described how TASSC altered the perception of

survivors' power. Rodrigo said, "We are not victims; we are survivors…. Survivors can act,

survivors can denounce." That collective self-concept enables many members of TASSC and

Kovler to take action. As described by Simon, the action he expects from TASSC "is basically

to write to the United Nations or do something about it so that it (torture) doesn't happen again."

This call to action is featured at the June 26 events sponsored by TASSC and the Kovler Center

every year. June 26 is the United Nations-created International Day in Support of Victims of

Torture.

This section has described how men participants experienced empowerment as

individuals within the TASSC /Kovler community, and as members of a community that

exercised power and influence over others. Their empowerment experiences in their countries of

origin were significant; the torture they experienced effectively disempowered their activism at

that time and changed their lives. The men were able to reclaim their identities as activists

through work in transnational communities, including the community of other survivors. The

psychological sense of community the men experienced with other survivors was empowering in

and of itself. Claiming those community ties represented the power of their recovery. The

community ties they created with other survivors also empowered them to advocate for others

who experience the vulnerability from torture.

Conclusions about Men's Community Lives in the United States

The men participants in this study fled their countries and came to the United States to reestablish their lives. The men had described their ethnic group and country as offering a sense of community in their countries of origin. That sensibility was undermined in the United States by the threats to psychological safety that people from their countries posed to the men. Other barriers also inhibited the men's abilities to establish community bonds with people in the U.S. Even qualified support for torture was frightening, and the poverty and inequalities discovered in the U.S. created a dissonance among the men.

Despite these obstacles, the culture of the U.S. provided some opportunities for reestablishing family life in ways that adapted to the culture of the United States. The men knit together family life. Several were able to reclaim the community-like bonds of family life as U.S. culture allowed new forms of relationships to develop.

The men found few communities in the United States with which to participate in community life except for that offered by the community of survivors. The trusting relationships established among survivors provided a basis for political participation and empowerment. As survivors, participants in this study could redefine their experiences and advocate for others who have been (or may be) tortured. The protections of freedoms in the United States facilitated men's safety such that they began to form new trusting relationships with family members and other survivors. From this foundation, men began the process of empowerment that sought to help those still subject to torture. The next section describes women's experiences in the United States.

<div align="center">Women in the United States</div>

The previous section explored how men developed community relationships in the United States, and how the elements of safety, trust and empowerment affected those community

relationships. This section explains how women immigrant survivors of torture developed and experienced relationships within communities once they arrived in the United States. As was true of the men, all of the participants are from countries other than the United States. One of the interviewed women (Farai, from Zimbabwe) was not actually tortured (although she was threatened). Because Farai offered insight into family life, a few quotes from her are used. The great majority of the quotes offered here, however, are from the women survivors of torture. First, the communities in which women have (or have rejected) relationships are described. Following that, the elements of safety, trust and empowerment within community are explored.

<u>Communities Women Survivors of Torture Report as Important</u>

This section describes the communities that the women describe as important, either because they have tried to assimilate into them or because they have rejected them. Community life is considered in three areas, again relying on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological levels of analysis.   First, the microlevel defined by family and ethnicity bonds are identified. Following that, the mesolevel of neighborhood and community groups are reviewed. The third, exolevel of analysis identifies how country and culture affect community life. Explanations of how safety, trust and empowerment are experienced within these communities and are related to the women's psychological sense of community follow.

<u>Family and ethnicity as community</u>**.**

When the women spoke of their families in the United States, they did not give the rich descriptions offered about family in their countries of origin. Four of the eight women interviewed indicated that they were married. Anamaria's husband is from the U.S. It was not clear if the husbands of the other women were from their countries of origin. Of the four married women, three spoke briefly of their children. One of the four was not a survivor, her husband is.

This only became clear as Farai was interviewed. Farai has young children, and described how "we immigrant communities face a challenge." Her description follows:

> It's really a challenge, it's an identity challenge. You're in a different country, different cultures, different communities. We are bringing up children who are interacting with different communities from the ones we interacted with when we were young. You try to instill your values from your communities before, but you're in a different country and the children are bound to not understand what you are imparting to them. And on the other end, you don't want your children to be different from the other children 'cause they might be considered as outcasts.

Francie offers insight into how her family adjusted to life in the United States following treatment for the torture she experienced, and her association with TASSC. Says Francie, "With the support of the communities like TASSC, doctors, physicians, the church … I changed positively. I became better and those who were to see first was my family community, my husband and children." Francie's experience describes how recovery from torture, as well as the torture itself, affects family life. One woman may have captured what the others did not speak of because of the pain associated with it. Claire said that when she left her country, "I had to leave my family altogether." Claire offered no more information than that.

The women also described the relationships with their extended family and ethnic communities in the U.S. Joelle and Farai described their ongoing relationships with people in the U.S. who were from their country and active in independence movements. Although members of these groups, they did not describe the close relationships that form community bonds. Rather, Joelle and Farai were willing to associate with people from their country only if they were active in independence movements. As declared by Joelle, "I'm a part of my tribe's

people. I am part of the liberation movement which is fighting to liberate my people back home."

Anamaria offered her experience of being part of the Guatemalan community in negative terms.

She indicated, "One of the things I have not wanted was to be with Guatemalan community."

Anamaria did not trust other Guatemalans; this is explained more fully in the section on trust.

Likewise, Kharen spoke at some length about her ambivalence toward the Filipino community.

She expressed some reservations (explained in further sections), but also added the importance of

finding community with others from her country because "you miss Filipino food."

Overall, the women did not describe a strong sense of community with extended family

life in the United States. Several of the women expressed distrust of others from their ethnic

community, which is further described in the sections on safety and trust. Those women with

children had difficulties trying to maintain their sense of community with their countries of

origin. Mistrust of others from their countries meant that the children were not exposed to the

broad communal life that many of the participants had experienced as they were growing up.

<u>Neighborhood and community groups.</u>

Like the men, the women found that building community life with people from the

United States was challenging. Anamaria described how "It's just that life is totally different

here. I think I am still looking for a community. Yeah, I think that people are too busy here."

When asked if her neighbors might offer opportunities for forming a community, Kiki said, "No.

Neighbors is never." Some of the challenges have to do with access to people, to communities.

Claire described the logistical barriers to meeting up with people made difficult because she does

not have a car. Claire said, "It is difficult, you see. You give me an appointment at 3 o'clock, I

come at 4 o'clock. If you go for the community (meeting); you late like that, it's not fair."

Francie also described how difficult it was for her because "I don't have the transportation."

In addition to the logistical challenges, the women described other barriers to forming relationships with communities in the U.S. Angelique said that "like when I go to church, they don't (aren't) open. They different." Joelle described her interaction with African American neighbors negatively, saying, "They normally don't feel for one another. They don't value the importance of education." Although Anamaria knows her neighbors through interactions over their dogs, she says that "I wouldn't feel good, as I said, if I asked them for an onion." Anamaria had continually referred to borrowing an onion as the measure of whether she could feel comfortable in a community.

Angelique felt a strong sense of community in the cooperative house in which she lived with people from many countries. She described, however, the U.S. couple who owned the house as "totally different from [other] American people." The expectations and realities of forming relationships with U.S.-based communities were too challenging for most women to overcome.

As was true for the men, the women (with one exception), described a strong sense of community with TASSC. Angelique expressed her appreciation of "the people from different countries: Ethiopia, Iraq, everywhere in the world." Claire said that "every Saturday…we go to the TASSC, where they sing, they dance, they talk, talk, talk."   Of TASSC, Joelle said "I felt that I was part of the community. Not by compulsory, but their actions pulled me to them." TASSC is an important community to most survivors interviewed. The interactions within TASSC that drew participants to it will be further discussed in the sections on safety, trust and empowerment.

Country, culture and community.

Similar to the men, the women did not describe the United States as offering them a sense of community. None of the women (or men) were seeking liberation for the people of the United States. Rather, there was much about life in the U.S. that women identified as posing barriers to building a sense of community. Many of those barriers are related to trust and safety, and are further discussed in the following sections addressing those elements. Of considerable note was also the view from women that the freedom offered in the U.S. and the protections that women could call on significantly change how they can participate in community life. The changes in country are also changes in culture. In their countries of origin, the expectation that women would defer to men was nationwide. In the United States, the interaction of women, culture and community life is more dynamic, less deferential. This dynamism is addressed more fully in the empowerment section.

Safety, Trust and Empowerment in Women's Community Life

This next section examines the ways that safety, trust and empowerment manifest in community relationships experienced by the women in the United States. Each section summarizes the definition of the elements of safety, trust and empowerment. The ways in which these elements are experienced are then described. There is a summary of women's experiences at the conclusion of the section.

Safety experiences of women in the United States.

The way safety is understood in this study is to be free from threats to one's body and to one's emotional well-being. In addition, safety is to be free from fear, the sense that one is not afraid. Kharen captured what safety meant to her with this comment. "There are executions, killings happening but probably because (of what) I've been through, it's easier for me…. I think I know how to sense danger and like, I know when to stop and so that many people will not

be compromised or affected." For a committed activist like Kharen, who continues to return to her country and engage in activism against the ecological damage the U.S. left in the Philippines, safety was experienced through calculated risk. For Francie, safety is that "the past will never come to me again." The safety that the women describe is not only physical safety; it also includes a psychological freedom, viz., being free from threats to their emotional well-being.

