Prison Subculture and Drug-Related Crimes in Iran

By
Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki

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Department of Sociology
Memorial University of Newfoundland

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Abstract

The present study seeks to investigate prison subcultures in the Iranian cultural context with regard to drug-related crimes. Following this vein, the main objective is to compare the subculture of prisons as governmental institutions with that of non-governmental treatment institutions. 'National threat', 'danger', and 'criminal', are the terms used to legitimize the mass incarceration of drug users since the 'war on drugs' began in the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. This policy had a number of unintended consequences, including the way that incarceration of first time offenders may actually produce professional criminals as a result of exposure to prison environment. Therefore, the argument that drug-related offenders need to be medically cured instead of locked up was put forward and led Iranian authorities to introduce treatment regimes in the 1990s. Drug users have been re-categorized since that period from 'criminals' to 'patients' while their moral weakness was justified by a medical cause.

The key research question of this thesis explores: how drug-related criminals and drug users experience and adapt to the context of prison and NGO Treatment Centers? I utilized Grounded Theory to examine this question, and extracted seven categories to explain the sub-culture of prisons: (1) unstable pyramid, (2) captives as a society, (3) battle zone, (4) hegemony of drug-related networks, (5) shifting identities, (6) instrumental relationships, and (7) two sides of the same coin. Moreover, four categories were extracted to explain the sub-culture of 'Narcotic Anonymous', including: 1) horizontal network; 2) restricted and exclusive trust; 3) constructing and reconstructing identity; and 4) gender-based reintegration.

A key element in the lives of drug users both inside and outside the legal system, is their 'contested identities'. The modern era produces contested identities almost everywhere. Individuals in the modern world struggle with these contested identities not only in prison but also

in their treatment centers. A distinctive feature of drug addicts' contested identities refers to their multiple exclusiveness.

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1. Introduction

The so-called 'war on drugs' or anti-drug campaign in the Islamic Republic of Iran has had irreversible and unexpected consequences since 1979, with drug users being considered a 'danger' and a 'national threat', which has legitimized mass executions and incarcerations. In 1979 the Islamic Revolution in Iran brought to power the radical conservative Islamists, under the leadership of the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran declared that the consumption and trafficking of illicit drugs in the Islamic Republic of Iran is a direct result of the influence of Western culture and should be prohibited (Ghiabi, 2014). Thus, in 1980, the purification of drug users through massive waves of arrests and executions was undertaken by the "hanging judge", Ayatollah Khalkhali (Christensen, 2011). Although eating and smoking opium had been prevalent among Iranians, especially among elderly men, since the fifteenth century, after 1979, the pervasiveness of drug abuse among younger groups in all social classes was referred to as a "social plague" (Christensen, 2011, p.122). Drug users have been re-categorized constantly since then from 'criminals' to 'patients' and from having an 'illness' to being defined by their moral weakness. These approaches not only have not controlled the drug crisis but have made drug users the targets of contradictory policies of the state.

Today, the regime is still dominated by a conservative group and another supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Drug-related offenders still receive large fines, lengthy sentences, corporal punishment, and in some cases, the death penalty (e.g., 21 executions in one week of January 2014). The number of those incarcerated for drug-related offences has been rising sharply, from 101,801 in 1993, to 204,385 in 2010, and 217,851 in 2014. However, the capacity of Iran's prisons was only 113,000 in 2012 (IHRDC, 2015). It has been well documented that most prisoners (approximately 60%) in Iran are incarcerated due to drug-related crimes; over 80,000 drug-related

offenders were arrested in 2000, and this number increased to 314,268 in 2007 (Calabrese, 2007; Nissaramanesh et al., 2005). According to the Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran (2016, p.16), "more than 2,990 people were executed on drug offences between 2010 and 2016". In 2011, more than 509 drug-related offenders were executed, and this number decreased to 296 in 2016 (Iran Human Rights, 2016). However, Iran is ranked second in the world for the number of executions carried out annually, as two-thirds of the executions are for drug-related crimes ranging from minor offences (e.g. transportation of more than 30 grams of narcotics)[1] to major offences (e.g. armed smuggling) (HRIU, 2015; Hlinomaz et al., 2014). Furthermore, of 1,532 armed confrontations in 2000, 142 law enforcement officers and 904 drug traffickers were killed in border skirmishes between police and drug traffickers (Hlinomaz et al., 2014; UNDCP 2000; NDCR 2001).

Despite the efforts of the Iranian government to reduce drug-related crime rates, the statistics reveal a serious crisis. Estimating the size of the drug addict population in Iran is difficult, since the government tends to not publish accurate data. Additionally, as Mokri (2002, p.184) states: "Social stigmatization along with legal restrictions on substance abuse prevents drug users from admitting their act, offering clear data and referring to governmental sectors." The Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) together with the conflict in Afghanistan due to the Soviet invasion made Iran

[1] Article 8 in the Anti-Narcotic Law of Islamic Republic of Iran: "Anyone who imports, exports, distributes, produces, deals in, keeps or stores, conceals and carries (or transports) heroin, morphine, cocaine and other chemical derivatives of morphine or cocaine shall be sentenced to the following punishments, taking into account the amount of said drugs: 1. Up to five centigrams, a fine in the amount of five hundred thousand to one million rials in cash plus twenty to fifty lashes; 2. More than five centigrams to one gram, a fine in the amount of two million to six million rials in cash plus thirty to seventy lashes; 3. More than one gram up to four grams, a fine in the amount of eight million to twenty million rials in cash plus two to five years of imprisonment and thirty to seventy lashes; 4. More than four grams up to fifteen grams a fine in the amount of twenty million to forty million rials in cash, plus five to eight years of imprisonment and thirty to seventy four lashes; 5. More than fifteen up to thirty grams, a fine in the amount of forty million to sixty million rials fine in cash, plus ten to fifteen years of imprisonment and thirty and seventy four lashes; 6. More than thirty grams, death penalty and confiscation of property excepting the normal living costs for the family of the convicted".

the most important destination for importing drugs from the "world's leading opium puppy producer", Afghanistan, despite the harsh criminal penalties of the revolutionary government for drug consumption and trafficking in Iran (Calabrese, 2007). Thus, from 1998, a sharp increase in the availability of heroin, heroin addiction, and injecting heroin was recorded. The Rapid Situation Assessment (RSA) estimated that there were 1.2 million addicts and 800,000 recreational users in Iran (Calabrese, 2007). According to the results of one of the large nationwide samples taken in 2001, the number of opium and heroin addicts in the country was about 3.76 million (Calabrese, 2007). However, in 2003, the State Welfare Minister said that there were 1.2 million addicts and 800,000 recreational users (IRNA, June 2003). According to Ghiabi (2018), other than the cultural tendency of Iranians to use opium (opium has a history of being used for medical purposes and domestic consumption), recently, methamphetamine (*shisheh*) and heroin have seen a rapid increase in use. In addition, drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Iran and the subsequent abuse of opium and heroin have increased since 2001. According to the United Nations (2003), between 1.7% and 2.8% of Iranians are addicted to opium-based drugs, and Iran has accounted for 73% of the opium and 25% of the heroin seizures[2] in the world (UNODC, 2012).

The war on drugs, as Christie (1993) argued, has had unexpected gains and costs. According to statistics from Iran, the government is spending large amounts of money to address the so-called "dangerous classes" and paying less attention to alcohol abuse. Increasing prison populations and overcrowding prisons as a direct result of hardline drug policies in Iranian criminal

[2] In Canada, "although there had been an increase in heroin seizures from 2008 to 2009, seizures decreased considerably, from 213 kg in 2009 to 98 kg and cannabis herb seizures in increased from 34 to 51 tons in 2010" (World Drug Report, 2012, p. 29 &51).

law are associated with different types of pathologies. Some scholars argue that there is a correlation between prison overcrowding and prison misconduct (Megargee, 1977), recidivism (i.e. the tendency to relapse into criminal behavior) (Farrington and Nuttall, 1980), and increases in deaths, suicides, and negative psychological reactions (Cox et al., 1984). Prison overcrowding has a significant effect on the social organization inside a prison. In fact, decreased privacy, forced proximity, the overarching inmate culture, and increasing relationships and interactions with others have resulted in increased gang participation and involvement during incarceration (Irwin, 1980; Hunt et al. 1993; Stevens, 1997). To portray the danger of drugs, the media regularly equates drug use with drastic increases in violent crime and extensive measures are used to combat what is perceived as a 'social menace'. Such representations of drug use are used to define the form which law enforcement will take and influence official definitions and thereby policy. They also determine the focus and direction of the political management of the 'war on drugs'" (Malloch, 2000). In fact, the social construction of the 'dangerous' classes and 'war on drugs', at least in the Islamic Republic of Iran, creates economic and political opportunities; otherwise, they would not be seen or acknowledged by society. Although they are often considered 'human waste' (Bauman, 2013) or 'homo sacer' (Agamben, 1998) by society, they are not a 'forgotten' phenomenon or 'non-existent', since they also bring advantages for some. Except for the small number of non-governmental harm-reduction, treatment, and detox centers, almost all drug rehab centers provide their clients with multiple services for a large amount of money. As participants declared, temporary treatment and detoxification are not successful in persuading recovering addicts to stay on the clean path, as they often relapse and undergo the same detox process repeatedly. The high demand for drugs, from methadone to heroin, in prison creates an exclusive market which is cost effective, with high profits for the involved parties. Additionally, arresting and accusing political