For many of the women, the sense of freedom they experienced in the U.S. provided safety. Kiki said, "I come (to) America. (It) is free – it is safety." Francie described how "I am going to be protected because the United States accepts the rights, the rights of the person. I am sure that my country cannot come to look for me here because the U.S. is where they respect my rights. I am not scared anymore, I am free." The safety afforded women in the U.S. affected family relationships. Explained Joelle, "if you beat a woman in America, the police will pick you up. Back home, you can be beating your wife; she will be screaming. If somebody comes and you tell them, don't knock at my door, he will go back (leave)."

Despite the freedoms afforded women in the U.S., Anamaria continued to feel threatened by people from her country. She explained "One of the things that I have not wanted was to be with the Guatemalan community…. Being with them brings memories to me, and so that's hard. But then the other things is I am always concerned are they going to ask me, 'What happened to you?', 'Why are you here?', or 'Where did you live?' Those are questions I really don't want to answer to them because I think part of me is afraid of 'who are they, why are they asking me those questions'."

Their participation in TASSC and the sense of community it offers all survivors of torture facilitated the women's sense of safety. Said Kiki, "I have safety because I have TASSC International." Claire described the safety she felt with TASSC, because "TASSC made me

forget everything." However, Anamaria, like Simon, described how unsafe she feels with TASSC. Anamaria's sense of security was challenged by the thought that survivors share their stories at TASSC meetings. Said Anamaria, "Sometimes they start talking about what happened to them and it's just very hard for me." She is afraid of being asked for her story, saying "I just did it once and then I was like no, I cannot [talk about what happened to me]."

Joelle expressed threats to safety from her neighbors. She explained how she pursued prosecution of her neighbors for dealing drugs, which resulted in the conviction of one of them. Her safety is now assured, as her neighbors "have taken note that when they linger around my house, a report will be made." Joelle says that now "They just don't come. I'm safe."

The women (and men) in this study could not begin to form community relationships until they left their countries and found the relative safety offered by life in the U.S. Now safe, the women began the tentative interaction that begins the establishment of communities. Several of the women generally expressed a sense of safety in their relationships with men because of the elevated status that women have in U.S. culture compared to that experienced in their own countries. With the exception of one woman whose vulnerability to the story-sharing that is part of TASSC, the women expressed a sense of safety that helped them build community with other survivors.

The women expressed a need to feel safe before they could develop the trusting relationships so important to community life. Trust is addressed in the following section.

Trust experiences of women in the United States.

The concept of trust suggests an expectation that others may be counted on to reliably participate in community life with integrity. Trust contributes to members' belief in the integrity

of the authority structure of the community, be it the leadership or the symbols that convey to others who is in the community (McMillan, 1996).

The one community in which participants expressed trust is TASSC. "I pick TASSC as my family," said Claire. "If there is not TASSC," said Kiki, there is "nobody to talk to (about) your problem." Kiki described how TASSC "comfort you to be strong, to be fine." Kharen described how she came to find TAASC and "they understand what I'm doing. I'm not an oddball there." Joelle offered that "TASSC is more trustful to me because … I know their mind. They know mine. I tell them what I like, what I don't like. I see their reactions. I know what they are." These strong feelings of trust among survivors are a basis of the community created at TASSC.

The women also described issues of trust (and lack of trust) with the communities in which they live. Kiki lives in a community house where people from different countries live together. She described their weekly community decision-making consultations and exclaimed, "We do everything together like a community!" Kharen lives with a different peace-making community and described how, because "they've been arrested many times" and "some of them have been kidnapped, some have died, so it's easier to relate to them." The positive experiences of Kiki and Kharen contrast with those of Joelle. Joelle who does not live in such a community house described how untrustworthy her neighbors are, how when she has tried to negotiate clearing up their shared yard, "they always give me a dead ear."

Another expression of mistrust was voiced by Kharen. She felt that she could not share her identity as an activist and organizer with the expatriate community of Philippines in the United States. Among other concerns, she felt that Filipinos would "think of me as competition, especially if I speak better English than them." Kharen explained that this is "a national problem

of corrupt mentality. It's like, if you shine, somebody tries to pull you back." Anamaria was also insistent that she could not trust others in the Guatemalan community, saying "it's still in me, that part of don't talk especially to the Guatemalans. You don't know who they are and are they going to tell people where you are?"

Overall, the women described the trusting relationships they have developed with other survivors as contributing to their community bonds with TASSC. Challenges remain with how trusting the women find others from their country, and their neighbors.

Empowerment experiences of women in the United States.

As is true for the men, women experience torture as inherently disempowering. Communities and individuals become disempowered when stripped of decision-making abilities as the perpetrators of torture dismantle social and political structures (Gonsalves et al., 1993). The prohibition of political dissent and collective action disempowers individual and communities as well (Green, 1994).   Kharen offered a sense of how important empowerment is to activists with her comment about her own activism and hope to empower others. Kharen said, "It's very important to me because it [activism] unleashes the power of people for communities to gain something for themselves."

The women participants described a sense of freedom and not only safety as described above, but also empowerment in the United States. Kiki described her reason for not wanting to return to her home country "because it's not free. In the United States, is good, is free." Francine said that what brought her to the Unites States, "I am 100% sure that I am going to be in peace - a place where I was going to be protected because the United States accepts the rights, the rights of the person." Joelle offered, "There is freedom of speech here."   Through the freedom experienced in the United States, Joelle and Kharen are able to be empowered enough to

continue to advocate for the liberation of women and the people of their countries. The women

also expressed a sense of empowerment in the United States about their status as women. Joelle

described how the freedom experienced in U.S. culture extended to how men and women may

relate to each other.   She said, "Because if you talk to a man in my tribal community he will say,

'Hey Joelle, is it because we are in America, when I say 'sit down', you will ask me why?'

Joelle's quote indicates how the changed status of women may also affect how men relate to

women. This power relation between the genders is in contrast to the experience she described

in her country. There, she explained, a man could beat his wife without interference from others

(described in the section on safety in country of origin).

TASSC and the Kovler Center did much to facilitate the empowerment of the individuals

who benefitted from receiving services there. Women participants described various aspects of

how their torture and ultimate displacement disempowered them. Anamaria described the

flashbacks from her torture as a barrier to relating to others. Said Angelique, "being a survivor,

you don't choose 'I want to be this'. It just happens." Together, the survivors who participated

in TASSC sought their mutual empowerment.   Angelique described it as "you cannot do nothing

by yourself -- but together 5 people, 10, 100, 200…! It is for this world to have community. It's

good for me; it's very important." Survivors are able to help each other be strong enough to heal

and survive their torture. Francie expressed it as, "they (TASSC) try convince her that it's

possible to forget what happened and build a new future."

It is also through TASSC that women described their empowerment as a political group

in the United States, one that advocates for the abolition of torture. Joelle described her

participation in a June 26 event in Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C.. TASSC hosts activities

that address torture during the week including June 26, the United Nations' International Day in

Support of Victims of Torture. Joelle said, "We had a demonstration. TASSC and Amnesty, we had a demonstration at the White House." Francie also expressed a desire to engage in advocacy, to be a member of an advocacy group on behalf of women with disabilities "so I will continue to get the chance of helping women." The activism that was so much a part of the lives of the women in their countries of origin may be generating the possibility of activism now that they are in the U.S.

The gatherings of TASSC members have enabled the women to gain individual empowerment that facilitates the possibility of forming relationships in new communities and in relating with others in new ways. Women became empowered collectively through TASSC as well, advocating for others who are subject to oppression and vulnerable to torture. The psychological sense of community experienced in TASSC was strengthened by the empowerment of its members. The commitment to the human rights of people in their countries continues through a commitment to other survivors. The possibility of advocating on behalf of women, people with disabilities, and their own countries also continues.

Conclusions about Women's Community Lives in the United States

Upon arrival in the United States, the women experienced great changes in their family lives. Like the men, the women left extended family members at home. Four women have children and husbands; the other four did not directly disclose their status. As all try to adjust to U.S. culture, families are challenged to integrate valued cultural practices of their countries of origin. The ability of family life to model community life in the U.S. is undermined because participants have so many difficulties forming community bonds with neighbors and other people in the U.S.

The obstacles to forming community bonds with U.S.-based people are numerous and include logistical challenges due to limited transportation options, as well as general expectations of what U.S. interests are. Those community groups outside of TASSC with which the women experienced a sense of community were with those cooperative living arrangements described by Kharen and Angelique. The communities are committed to peace, activism and multiculturalism.

As is true with the men, TASSC provided a foundation for community life in which the women felt safe and able to trust others. TASSC also provided opportunities for the women to advocate for the abolition of torture. TASSC offers the women safety, trust in others, and opportunities for collective as well as individual empowerment.

The culture in the United States offers women the opportunity to increase their status in relationships with men. The women generally described the opportunity that U.S. culture would offer more equitable ways of relating to family members, especially their husbands. These opportunities affect women and men, and remain in conflict with the norms of gender interaction in their countries of origin. This tension was experienced even in the feedback session where the results of this study were shared with torture survivors in Washington, D.C.

Further discussion of the experiences of women and men, in countries of origin and the United States, are offered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

DISCUSSION

This section of the dissertation considers the findings of this study in terms of the relevant literature. The findings themselves are complex. The participants in this study, immigrant survivors of torture, are from eleven different countries. Their experiences of community life in their countries of origin and in the United States are decidedly different. The ways in which gender has an impact on community life are also examined. This complexity and what it contributes to our knowledge of torture and psychological sense of community are considered below in the "Major Findings."