protestors and social activists of being under the influence of drugs is considered a means of eliminating an 'unwanted' group of people.

1.1. Internalizing the Criminal Lifestyle

Despite these shocking statistics and unexpected results, it is important to consider that drug-related offences, at least in some cases, do not necessarily have victims, and such offences differ from other types of crimes (Oleinik, 2013). The current policy around the world regarding the legalization of 'soft drugs' (e.g. marijuana[3]), which do not produce physical dependence and are less addictive than 'hard drugs' (e.g. cocaine and heroin) is one confirmation of this reasoning. As Christie (1993) asserts, viewing drug-related activities as a crime or "serious crime" strengthens governments' control over potentially dangerous people but not their activities. Therefore, "those convicted of drug-related crimes violated a law but not a social norm" (Oleinik, 2013, p. 186). Drug-related crimes have potentially contributed to physical damage such as malnutrition and suicide attempts, family problems such as divorce and domestic violence and other types of crime such as murder and smuggling. Nonetheless, it is worth considering that one of the most important consequences of anti-narcotics laws and the war on drugs, which impose stricter sanctions for drug-related crimes, is the spread of criminal cultures within society. Before their arrest, drug-related offenders are not necessarily in regular contact with criminals, but they become familiar with criminals and prison subculture once incarcerated.

Prison life is guided and organized based on official norms and inmate norms, with the latter being developed by prisoners to make prison life more bearable (Oleinik, 2003). Incarceration does not occur in a vacuum, and many theories frame prison as a society or

[3] Recreational marijuana use was legalized in Canada on October 17, 2018

community (e.g. Clemmer, 1940; Sykes, 1958) in which inmate subculture revolves around specific inmate codes. Oleinik (2003, p. 9) states that, "the penal subculture may be viewed as the expression of the individuality of the inmates, the desire to create their own society, even under very harsh external constraints." This process is called "prisonization". According to Clemmer (1940, 299), prisonization refers to "the taking on, in greater or lesser degree, of the folkways, mores, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary". Clemmer (1940) was one of the first criminologists who observed prisons as communities with their own norms, rules, habits, laws, and attitudes. A plethora of research has been conducted on prisonization throughout the world (Sirisutthidacha & Tititampruk, 2014; Oleinik, 2013; Oleinik, 2003; Einat & Einat, 2000; Kaminski & Gibbons, 1994; Akres et al., 1997; Thomas and Zingraff 1976; Thomas 1977; Tittle & Tittle 1964; Garabedian 1963; Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Goffman 1961; Clemmer, 1940).

It is well documented that the process of prisonization pushes inmates toward internalizing the criminal lifestyle. In other words, incarceration can be a central source of criminality. Clemmer (1940, p. 313) suggests that "the culture of prison influences the people participating in it, in the same way as culture anywhere plays a part in shaping the lives of men." As Clemmer argues, culture can be defined "as those artificial objects, institutions, modes of life or thought which are not particulary individual, but which characterize a group and have both spatial and temporal continguity". Clemmer was one of the first scholars who related prisonization with recidivism, which is defined as "the reversion of an individual to criminal behavior after he or she has been convicted of a prior offense, sentenced, and corrected" (Maltz, 1984, p.1). The process of socialization and prisonization into inmate culture teaches prisoners sophisticated methods of breaking the law, which results in the intensification of criminal careers and the spread of crime. As Alahdadi (2016, p.63) argues, "regarding the lack of facilities and insufficient experts in

(Iranian) prisons, the prisons are not efficient to prevent crime, but also expand recidivism, variety of committing crimes, and train criminal techniques." Therefore, it is important to consider how incarceration impacts human behavior and how rates of crime increase dramatically despite the immense effort put into imprisoning and controlling criminals.