Also because of the complexity of this study, there are implications from the findings that affect theory, research and practice. These are addressed following the major findings. Finally, the strengths and limitations of this study are identified so that readers may better understand its distinctive contribution.

Finally, this qualitative study is not an examination of cause and effect. The experiences of these survivors of torture are not necessarily a direct result of their being tortured. Indeed, some of their experiences in the United States may be common with all other immigrants. For these participants, however, their immigration experience is related to their lives in their countries of origin. These participants were tortured by their governments and had to flee their countries in order to find safety. Without their experiences of torture, they may not have been immigrants. In seeking understanding of their experiences, I am unable to distinguish participants' immigration status from the fact of their torture.

Major Findings

This section first evaluates the communities that immigrant survivors of torture describe as being important to them. Three categories of communities are addressed, mirroring the micro-, meso- and macro- levels of analysis of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological perspective. As was reported in the results, the microlevel examines family. For many of the participants, the extended family was closely bound and often identified by ethnicity. For this reason, ethnicity is considered at the microlevel. The mesolevel examines neighborhood or affiliation communities. The macrolevel describes how country and culture contributed to community life among participants. Within each of these levels of analysis, the experiences of men and women are examined. Unlike the format of the results, this examination also includes within each ecological level reports of community life in countries of origin and the United States. This comparison helps underscore how community life changed for men and women following their torture and immigration to the United States.

Following the discussion of which communities are important, the discussion focuses on how safety, trust and empowerment are experienced. Within each subsection on safety, trust and empowerment, the experiences of men and women are addressed. Likewise, the experiences in countries of origin and the U.S. are also included.

Communities Important to Survivors of Torture

The participants in this study described communities that are important to them. Also described is how participants' relationships with those communities changed over time, as people left their countries and came to the United States.   Men and women experienced their community lives differently; this is also examined. Overall, communities in countries of origin that were generally important included family, community organizations such as microloan organizations, and political movements. Participants also described community relationships

among larger, unusual kinds of communities that include all people in the country (for men) and all women (for women). These larger associations seemed to be based on a shared oppression and the survivors' desires to develop a community whose human rights were being violated and could be reclaimed. Once in the United States, the community that almost everyone found was among survivors of torture.

The literature in community psychology does not address community life as experienced by immigrant survivors of torture. The literature addressing recovery from torture often neglects to examine contextual factors outside of torture that affect survivors' well-being. This study contributes insights into the community life that survivors experienced in their countries of origin, and the dramatic changes that occurred after they left.

Family as community.

The participants in this study described family life in their countries of origin as gateways to the larger communities outside their homes. From families, both women and men learned to share resources, make themselves available to those in need, and sustain their shared culture. Most of the participants described family as including extended members beyond the nuclear family. The extended family and tribal or ethnic identification identified the membership boundary that McMillan and Chavis (1986) rely on to denote who is in one's community and who is not.

How families and communities interact to influence a psychological sense of community is relatively unexplored. The influence that family structures had on community life has been studied by, among others, Robert Putnam. In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam (2000) described how civic engagement in the United States is related to changes in family and community structures. The interaction of family and community structures was also evaluated to understand the

changes that occurred following World War II when women began working outside the home in increased numbers (Roos, Trigg, & Hartman, 2006). As family structures responded to the need for women to work, community structures either adapted or struggled as well. In both studies (Putnam, 2000; Roos, Trigg & Hartman, 2006), changes in family structure affected community life, just as changes in community life affected family structure. The stories of the participants in this study reveal the impact of torture at an ecological level, undermining the solidarity experienced in both family and community life.

In participants' countries of origin, families became fractured as the unity that once had been experienced was challenged by political divides. Those in Rodrigo's Chilean family who supported Allende were united; those who supported Pinochet ignored the consequences to those who supported Allende. The failure to acknowledge how torture ripped apart families and communities perpetuated the mistrust and lack of safety family and community members experienced. A sense of family, and a sense of community, was undermined by the long lasting effects of torture. Such changes can impact larger social structures as well. The countries in which participants lived lost the foundation for building their societies that families and communities provide.

In the United States, participants' family, community and cultural lives became even more unstable. The men and women who had to flee their countries in order to find safety left behind spouses and children who could not, in some circumstances, come with them. Moreover, the once familial exchanges among members of a tribe become negotiations of suspicion about who may be spying on whom. In the wake of the flights from their countries, families, tribes, and expatriates of a country became fractured, mistrustful of which side of the divide in their country others might be from. Rodrigo reported how his family remained polarized. Other

participants indicated their mistrust of others in their ethnic group, and from their country. Families and communities whose unity was unstable in their countries of origin became completely splintered in the U.S.

Community organizations.

In contrast to their family lives, men and women participants reported more variance among each others' experiences of community life in their countries of origin. Men described strong bonds with national and international movements working for freedom and human rights (described in the next section). Women's experiences of community life close to home were with microloan organizations. The microloan organizations allowed people to share the few resources they had. The sense of community that stemmed from women participants' involvement was a way of helping women receive the money they might need, and to control resources that were otherwise controlled by men in their families. The women involved in the microloan organizations formed bonds based on shared values (to help each other) and shared vulnerability (to the oppression of women within the family). Women's inclusion in the community microloan association helped them negotiate the alienation or the lack of a positive sense of community they experienced within the oppressive society at large. As is also the case among Afghani women active in the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, a sense of community at the organizational level mediated their sense of community at the macro, cultural level (Brodsky, 2009).

In the United States, the logistics of neighborhood safety, transportation and language created barriers that men and women survivors had difficulty overcoming in order to get access to others with whom to build community life. Even more significant were the barriers created when neighbors and potential community members voiced tolerance for torture. Differences in

values can result in a negative sense of community (Brodsky, 1996). Survivors reject relationships with those whose support for torture imperils all those who live in countries with despotic governments.

In the U.S., the close bonds that created a sense of community on which participants could rely are those found among other survivors of torture through TASSC and the Kovler Center. TASSC and Kovler provide what Turro and Krause (2009) might characterize as the "protective space" in which a sense of community can be developed. Participants described the trust they experienced among each other (Bothne, 2010), a basis for the stronger sense of community that relationship-based communities have (Berliner, Dominguez, Kjaerulf, & Mikkelsen, 2006). The sense of community found within TASSC and Kovler also provided participants a foundation for negotiating U.S. culture. As a group, they could share strategies. As a community, immigrant survivors of torture came together to rally for others who have been or are being tortured. There are opportunities for empowerment of individuals and the community of torture survivors that were important to these participants.

The TASSC and Kovler communities negotiated the terrain between the sociopolitical territory that tolerates (and sometimes embraces) torture and individuals' needs to mediate the tolerance of torture. Again, the community helped mediate the negative impact of cultural values. This is similar to the sense of community created by "colored" South Africans in Australia. Together, the community was able to transform the pejorative label imposed on them in their countries of origin to a positive identification in a new setting (Sonn & Fisher, 1996). In the same ways, victims of torture have used their sense of community at TASSC and Kovler to form a positive survivor identity. The positive survivor identity becomes a basis for survivors to organize and resist torture.

While it is true that torture dismantles community life (Anckerman, Dominguez, Kiaerulf, Berliner, & Mikkelsen, 2005; Ehrenreich, 2003; Gonsalves, Torres, Fischman, Ross, & Vargas, 1993; Green, 1994; Peddle, Monteiro, Guluma, & Macaulay, 1999), it is also true that community life may dismantle the effects of torture. Through TASSC and Kovler, immigrant survivors of torture described how they could share with each other what happened to them, and to be understood. As described by Claire, at TASSC "they (survivors) sing, they dance, they talk, talk, talk." There is joy in the community life experienced among other survivors. That joy is a symbol of recovery from torture.

Culture and country.

The men expressed a sense of community with all others in their countries of origin. The women expressed a sense of community with all other women. It seems unlikely that a sense of community can be developed among so broadly based a group of people. Yet both the men and women spoke of their commitment to help others in their countries achieve their human rights. When shared values are the basis of a sense of community, the strong bonds formed among community members may be an expression of responsibility to protect those values (Nowell & Boyd, 2010). The shared values within these broadly defined groups that survivors report as important may be their opposition to torture, to corrupt government, to abuse of power (including that created by patriarchy) and to injustice (including oppression of women). The capacity to protect those values cannot be accomplished by individuals. As was described by Francie, important values are sustained when older generations meet the responsibility to educate the younger ones.

On June 26 of every year, survivors of torture come together to advocate for each other and those who remain vulnerable to torture. This responsibility to self and others is a remarkable

feature of this day identified by the United Nations as an international day in support of victims

of torture. As was true of participants in their countries of origin, the sense of community

experienced among a broadly diverse group is based on a shared acknowledgment of the

oppression each has faced. Accompanying that acknowledgement, however, is a commitment to

help each other survive and oppose torture. It is that shared purpose and reciprocal responsibility

to advance that purpose that strengthens individuals' capacity to negotiate the larger culture

(Bishop, Chertok, & Jason, 1997). As survivors of torture acknowledge and share each others'

commitment to advance human rights, advance women's rights, and end torture, a sense of

community is created among those in a movement, among women, and in a country. The

participants in this study move from victim to survivor through their shared community life.

Gender Differences in Community Life

This study identifies differences and similarities between the community lives of men and

women. Men and women both described strong family relationships in their countries of origin

that were made vulnerable to the consequences of national policies that punish those who

dissent. Men and women also described divisions within their families that resulted from their

activism, subsequent torture, and flights for safety to the U.S.

When describing their community lives, the similarities and differences between the men

and women became more apparent. Both men and women described alliances with those in their

countries of origin who shared their oppression and disempowerment. The ecological level at

which men and women negotiated that disempowerment was different, however. Women

described activity in community organizations such as microloan organizations. In many ways,

the microloan organizations provided women a strategy to negotiate the oppression they

experienced in the larger culture. Much like the experiences of women in RAWA in

Afghanistan, the women engaged in microloan organizations to experience a positive sense of community within the context of the more negative sense of community experienced in a culture that devalued women (Brodsky, 2009).

The experiences of men identified a stronger sense of community among those in the national and international political movements in which the men were active. The differences of community life between men and women, between the larger national movement and local community organization, are consistent with the findings of a multinational study of political participation that examines gender differences in civic engagement (Coffé, & Bolzendahl, 2010). Women and men engage in political life in distinct ways. Men are more likely to engage in the collective action that men participants in this study reported as a foundation for forming the relationships that offered them a sense of community. The men joined together to fight their oppression as the women did; they did so at a different ecological level.

Conclusion on Communities

The communities that survivors described as important were crucial in helping them negotiate their lives within larger contexts. Families helped individual participants learn how to participate in community life. Community organizations such as microloan associations helped women negotiate the lack of power they experienced within their families and their countries of origin. The sense of community formed among all women and all people in a country created a foundation to challenge their shared oppression by acknowledging their common purpose to fight that oppression. The reciprocal responsibility each had to maintain those challenges strengthened the bonds among them. A psychological sense of community experienced at one ecological level may be mediated by the stronger (or perhaps weaker) sense of community

experienced at another ecological level. Not surprisingly, women and men differed in how they engaged in community life.

This study illustrates how a sense of community can emerge from the negotiation that occurs between individuals and the larger social constructs within which lives are led, and relationships are formed. The community life described encompasses constructs beyond the interpersonal bonding that McMillan and Chavis (1986) identify. The communities important to these activists, immigrants, and survivors of torture helped them build strong relationships with those who had to negotiate the same larger sociopolitical terrain.

The identification of communities important to the immigrant survivors of torture who participated suggests how essential issues of safety, trust and empowerment are in their community lives. These survivors were activists in their own countries. They were threatened, tortured and in order to stay alive, had to flee their countries. Upon arrival in the United States, they had to reestablish lives without the reliable foundation that family life had provided them. These elements of safety, trust and empowerment are more fully explored in the following section.

Added Dimensions of a Psychological Sense of Community

The analysis of safety, trust and empowerment and how they are experienced among the participants in this study adds new dimensions to McMillan and Chavis' (1986) understanding of a psychological sense of community. The following discusses each of these elements one by one. Overall, the examination of safety, trust and empowerment reveals how larger societal forces can interact with the creation and experience of communities. Communities can help mediate threats to members' safety, the negotiation of trust in an unstable environment, and the development of empowerment affecting community safety and trust.

Safety.

McMillan and Chavis (1986) understand safety as a result of community members'
awareness of the boundaries of who is in and who is out. With that knowledge, community
members are better able to intimately connect with each other. Because many survivors believe
they may be tortured again (Magwaza, 1999), the issue of safety after their torture and flight
from their countries to seek safety remains relevant. That relevance may hold true for survivors,
their families and communities.

The threats to safety that are part of the culture of torture invade family life. Evrard
described his daughter's rape as punishment to him, a result of his activism. Rodrigo described
the division that occurred in his family over who supported Pinochet or Allende.   Neighborhood
sense of community is affected by residents' safety (Townly & Kloos, 2011), but the effects of
torture move beyond risk when walking in a neighborhood. In participants' countries of origin,
the political divides that can make for interesting table talk in other circumstances became
representative of an unacceptable tolerance for torture when a family member is targeted by
authorities. Torture changes meanings of words; it becomes the context through which political
divides are life threatening. Torture is an interpersonal crime; intimacy is established between
the person tortured and the person doing it. Families become distant as victim and perpetrator
become intimate. The communities in which survivors have been included are no longer safe for
the survivor. The survivor is no longer safe for the community. This is why establishing
community life with others is so important in survivors' recovery (Blackwell, 1993; CVT, 2005).
Communities can offer a bridge between those who have been tortured and the capacity to feel
safe. The meaning of their lives and the sense of security of one's place in the world can be
reestablished.

Maslow (1942) offers a definition of safety that includes the concept that the world is good, free of threats and conflict. Maslow suggests that insecure people have a "continual, never dying longing for security" (p.336). In participants' unstable countries with abysmal human rights records, perhaps the only routes to security were through alliances with those who shared the same goals for justice, equality and respect for human rights. Among the activists that these survivors were, the drive to experience safety in their countries was accomplished through bonding with others. Individuals in the association of journalists of which Okello was a part filed separate challenges to censorship and antiterrorism laws. A sense of community emerged from the association as they distributed the vulnerability such challenges created among them. Their shared purpose was to challenge the law and protect each other. Their reciprocal responsibility was to protect each other. From this shared commitment and negotiation of external relationships, a sense of community was formed (Bishop, Chertok, & Jason, 1997). Perhaps the reason why the journalists were able to maintain a sense of community and the family was not is because journalists choose their calculated risk. Family members, on the other hand, were vulnerable simply because of their association.

Survivors expressed great appreciation for the protections of rights that living in the United States affords them. The "continual, never dying longing for security" (Maslow, 1942, p.336) is one step closer for survivors who live in the United States. One step in their recovery from torture is to recover the capacity to feel safe with others. The expression of support for torture challenges that capacity. That survivors reject torture is a foundation for the safety they feel among each other.

Safety and Gender.

Women and men both felt unsafe in their countries of origin. Once in the United States, however, women expressed a greater sense of safety. Women's feelings of safety increased because of protections of their rights to dissent, but also because they felt better protected from violence directed at them by men. The power balance between men and women shifted in the United States, empowering women to call the police when threatened, for example. This suggests that women may become more active in community life than had been the case in their countries of origin.

If lack of safety is a barrier to women's participation in community life (Calazza, 2005), is increased sense of safety a catalyst? The data did not address this issue. What did emerge is that women and men experience close ties to community life at different ecological levels. Women and men are both engaged in advocacy for human rights; in countries of origin, women do so closer to home.

Trust.

As with safety, McMillan and Chavis (1986) identify trust as an important element in psychological sense of community that is protected by members' understanding of the community's boundaries. Within the community are those who can be trusted. That trust also enables power to be exchanged within the community such that members may respond to each other's influence. The participants in this study described trust as the most important element of sense of community. Yet as is true for safety and empowerment, the negotiation of trust within the communities in participants' countries of origin was affected by external contextual forces.

As described in the section above, a regime of torture destabilizes communities' safety. As goes safety, so goes trust. A neighbor's notice of a late night violation of a curfew could bring the authorities calling was the example from Okello. He did not know who might report

him, or why. Okello and his neighbors knew what might happen were the government to learn this information, however. Torture is the device its perpetrators use for social control (Gray, 2004). Learning how to trust others in countries where the consequences of being betrayed can be so profound is difficult.

Threats to safety destabilized otherwise trusted relationships. The experiences of the participants in this study illustrate how external factors such as stigma and social control of dissent can also undermine the capacity to form trust within communities. To recover the sense of community, the community must provide a space for its members to experience safety and trust among each other. That negotiation may require the community to allow subcommunities to exist within the boundaries of the larger community. As McMillan and Chavis (1986) suggest, within those safe boundaries the exchange of influence can occur. As Wiesenfeld (1996) suggests, that influence can be facilitated as individuals in subcommunities negotiate on behalf of their shared interests.

Trust and Gender.

Cultural norms can also undermine trust within a community. Women were expected to be caretakers of husbands and children, and to defer to patriarchal authority within the family. The women described the lack of trust they experienced with the men in their families and in their detention cells because of this "required" preference. The undermining of trust, as noted above, interacts with threats to safety. Although not disclosed by any of the women participants, it is likely that all of them were raped during their detention (CVT, 2005). The lack of trust the women experienced went beyond the threats to their physical safety, however. The condemnation that women anticipate and experience from men (and other women) for being victimized by sexual assault silences the women. This silencing occurred even in the feedback

sessions when I reported the results to TASSC members in Washington, D.C. Women did not

trust the men survivors in the room not to react negatively to their disclosure about having been

detained in cells with other men.

Because women are silenced about their sexual assaults, they and their countries are

deprived of the possibility of holding accountable their perpetrators (McKay, 2000). Without

that accountability, it is likely that rape as a tool of war will continue, as will the stigma that

accompanies it (McKay, 2000). Women are thus unable to trust that justice will be served.

Women also remain subject to the condemnation of others for acts they resisted (Ryan, 1972).

Women and men, within families, communities and countries thus experience barriers to

building a sense of community. This is the "myth of the we" (Wiesenfeld, 1996) that requires

greater interrogation. Women and men do form community life together. Finding

subcommunities within the larger community to build the trust between men and women may

form a foundation to negotiate cultural norms that otherwise silence women and the men who

support them.

<u>Empowerment.</u>

The experiences of torture survivors in their countries of origin are case studies of how

powerless an individual can be. The threats to their lives and their inability to challenge those

threats were so severe that participants had to flee their countries and leave those communities

with whom they shared their lives. Yet before these participants fled, these activists worked with

others to organize opportunities for political and community empowerment. The organizations

formed, the microloan organizations, political movements, women and freedom-focused

communities, created a foundation for people in oppressed countries to counter oppression.