The process of prisonization seems to conflict with the principal goals of rehabilitation programs, correctional staff, and institutions. It has been frequently suggested that either the negative influences of prisonization or the extent to which prisoners assimilate are reflective of the type of organizational structure of the prison (Thomas and Zingraff, 1976). "Prisons are, primarily, a place of punishment" (Liebling, 2004, p. 462); however, the principal goals of incarceration recently have been turned toward rehabilitation, which is accomplished by providing educational and occupational opportunities for inmates inside the prison to make them more productive citizens after incarceration.

1.2. Treatment Regimes

Reflecting the argument that offenders need to be cured instead of locked up, treatment regimes with a focus ranging from abstinence to detoxification were introduced in the 1990s by the Iranian authorities. In 1994, medical intervention and the medical treatment of drug users began in the Islamic Republic of Iran (Calabrese, 2007; Mokri, 2002). Additionally, in 1997, the government passed a law declaring that drug addicts who voluntarily sought recovery can be exempted from punishment. According to Calabrese (2007), in 2007, there were 51 government treatment centers, 457 private centers, and 26 transition centers in Iran. By 2009, according to the Drug Control Headquarters (DCHQ) (2009), there were 1596 treatment centers, 337 government facilities, and 1232 non-governmental facilities, which provided services for about 643,516 people. However, not all the treatment centers and camps in Iran are legal. There are 400 illegal camps in Tehran,

294 illegal camps in Isfahan, and 50 illegal camps in Arak (Hamshahri, 2010). According to Ghiabi (2018), in spite of several notifications of the state regarding the closure of illegal camps nationwide, most treatment camps in Iran still do not have a licence from the Welfare Organization. However, families of people who use drugs usually prefer to call the illegal camps' personnel instead of the police to pick up addicted family members from home and take them to the camp sites for treatment, even if this involves violence and beatings[4], since the second strategy involves criminal charges and dishonorable consequences among the community and neighbours. As Asghar, one of the NA recovering members and the most important weekly NA representative in Isfahan prison stated:

> *"One day when I was high on heroin, my mother called the police to arrest me. She thought that prison might make a good person of me and force me to quit drugs. The police arrested me that day and sentenced me to five years of incarceration. My mother made a big mistake in her life, as she put me in the most dangerous place for drug addcits (prison). Also all the neighbours since then do not talk with my family because the police arrested me that day. You know, there are several parents who just call the camps and give them a bit of money to forcefully take their child from home and get them clean, but my mother was a fool. She ruined her own life and mine as well."*

This is also an efficient option for low-income families who are seeking drug treatment. Additionally, most often the personnel and workers of the illegal treatment centers are former addicts who became clean in the camp and then were recruited by the manager as a social worker. Thus, people who use drugs who do not have any position as a normal citizen in the society can have improved status in society through being employed in camps. However, despite the positive effects of the illegal camps in Iran, from reducing police intervention and providing facilities for people who use drugs, to employing former addicts, the treatment strategies that have been applied

[4] This result has been paralleled with some parts of the film titled "Life+1Dday", which was directed by Saeed Roustayi in 2004. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5460658/

in the illegal camps are controversial. According to addict participants who were recruited in the illegal camps, beatings are the fundamental strategy used to control and manage camps, especially when new addicts arrive. As Ali, one of the recovering addicts said:

> *"The only way to control them in the first days of detoxication was beating. The manager of the camp just beat them and yelled at them; otherwise, they were out of control"*.

As a matter of fact, the mushrooming phenomenon of illegal camps in Iran are considered a double-edged sword, which affects addicts' lives through providing treatment facilities for addicts while using unprofessional treatment strategies.

The government of Mohammad Khatami introduced harm reduction measures such as safe needle distribution, methadone maintenance, and the legalization of rehab centers (Ghiabi, 2018). In 2010, the anti-narcotic law was reformed. As a result of reforming the drug law, the practices of harm reduction centers were legitimized by including them in the institutional order. Also, harm reduction centers such as charitable clinics, private clinics, and state-run institutions were established, making a clear distinction between people who use drugs who have a genuine desire to quit drugs and those who are not willing to stop using drugs but are subjected to arrest. In addition, the death penalty was introduced for possessing 30 grams of methamphetamine. In 2011, adding articles 15 & 16[5] to the anti-narcotic law placed addicts' detailed information within the "network of writing", which provides an opportunity for the state to control them constantly