They offered participants opportunities for empowerment.

Anderson's (2010) research indicates a strong sense of community promotes community members' beliefs in their own efficacy and belief in government's likelihood to respond to those political concerns. Perhaps one reason why torture is so disempowering is the enormous consequences to survivors' unrealized hopes for efficacy in challenging their governments. It is not just that their empowerment strategies failed. It is also that the empowerment strategies led to their torture. The torture participants experienced undermined the safe and trusting relationships previously found within their families, and within their countries. Participants' failure to facilitate community empowerment for themselves, their families and others similarly oppressed eventually led to the flights for safety that isolated them from the lives they had known.

The empowerment of its members also formed the basis for a strong sense of community among survivors in the United States. Particularly important to the healing survivors experienced through TASSC and the Kovler Center was the reinforcement of the power of "survivors" of torture, rather than the diminishment that the label of victim casts. The reconfiguration of the oppressed status that outsiders cast to reinforce oppression may be the basis of a strong sense of community based in shared resilience (Sonn & Fisher, 1998).

The experiences of the participants in this study identify how important it is for organizations such as TASSC and Kovler to provide their members opportunities to reclaim individual empowerment. As survivors gain trust among each other and became empowered, the psychological sense of community experienced within TASSC and Kovler grew. An outcome of the strong sense of community was that the community became empowered, able to band together to advocate against torture and for human rights.

Empowerment and Gender.

The experience of a sense of community within an organization can be empowering for its members (Hughey, Peterson, Lowe, & Oprescu, 2008). In the present study, some women took action together to share meager resources and allow each other the episodic economic independence that occurred from each microloan. Each woman had to participate in order for all women to become empowered. Men took action with others similarly oppressed to create human rights movements. By coming together, the men were able to resist the oppression that each of them shared.

A sense of community emerged from these organizations through these shared purposes and the engagement of their members. Bishop, Chertok, & Jason (1997) identified this engagement as reciprocal responsibility. Responsibility to each other effectively monitored their paths to mutual empowerment. These participants shared a belief in something bigger than themselves and took action to achieve it. The interaction of psychological sense of community and community empowerment provided energy to their resistance of oppression. Women and men may bond over a shared desire for empowerment based on different dimensions of disempowerment. Women are denied power based on their gender; this may be the basis for their "reciprocal responsibility".

Conclusion.

Individuals experience safety, trust and empowerment in relation to other people. The survivors of torture who participated in this study described how community life mediated the challenges to safety, trust and empowerment created by larger sociopolitical forces. Communities were formed based on members' needs to share values that could help them negotiate the sociopolitical forces they could not otherwise influence. The community members' shared purpose and values enabled individuals to take action.

Within their countries of origin, trust diminished as threats of torture and other harm disrupted family and community life. The empowerment sought through community organizing and human rights movements was eviscerated when participants were tortured. Within the safer confines of the United States, participants were able to make those tentative steps to rebuild connections to others through community life. Among other survivors, participants reclaimed a psychological sense of community. The sense of community formed relied upon members' reciprocal responsibility to help each other and all other torture survivors. Through community life, these vulnerable individual participants reclaimed safety, trust and empowerment.

The experiences of the participants in this study illustrate how trust, safety and empowerment interact within a community. Because their governments were threatening and unjust, the capacity of people to trust each other in community and social life was undermined. The undermining of human rights, including the right to dissent, disempowered those who sought to challenge the human rights violations being experienced. These participants worked collectively with others to challenge their disempowerment. Once participants were tortured, however, their safety was so threatened that they had to leave their countries.

Gender and Community Life

Women and men experienced safety, trust and empowerment differently based on their gendered identities. It is not just that women defied expected gender roles and so made themselves vulnerable to threats from their governments. Communities have the capacity to exacerbate the effects of torture (Anckerman, Dominguez, Soto, Kiaerulf, Berliner, & Mikkelsen, 2005; Peddle, Moteiro, Guluma, & Macaulay, 1999), perhaps particularly so with women. When women's safety was threatened, so too were their reputations. Although women may have strenuously resisted their torture, women remain condemned for the sexual assaults

waged against them (McKay, 2000; Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008). When women's safety is threatened, so too is their role in the families and communities of which they are a part. Because women are not the leaders of their cultures or their families, their vulnerability to this double threat is perpetuated. Women's safety is thus related to their empowerment.

The men, too, offered examples of how the cultural expectations of men as the head of the family affected their experiences of disempowerment when their families were broken up as men participants fled their countries. Men did not experience the cultural condemnation that women did, however. Nonetheless, both men and women who come together in the community of torture survivors may also need to find the subgroups within the larger community that help them negotiate the greater diversity communities offer (Wiesenfeld, 1996).

<div align="center">Implications for Theory, Research and Practice</div>

This study has generated information about immigrant survivors of torture, psychological sense of community, gender differences in how community relationships may be experienced, and the impact of country and culture on how communities form. As indicated in the previous examination of gender, the findings have implications that relate to theory, research and practice.

Implications for Theory

The findings in this study suggest that ecological context may affect the ways in which communities form and its members experience a psychological sense of community. The psychological impact of that context is also needed to understand the formation of communities.

The construct of a psychological sense of community offered by McMillan and Chavis (1986) identifies how interpersonal bonds among members mesh together to form the strong ties of community life. This study identifies how communities form to mediate the impact of external forces on its members. Participants in this study created and engaged in communities as

strategies to resist oppression. A sense of community was formed with all those who shared that oppression. The contextual evaluation of a psychological sense of community may reveal insight into the mediating properties of community life for individuals in societies that are characterized by human rights violations, government corruption, and oppression of marginalized groups. Understanding the context in which communities form may add to more meaning to the construct of psychological sense of community developed by McMillan and Chavis (1986).

This study describes how torture undermines the capacity of any individual or community to experience safety, trust or empowerment. Torture undermines safety and trust among people; the lack of safety and trust undermines the capacity to form communities. The disempowerment of communities to challenge governments that torture increases the impunity with which torture is perpetuated. As torture is perpetuated, the capacity of people to experience safety and trust diminishes. This dysfunctional cycle disrupts the formation of communities and the empowerment of their members. Communities that form in such circumstances may be the result of shared psychological response to the environment.   The psychological impact of environmental context on community life needs further exploration.

The experiences of community life in countries of origin and the United States illustrated how safety, trust and empowerment interact to affect community life. When participants described a lack of power (within their countries of origin; for women, in relation to men), they also described vulnerability and not being safe. When safety was undermined, participants described difficulty in trusting others. In the United States, for example, participants did not trust others from their countries. Participants remained afraid they were being spied upon. It was as participants became more empowered that they also described feeling more safe. Such was particularly the case for women when they came to the U.S.

Implications for Research

Communities that form in response to shared oppression may experience elements of a psychological study distinct from those identified by McMillan and Chavis (1986). The psychological elements important to participants in this study include safety, trust and empowerment. Further research is needed to identify whether other communities that are created to resist oppression also seek to negotiate safety, trust and empowerment.

Kral, Garcia, Aber, Masood, Dutta, & Todd (2011) call on community psychologists to more effectively examine the impact of culture as a contributor to understanding the ecological context of phenomena. Kral et al. suggest that to do so requires researchers to engage community members as their own cultural interpreters. Cultural interpretation of torture was offered for this study by the Dissertation Advisory Group and TASSC members. To think that torture creates its own culture may be an unusual interpretation of culture. Yet the experiences that survivors describe transcend their nationality and are rooted in the symbols, history and manifestation of torture. I join Kral et al. in calling on community psychology to further study culture, particularly in how culture influences a psychological sense of community.

I also join the call to examine subcommunities and the broad range of diverse experiences that can be experienced within a community (Wiesenfeld, 1996). Men and women experienced the psychological elements of safety, trust and empowerment within the same community in distinct ways. The women survivors with whom I met were willing to tell me that they wanted to resist their silencing by men in their communities. The women would not tell the men. Further examination of gendered experiences of community life may help identify the anecdote to the fragmentation of communities.

Implications for Practice

The experiences of immigrant survivors of torture in the United States are distinct from those of other immigrants. The political divisions that often served as the basis to justify the torture of people are perpetuated in the U.S. It is estimated that over 60% of refugees in the U.S. are survivors of torture and serious human rights violations (CVT, 2005). Organizations that provide services to refugees and political asylum applicants may wish to develop approaches that are sensitive to the likelihood that survivors of torture are among them. Refugee organizations may need to identify the openness of refugees to participating in exchanges with other people from their countries. Should refugees indicate hesitation to sharing information with others from their home countries, it may be more appropriate to identify pan-African or pan-Latin American communities that may be of interest. Survivors may benefit from interacting with those who know something of their countries, without having to directly interact with the divides that may arise from people from their countries.

The experiences of men and women survivors of torture are also distinct. Women survivors expressed hope that life in the United States would relieve the oppression they experienced in their countries of origin. Nonetheless, women survivors continue to be silenced in discussions that men dominate. Sensitivity to the differences in how women and men experience immigration and recovery in the United States may require torture treatment centers and others to review their practices. Perhaps groups of all women and groups of all men could be convened. The negotiation is likely to require a delicate consideration of culture and gender.

The men and women who participated in this study found that they could build a strong sense of community with other survivors. The community formed by survivors offered opportunities to heal that were crucial to the recovery of many of the people interviewed for this

study. Some people were so sensitive to the retraumatization they risked by hearing other survivors stories, however, that they could not participate in this community. Nonetheless, for many survivors, the only community within which they can comfortably participate is with other survivors. Those most vulnerable to retraumatization may thus find themselves with no options for community life at all. TASSC may wish to consult with the experts in trauma and torture recovery to identify strategies on how to manage this vulnerability and provide support to those for whom discussion of torture is potentially harmful.

Finally, the process in which this study was developed and conducted included survivors of torture. Survivors were active in the Dissertation Advisory Group. In addition, there were several consultations with community groups of survivors. This kind of community consultation is consistent with a culture of community decision-making about personal and family decisions that exists among many non-Western cultures (Molyneuz, Wassenaar, Peshu & Marsh, 2005). Given the successful collaboration that has occurred, those who develop programs and policies that affect refugees and other immigrants may wish to be deliberative in creating community advisory bodies. Not only does this kind of advisory group integrate refugees' culture into U.S.-based work, it also can promote the empowerment of the community for whom programs are developed (Anderson, 2010).

<center>Strengths and Limitations of the Study</center>

The obstacles to a study that includes participants from eleven countries, uses interpreters, engages a vulnerable population, and addresses a concept such as psychological sense of community are numerous. This study cannot be used to generalize about all survivors of torture. Nor does this study separate the experiences of participants into those caused by torture from those caused by immigration. The participants who chose to participate in this study self-

selected. The participants may represent those survivors whose recovery has relied on

community interaction with other survivors. It is possible that survivors who do not care about

or do not have access to a community of torture survivors use other pathways to recover from

torture.   Nonetheless, each of these limitations also helped develop the access and the

opportunity that became this study; they were necessary in order to conduct this exploration of

community life of survivors of torture. The breadth of this study offers those who work with

survivors some insights into how survivors' community life has changed. Likewise, the study

identifies elements that are important to at least some survivors in community life as they

recover.

This study suggests that there are ecological elements that influence a psychological

sense of community. The influence of a society's overall possibility of safety, trust and

empowerment affect the communities within it. How are the communities created in unstable

environments different from those created in stable environments? Are different kinds of

communities created in societies that are more equitable? What is the relationship between these

communities and the society in which they are established? The identification of these issues

suggests the need for further research, for quantitative examination among a larger group of

survivors, and for examination of studies in multiple contexts and countries.

Another limitation to the understanding of this data and pathway to accessing these data

is the perspective of the researcher. Because I am a feminist human rights activist, I not only

looked for themes that resonate with my values, I may have projected my interest to the

participants. Their responses may be based in some part on their wish to respond to my values.

While my identification with Amnesty International suggested a certain credibility to the

participants, it also conveyed values that may or may not have been shared. It is also the case

that without my identification as a committed (and opinionated) human rights activist, I would not have had the access that was achieved.

The barriers of language, culture, inflection and subtlety also suggest limitations. English was not a first language for any of the participants in this study. Participants' understanding of English, the interpreter's understanding of what was being communicated in four of the interviews, my understanding of the interaction of the interpreter and the participants were at times problematic in the course of the interviews. There were moments when I thought I understood French based on the participant's body language – but I did not. There were times when the participants interrupted the interpreter to offer their thoughts in English. The interviews were dynamic and the risks of that dynamism may be that some meaning was lost. The intent of the participant, interpreter and myself was to understand each other. Our mutual desire helped overcome some of the barriers in our communication.

The Dissertation Advisory Group was created, in part, to attempt to mitigate some of these limitations. I also met with various survivor groups and clinicians familiar with immigrant survivors of torture throughout the study to share with them the findings and seek their response. Through the ongoing communication about this study with the survivor community, it is hoped that some of these limitations were assuaged.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Participants described how important family life was for them in their countries of origin. Families broker individuals' entre into the community. Within their communities, the participants in this study were activists, engaged with others to advance human rights in their country and to work with others to challenge the oppression they shared. Once participants were tortured, the family and community systems that had been so important to them shattered.

The family and community experiences of the participants in their countries of origin make the case for an ecological examination of the psychological sense of community. In participants' countries of origin, the close emotional connections that characterize a psychological sense of community are strained by threats to safety. The vulnerability of everyone in a country jeopardizes the ability of community members to trust each other. The very human need to become empowered with others to fight oppression has high stakes. Failure can result in torture, death and vulnerability of all those associated with such action. What kinds of community bonds develop in such a context?

The survivors of torture who participated in this study fled their countries and came to the United States. Wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, daughters and sons were often left behind by participants' immediate needs to find safety. Arrival in the United States was disorienting. Survivors of torture experience the same kinds of challenges that all immigrants face: learning the language, local culture, transportation and meeting basic human needs. The needs of these individuals are beyond those of over immigrants, however. Survivors of torture need to reestablish the capacity to feel safe, to experience trust and to gain power over the circumstances of their lives.

Forming bonds with U.S. communities is challenging. Those who survive torture feel threatened by the support for torture that many people in the U.S. have voiced since the bombings of September 11. Survivors of torture must recover the capacity to trust others (Blackwell, 1993; Fabri, 2001). The stigma associated with the sexual assaults that women survivors likely experienced undermines the capacity for building trust between men and women. The fear of spying by others from their countries undermines the capacity for trust in others from their countries.

Immigrant survivors of torture are building a strong sense of community among each other. This emotionally and physically scarred group of people come together to aid each other to heal, and to experience joy in life. As the psychological bonds of community are built, survivors come to feel safe among each other. Yes, men and women experience community life differently. Yet the capacity to trust blossomed, despite the challenges created by their injuries, their multinational cultures and languages, and the difficulties most of them face as immigrants in the United States. As a community, these immigrant survivors of torture come together to advocate to abolish torture and assist others who are being threatened by torture.

The community lives of immigrant survivors of torture underscore how safety, trust and empowerment contribute to the capacity to build a psychological sense of community. The ecological examination of their experiences helps us understand how communities may emerge in response to larger sociopolitical forces that provoke shared resistance. The development of tools to help community psychologist examine the ecological context of communities may further our understanding of oppression and resistance, cultural contexts and gendered experiences of community life.

CHAPTER V.

SUMMARY

This study seeks to understand how immigrant survivors of torture in the United States have experienced a psychological sense of community. Participants in this study were activists whose governments detained and tortured them. They fled their countries and found safety in the United States. The results of this study are reported in two main sections, about experiences of participants in 1) countries of origin and 2) the United States. In each of the sections, the results are again divided between the experiences of men and women. This contextual examination of psychological sense of community reveals how influential gender and the experiences of safety, trust and empowerment are on community life. This qualitative study includes data from sixteen people from eleven different countries.

In their countries of origin, participants described the importance of extended family life in brokering their relationships to the larger community. Many of the communities that participants engaged with were formed in order to promote the empowerment of those marginalized by government forces. Particularly for the men, their alliances with others in the human rights movement created a strong sense of community. The women reported a psychological sense of community with all women in their countries, indicating its basis in their shared oppression. In participants' countries of origin, threats to safety undermined the capacity of participants to build trust with others in their communities and countries. Communities were formed in order to develop the empowerment necessary to challenge government regimes that threatened dissent with torture. The negotiation of safety, trust and empowerment was distinct for women. Women were not safe from the arbitrary regulation of their lives from men in their

families. This undermined women's capacity to trust as reports of their conduct outside of cultural norms could result in their condemnation.

The injuries that participants sustained from their torture and the experiences in their countries of origin continued to undermine their capacities to feel safe and experience trust. Participants were unable to build trusting relationships with those who expressed even qualified support for torture. These immigrant survivors of torture are also suspicious that others from their countries may be spying on them. Among other survivors, however, participants reported a strong sense of community. The community they created shares a purpose and responsibility, to help each other heal. Survivors experience safety and engage in trusting relationships with each other. The collective empowerment they develop together is used to influence each other's healing. Their shared empowerment is also used to influence U.S. policy on torture, seeking its total abolition.

An ecological evaluation of a psychological sense of community reveals how important the issues of safety, trust and empowerment are. This study suggests that there may be other contributions that help us understand the construct of a psychological sense of community as developed by McMillan and Chavis (1986).

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol for Survivors

Regarding Sense of Community

Hi. Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this research study. This research is meant to explore how torture survivors and communities relate to each other, and what community may mean to survivors.

I am interested in this topic for many reasons and thought it might help to explain a bit of my story and how we came to be here.

I have been a human rights activist for much of my life. Most recently, I worked at Amnesty International USA. There I met many survivors, and worked to stop torture and for holding perpetrators criminally accountable for what they have done. I think we did good things but I felt that we often ignored what happened in the lives of survivors, when they returned to communities, or when they moved to new places. Maybe an individual survivor can find some kind of justice now and then -- but how do survivors and communities relate with each other after the torture stops, or after the trial is over? Is a sense of community important? Is there justice within the community?

I left my job and became a doctoral student in Community Psychology at DePaul University to explore these questions about survivors and community. It's going to take a long time to pursue these issues! This study is one step of what I hope will be more research on how survivors and others form community relationships. The research I am doing right now is for my master's thesis.

I will ask you questions, designed to guide our conversation. Please feel free to stop at any time, ask questions and comment, or to stop the interview altogether. Also, there is something personal in our exchange, and most of the focus is on you and what you have to say. If you wish for me to answer questions, though, please ask them. We are in this interview together.

I am doing what I know how to do to help make this interview comfortable for you, and ethical in how I proceed. I am explaining what will happen so that you know as well as possible what we are going to talk about. Should you become uncomfortable at any time, we can stop the interview or go on to another question. I do not intend to ask you for specific details about your experience, but hope to hear your story as you would like to tell it. I will ask you about your experiences of violence in general terms only because I am trying to document that you are a survivor, so that I collect this information form a group of people whose experiences are shared. I will also ask about who the perpetrator is, for the same reasons.

I would like to tape record this session so that I will have a complete and accurate account of our interview. I can also pay attention to you better in this interview when I use the recorder, because I'm not writing so much. If there are times that you don't want something taped, that is fine. We can stop and restart the tape. Just let me know.

The information you provide will be kept confidential. The interpreter and I will be the only ones in the room with you. I will record our conversation so that I can transcribe it, and will then provide you the opportunity to check and change what you have said. Some students at DePaul will help with the transcription, but they will not know who you are. What I write will focus on

major themes, not on reporting what particular individuals say. When I quote you or describe your ideas, it will be to illustrate an important theme and your name will not be used.

I have an agreement – a certificate of confidentiality - from the United States government that certifies that any information I receive from you cannot be obtained by any federal, state or local government for any reason.

There will be many questions about your relationships with communities. It is not necessary for you to think a long time to try to determine what communities you may have been a member of. I want to know if you have or have not been a part of communities. I also want to learn if there are some communities you have deliberately not wanted to have been part of, or if you have been generally unattached to communities. I am specifically not asking whether survivors should reconcile with torturers. There are no "right" answers.   I am interested in your ideas and experiences.

I don't know what your answers will be, of course. Whatever they are, I hope that this research might offer insight into the kinds of ways that communities can support those who have been targeted for state-sponsored torture.

Some of the questions may seem repetitious or simple, but that is because I am trying not to suggest that there is a particular kind of answer being sought. There isn't, I just want to be careful in what I am asking, and clear.

If you would like a written transcript of this conversation, I will be able to provide that for you in a few months, after the recording is transcribed. You will be able to review it and correct any answers. I can only provide this transcript in English, however. I will ask XXX to help once again with translation if you need it, when the transcripts are done. Also, if you would like a final summary of my paper (or the whole thesis), I can send that to you. It, too, will be in English. I will be able to provide a summary in your language if you would like that.

If at any time you feel uncomfortable, please do let me know. We can terminate this interview at any time. You can also opt not to answer any or some questions. The research is important, however, to help understand how individuals and communities recover from torture. I appreciate your willingness to take part in it.

Is it okay with you that I start the tape here?
Start tape.

This interview is your interview; it is your opportunity to speak about your experience and what you think. If there are issues I don't ask, or you want to speak about in a different way, please do so. Is there something I can do right now or throughout the interview to make this comfortable for you? For example, I know that some people do not like eye contact. Do you prefer eye contact or no? Is this setting comfortable for you?

Do you have any questions about anything gone over so far? Is it okay to begin this interview?

Have you reviewed and okayed the form that says you are giving "informed consent" to be part of this study? If yes, may I have it? If not, should we go over it? I know that sometimes there are problems in accurately translating or communicating "informed consent". Can you tell me how you understand it?

Where is this interview taking place? (This is for the purpose of the tape recorder.)

Did you receive a referral to this interview? If so, from whom or what program?

Can you tell me about where you are currently living?
If probes needed:
For how long have you lived there?
How long have you been in the United States?

Can you tell me about your family?
If probes needed:
Does your family live with you or somewhere else?
Do you have a partner or spouse? Is your partner here or somewhere else?
What about children?
Extended family?

I'd like to ask now, what is your age? Gender?

Can you explain something to me about your country of origin and where you are from? Who are your people?

Can you tell me more about your own story? What led you to come to the United States?
If probes needed:
Some people are targeted for political violence by governments because of their politics, gender, activism or for no reason at all. Do you think you were targeted for a specific reason? If yes, on what basis were you targeted? Can you tell me about that?

I am going to ask questions about communities you have and have not been a part of.

To begin, when I use the word community, what does that mean to you?

Now that you are in the U.S., are there any communities that you feel you are connected to, or a member of?

If YES:
What are those communities? What about them is appealing to you?

When you say that you feel like you are a part of community, what does that mean to you?

For all, yes or no:
Are there U.S. communities you would want to be a part of?

If yes:
What are they?
What is it about these communities that lead you to think you would like to be part of them?

For all, yes or no:
Are there U.S. communities you do not want to be part of? Which ones? What is it about these communities that lead you to not want to be part of them?

May we go on to discuss the experience of communities in your country of origin?

Did you feel that you were a part of any communities in your country of origin?

If YES:
With what communities do you, or did you, most identify?

What is it about these communities that lead you to identify with them?

When you say that you feel like you were a part of these communities, what does that mean to you?

For all, yes or no:
Were there communities in your country of origin you wanted to be part of? Which ones? Can you explain what about these communities made you want to be a part of them?

Were there communities you did not want to be part of? Which ones? Can you explain what about these communities made you not want to be a part of them?

For you, do you feel that being connected to communities is important, not important or somewhere in between?

Has being part of a community or communities affected your process of healing? How so?

Has not being part of a community or communities affected your process of healing? How so?

Is there anything else you might want to tell me about your relationships with communities, or that you want to comment on?

I would like to ask you briefly about state-sponsored violence you may have been subject to. I am interested because I would like to know if survivors have a different view of community than people who have not had similar experiences. I do not want to ask about details of the experience itself, but you know I am here to listen to anything you share with me. Can we go on?

Have you experienced state-sponsored violence that amounted to torture? How long ago? To the extent that you are comfortable telling me, can you explain what happened?
    Probe: Who committed these violations?

In reflecting on what we have talked about today, do you believe that your experience affected how you think about being a part of communities? Can you tell me about that?

Communities have been described in academic literature using the following elements. Can you review them and tell me which ones, if any, make sense to you? If so, how?
trust among community members
a sense of empowerment within the community
safety - physical, emotional, spiritual and mental
mutual influence
shared emotional connections
a sense that spiritual, emotional, physical or mental needs are being met
membership, where some people are in and some people are not.

Can you rank each of the characteristics on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being very important to you, and 1 being not important?

Do you have any closing comments or questions? What are your reactions to this interview?

Thank you for participating in this research project. Your story and experiences are very important, and I hope that this interview will help develop information that promotes the healing of those who have survived torture.

I have asked XXXX to sit with you following this interview, to see if you would like to discuss how you are feeling or what you think about having gone through this process. XXXXX is waiting AT THIS LOCATION.

Thank you again.

Appendix B

Identification of Dissertation Advisory Group Members

Dissertation Advisory Group Members

Christopher B. Keys. Chris is a professor and former chairperson of the Psychology Department of DePaul University.

Janet MacLean. Janet is a pediatric chaplain.

Marianne Joyce is the Social Services Manager at the Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center.

Mario Venegas. Mario is a survivor of torture from Chile.

Martine Songasonga works for the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights, and is a survivor of torture from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Midge Wilson. Midge is the Associate Dean in the Liberal Arts and Sciences College and a professor in the Psychology Department of DePaul University.

Appendix C

Code Book from Original Study

Code Book

Gender Differences on SOC among Survivors of Torture

I. **Community location**
This tree node defines the geographical settings in which survivors describe their experiences. Of interest to this research is whether survivors are describing U.S. or country-of-origin based communities, but the location of data that describes locations other than "community" is also coded. Other options provided allow for "ideal" or "other" options. These categories do not describe where the survivor may have been when their experiences occurred; rather it relates specifically to where the action, experience, story or setting to which the survivor is referring is located. In most instances, the participant was asked specifically to describe community relationships in country of origin or the U.S.
Example: "He created an organization to help out orphans in the Congo."
This refers to a community in the U.S. of which he is a member, despite its mission to help those in Congo.

U.S.
The description of a setting, experience or story located in the United States, and not in country of origin or in an ambiguous location. TASSC or Kovler Center would be examples of U.S.-based communities in which such transactions occur. Families located in the U.S. and described as a community distinct from community in country of origin might also be included in this definition. It does NOT include ideal references to community.
Example: "With his wife or his partner here, he's part of an African association that's basically helping Africans and resolves problems they may have in the U.S."

Country of origin
The description of a community located in the survivor's community of origin. This would not include any third country location between the United States and one's country of birth unless the survivor was born in one country and migrated at an early age. Country of origin is indicated when a survivor answers the question "where are you from?"
Example: "As a community you can talk among yourselves and agree that each month all of us will meet in R's house and contribute $100 and give her to ease her problems and then, the next month we go to the next person. We call it injungi."

Other
Those communities that are not located in the U.S. or in the country of origin, or where their location is uncertain but fixed in a real place would be described as "other".
Example: "Next time Sudan, next time Saudi Arabia and last America. First I come from my country Sudan, from Sudan to Saudi Arabia from Saudi Arabia to America."
Ideal
The description of an experience that is not necessarily related to location. It describes a quality of community life or an experience that might be conceived in the survivor's mind and not related to any location, or may be related to all locations.

Example: "I believe the community is the place where I live. It's who I share everyday stuff with or just the place where I'm surrounded."

> **II.** **Relationship to or association with community**
> This tree node describes the way in which the survivor identifies or is associated with a community. Some community attachments occur as a result of birth, others by choice, and still others because that association is imposed by others. When it is unclear, or there are other circumstances, relationship to community is described as "other".

Community by Birth
This describes a community a person is a part of because they were they were born as a member of that community. That can include a religion that one is a member of because of one's family religion, or an ethnic community, or even the extended family in which one is born. It is NOT a church or the family one has when one marries.
Example: When a participant has been born into a community and lived there for their lifetime up until the point of their pursuit of asylum, that would be a community of birth. People of one country who speak the same language may provide another example. "With the whole situation with the military—they were aware of that and they would be together. Not with arms, but just letting people know that they were there."

Community of Chosen Attachment
This describes a "community" with which a survivor has chosen to develop relationships. It can also refer to the family that one creates, rather than is born into. Chosen communities are NOT communities that someone might be born into, such as one defined by ethnicity. A professional community where members share skills or a community of activists with shared values and a defined political party who define themselves as a community are chosen.
Example: A "community of chosen attachment" community might include a community of activists, or a community that is organized around shared values or rules. .

Imposed-upon Association with Community
This community is one that is imposed upon participants, whether they seek that identification or not. This may be a racial identification that is imposed, or an identification that one does not choose.
Example: One participant was orphaned following the genocide in Rwanda.

Ambiguous community
It may not be apparent what the relationship of a survivor to a community is. This category would also include those communities with which a survivor's relationship is not identified as one of identity, attachment or family. When survivors describe "ideally" located communities, their attachment may be ambiguous.
Example: "To me, community is people being together, people helping each other, people knowing each other."

> **III.   Kinds of communities**
> There are many kinds of communities in which individuals may participate. There are also sets of behaviors or attitudes that may be associated with particular communities. This tree node identities those classifications as discerned from the survivors' references to it.

Communities by birth are likely to include the following:

Country

This category refers to country-specific community practices or attitudes. It does not include what can be thought of as ethnic practices, which may be more tribal or village specific.
Example: "For him, even Africa in itself or Angola itself, it's a big community."

Ethnic

This addresses the ethnic identification of communities, behaviors or attitudes. It may include terms that include an indigenous or tribal affiliation.
Example: "According to them, traditionally they believe that, when a man says, "sit down on the floor" don't even ask him why you have to sit on the floor. Just obey the command."

Religious

This includes the religious affiliation with which a community comes together to address God-issues. It is also includes a spiritual community that may not be affiliated with what is thought of as the major religions.
Example: "I remember after the disappearance of my father, my mom was more in the church with the charismatics. For her, that was a way of healing, but for me, no."

Family

Family includes all those members whom the survivor believes to be part of the family. This will include extended family, family in the U.S. and family located far from survivor. It can also include those who are thought of as part of a family, such as a nanny. It does not include the "family" of torture survivors.
Example: "The rest of the family was polarized for instance in my father's side my aunt, the sister of my father they were celebrating my grandmother's birthday one day that family, my aunt family were totally supportive of the military government."

Communities of attachment are likely to include the following:

Workplace based

This includes description of people or events within the workplace. The workplace can be a place in which one volunteers and it can also include a school where one attends classes or provides instruction.
Example: "I started doing first after the war, working with kids where I did free activities through which we tried to relieve and forget the things they saw during the war."

Survivor/recovery community (Kovler, TASSC)

This includes all references to the group of survivors with whom the participant shared activities in U.S. based recovery centers associated with the Marjorie Kovler Center in Chicago, the TASSC office in Washington D.C., and TASSC membership in general.
Example: "She was rubbing me behind my back when I wanted to cry. She would take my head and place it on her chest and pat my back, 'it will be okay, it will be okay'. We started from there."

Political activist
This includes the community with which a participant has shared political values or that a participant engaged in organizing or political activities with others. This does not include the survivor/ recovery community such as TASSC and other survivors with whom participants may have lobbied members of Congress. It does include political parties or movements.
Example: "For example, when he was part of a political group from the political point of view, it was important for him that they share ideas and that they are trying to defend those ideas."

Neighborhood
This includes a compact geographical area. It may include a village, a street, an area of the city. It does not refer to city or country-wide location.
Example: "And so many things here are confusing to me as compared to back home where I was born because the house in which I am living I don't know my neighbor who's at apartment 'X'. I don't know him."

Social Network – Friends
A social network is one in which participant's describe relationships defined solely by casual activities and is excluded from the other-listed categories.
Example: "Another way—there's this place that's a park, for example. You can go and you see people you can play with or do something. So I used to play basketball with one group all the time."

Gender-specific community
This category is to include gender-specific references of community activities. It may include examples of women preparing food for the community, or women's roles within family.
Example: "I cannot accept when they say that being a woman is like nothing because God gave a man and woman to be part of the world and they cannot take that one part to say no."
NOT a community
This is described by participants explicitly as what is not a community.
Example: "But I don't think that you get once a year or twice a year that constitutes as a community for me."

> **IV.   Elements of a Psychological Sense of Community**
> The interview sought answers to questions about specific elements of a psychological sense of community. These elements addressed issues of empowerment, membership, trust, safety, emotional connection, fulfillment of needs and mutual influence. All responses by participants about community life were coded into one of these elements. For each of these elements, further coding was conducted to indicate whether the community element promoted separation or attachment.

Empowerment
References that promote a participant's or community's belief in their own efficacy would be included in empowerment activities, as would the exact opposite: those activities that deny an individual the sense that their action can matter or have any influence. It would not include descriptions of physical torture, which would be categorized under "torture".
Example: "So we were fighting theses laws and it was becoming a bit of a nuisance in the government. It was a bit of becoming public nuisance so we were doing it like a community of journalists. That was very important."

Mutual influence
These references may address values, opinions or behaviors. It suggests that because someone held esteem thinks or does something that others will do so as well. It is not trust, although it frequently interacts with issues of trust.
Examples: "He's saying that his association—his African association—is in touch with other associations, with other communities to try to make a bigger movement or a bigger association."

Trust
Those references coded with "trust" suggest that the participant would be comfortable being influenced by, or influencing, others. The essential ingredient here is the comfort one feels in the interaction, as well as the expectation of its reliability (or not).
Example: "I don't trust any of them in that community in dealing with my house or those that will come in and go out. Even my children have, my biological children, I have a reserve for them. I cannot read them. I cannot tell you that I know them from A to Z."

Physical and Mental Safety
Activities that promote physical and mental safety may include moving to a "safe" neighborhood or keeping away from a people whose political views may have been affiliated with the perpetrators of the survivor's torture.
Examples: "It's still in me, that part of don't talk to especially Guatemalans because you don't know who they are and are they going to tell people where you are? I think that I'm thinking that they are spies and that they would tell somebody where I am."

Membership
Descriptions of membership boundaries might include references in which a survivor indicates that he or she does qualifies as a member, or one in which the participant believes others do not.

Example: Participant may describe saying hello to neighbors in a way that suggests boundaries of neighborhood membership are maintained in ways that exclude the survivor.

Example: "If you just get in the right place in a community, finding the right place. If you think that you are not really ready for that or it's a person who is maybe persona non-grata, then he's still a part of the community and you still have to treat him like that. But I mean, with maybe cautions or something like that."

Fulfillment of spiritual, emotional, physical or mental needs

The fulfillment of needs may include basic activities such as when a group prays together, or assists in the aid of those left to face conditions that the participant may have fled. It may also include the provision of food, shelter, etc.

Example: "Because after we were released from the torture center then what we call the concentration camp where I was detained there was another community that would support you there but there was also an outside community which would be the relative of the political prisoners organize helping us in different ways with food and with clothes with moral support trying to do some activities."

Shared emotional connections

There is a sense of the spiritual, or of a bond that transcends cognitive evaluation of a relationship and that attaches one to others psychologically. It is not about who may or may not be a member of a community, it is the feeling the participant attaches to a particular community or its members.

 Example: "My friends that I share my life or secrets or share with them a confidence."

Not community activity

The participant may describe behaviors that do not necessarily engage communities. All of those activities should be listed in this category.

Example: "Like going to parties—just in that way, creating community just because we were going to party. To me, that part is not as important to be a community of helping each other in other circumstances."

Separation

Some aspects of the psychological elements describes activities that promote participants' separation from communities. This is in contrast to having a neutral impact, or to promoting interaction with community.

Example: "He has people that basically came here, bringing with them this mentality of division and are still even here trying to keep on with the division. And he's saying this is not good. This is not the way to do things."

 Attachment

Some aspects of the psychological elements describe activities that promote participants'' interaction with communities.

Example: "Really, really and that's how I live. I am never a stranger in a place for two, three hours. If I come to your office, to your house, if it is time to go to the kitchen, I will come and lean by the door. You get into the kitchen you do one, two, three things I'll do the third one. I will meet you in there."

> **V.   Torture and Recovery**
> Although information regarding their torture was not explicitly sought, participants made reference to the torture they experienced. Likewise, participants occasionally made specific reference to their recovery. These references are such that they are unable to be coded into elements of a psychological sense of community, even though they may be related to one or several elements.

Torture
This category includes the specific references to torture a participant may have made.
Example: "So he's ready to discuss it anywhere, with anybody, even if he has to buy a ticket and go somewhere to talk about it, he's ready to talk about it."

Recovery
The explicit ways in which a survivor describes his or her recovery which are not included in the above categories.
Example: "So all this time I've been seeking self-help books and stuff like that. Sometimes it's too western for me. But sometimes it helps; it helped me go to a lot of crisis."