[5] "Under Articles 15 and 16, drug addicts are required to seek treatment in authorized rehabilitation and harm reduction centres. Those with a certificate of treatment in a rehabilitation centre are exempted from punishment for offences under the law. Any addict not in possession of such a certificate will be sent to such a centre by a judicial order for six months. This period can be extended once for a further three months at the request of the centre or of the individual with the agreement of the centre. During this time, prosecution of the individual will be suspended. If the centre reports that the individual has undergone successful rehabilitation, prosecution will be dropped. However, unlike the previous law, prosecution is envisaged for addicts who fail to be rehabilitated.5 Penalties include imprisonment, fines or flogging" (Amnesty International, 2011, p. 15).

(Foucault, 1975). Although the 'war on drugs' has appeared to change the direction toward cultivating, distributing, and trafficking, it still targets addicts through article 16 and its purifying plans. By 2017, one of the most recent steps taken by government toward drug policy has been the establishment of two injection rooms for drug users in Tehran (Ghiabi, 2018). As of 2018, drug trafficking laws have been amended, and as a result, the threshold for the death penalty for drug possession cases has been raised, and the pending death sentences of most inmates have been reviewed or even commuted (Nikpour, 2018).

In keeping with this strategy, some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (e.g. 'Narcotics Anonymous', 'Sun House', 'Rebirth') are active in the treatment of illegal drug users and also have a different organizational climate and structure compared to prisons in Iran, which are, at best, the integration of custodial and rehabilitation orientations. The principal aims of these kinds of NGOs are based on treatment and rehabilitation factors such as encouraging volunteer work in the institution, establishing close relationships with members, developing good social habits, emotional maturity, and the capacity to deal with everyday problems (Slosar, 1978). In fact, this community "has focused its improvement program on the personal revolutionary plan and tries to make a total change in people's lifestyles with the aid of fellows' support" (HajHosseini & Hashemi, 2015, p. 36).

While most Muslim countries and some western states still do not accept welfare-oriented measures such as harm-reduction centers toward drug users, the Islamic Republic of Iran has established several harm-reduction centers nationwide through the intervention of the welfare system (Ghiabi, 2018). However, medical intervention acts as another system of control in addition to legal control, resulting in portraying people who use drugs as "sick". In fact, the official medical definition of people who use drugs was added to the previous ones (criminal and deviant), which

legitimized the criminalisation policies, acts, and programs introduced by anti-drug enforcement. Portraying people who use drugs as 'criminal' and 'deviant' automatically blocked all treatment solutions for the target groups, while considering drug addiction as a 'disease' or 'illness' at least opened a gateway toward rehabilitation. According to Singer (1993, p.43), "Both criminality and disease are conceived as outlaws, invaders with secret ways, as well as forces of disorder. Both criminality and disease (and their postulated equivalence) are used to rationalise forms of power in the name of maintaining a healthier, that is, crime-free and disease-free, society. Both rationalise power as management." As Conrad and Schneider (1980, p.250) state, "defining deviant behavior as a medical problem allows certain things to be done that could not otherwise be considered…, {which} this treatment can be a form of social control." According to the laws of 1997, only those who do not exhibit a desire to change are seen as a failure and unworthy to be considered as someone who needs 'help', thus they are considered as a criminal that deserves punishment. As Pitch (1995, p.21) states, "It now functions as a legitimation for incapacitation, as the criterion of classification within the prison system itself and between custodial strategies as such and the policies of 'soft' control ... It functions as a residual category: all that which is not amenable to treatment or rehabilitation is therefore dangerous." People who use drugs are still faced with only two choices: to be considered a 'worthy' drug addict who seeks treatment or to be considered a criminal and deviant. If they are in the second category, they will end up in prison or suffering the enforced treatment of compulsory camps. Most addicts are collected through the large gathering programs ('purifying plan') on streets and will be sent to the compulsory camps. Those camps make the violence against people who use drugs more 'private' and 'invisible' than in prison. In the name of treatment and having a 'healthier' society, especially in specific areas of the cities, the compulsory and forced treatment centers regulate and control people who use drugs. As a result of

drug-law reforms in 2010 in Iran, street drug addicts are regularly arrested by the police and sent to compulsory camps, which resemble prisons. From the one side, the government legitimized the harm reduction centers, and from the other side, people who use drugs who were not seeking to quit drugs are subjected to arrest by the police. As the manager of one of the most important and oldest harm reduction centers in the south of Tehran put it:

> *"I was shocked by these contradictory acts by the state regarding drug addicts On the one side, drug users came to my center to receive their methadone, and on the other side, the police arrested them. Sometimes, I thought that the harm reduction centers were being used as a big trap for addicts to be arrested by police. Or, one day, I was invited to the International Day of Anti-narcotics ceremony, and the ceremony building was filled with soldiers and administrative officials. There were several speakers. One of the most astonishing and unfortunate parts of the ceremony was when they set fire to the illegal drugs that were discovered by anti-narcotic police. Once this part of the ceremony was announced, I got scared and thought it might explode, since there were large amounts of illicit drugs to destroy. I sneakily left the campus and went across the hall. Suddenly, one of the soldiers asked me why I was leaving. I told him that I was scared, as there were a lot of drugs, which were going to be lit on fire, and I was scared of a possible explosion. He just laughed in my face and said, "Did you seriously think those are drugs that are going to be lit on fire? They are all straw. They never set fire to drugs. Those are funny games which are managed and controlled by the government."*

1.3. Objective of study

The main objective of the dissertation is to compare the subcultures of prisons in Iran by paying particular attention to the most populated provinces like Tehran, Isfahan, Kerman, and Mazandaran (Figure 1.1) as governmental institutions which have both custodial and treatment orientations simultaneously with non-governmental institutions which are treatment-oriented and provide drug users with medical and educational services. This study focused on drug-related offenders. Although the Iranian government is struggling to find a new strategy for the 'war on drugs', drug-related offenses have not significantly decreased. In these circumstances, different questions have been raised: does the incarceration of drug-related offenders contribute to

rehabilitation or to criminalization? Does incarceration simplify the desistance process or complicate it?

Most of the English language research on prison subculture has been conducted in countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and New Zealand; unfortunately, there are few studies outside the US and the UK (Sirisutthidacha & Tititampruk, 2014; Winfree et al., 2002). There is thus a dearth of literature regarding prison subcultures in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, given that drug arrests may be associated with breeding and deepening criminality and anti-social behaviour and considering the consequences of incarceration in the post-release life of drug-related prisoners, it is important to study the lived experience of not only drug-related offenders (e.g. drug users and drug traffickers) in prison and members of NGOs, but also to study the lived experience of citizens with no incarceration experience.

Figure 1. 1GeoCurrents Base Map, submitted by Martin W. Lewis on March 18, 2016.

1.4. Research Questions

The Four main questions of this study are:

1- How do drug-related criminals and drug users experience the context of prison and NGOs?

2- How do drug-related offenders experience their lives under the condition of confinement?

3- How do offenders adapt to the difficulties and issues they experience in prison?

4- How do drug users adapt to the difficulties and issues they experience in NGOs?

2. Literature Review

The sociological literature on incarceration mainly revolves around prisoners' adaptation to the social norms, values, and rules of prison. Early studies considered prison as an informal social world with its own special language, rules, social classes, and norms guiding prisoners' behaviors (Clemmer, 1985; Garabedin, 1963; Irwin and Cressey, 1962; Sykes, 1985). In other words, prison has its own institutional and subcultural factors that push prisoners toward learning, internalizing, and accepting specific rules, values, and norms (Sirisutthidacha & Tititampruk, 2014; Oleinik, 2013; Oleinik, 2003; Krebs, 2002; Einat & Einat, 2000; Kaminski & Gibbons, 1994; Akres et al., 1997; Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Clemmer, 1940).

Inmate sub-culture is a unique social order that has particular elements, which were observed by Clemmer (1958, p. 294-295) as follows: "habits, behavior systems, traditions, history, customs, folkways, codes, the laws and rules which guide the inmates and their ideas, opinions and attitudes toward or against homos, family, education, work, recreations, government, prisons, police, judges, other inmates, wardens, ministers, doctors, guards, ballplayers, clubs, guns, cells, buckets, gravy, beans, walls, lamps, rain, clouds, clothes, machinery, hammers, rocks, caps, bibles, books, radios, monies, stealing, murder, rape, sex, love, honesty, martyrdom, and so on."

The degree of socialization and prisonization into the inmate subculture are influenced by pre-prison characteristics, situational deprivation, the contextual features of a prison, and post-prison life possibilities. Most of the studies to date have followed two competing hypotheses: the deprivation or "functional or situation response model", and the importation models of prisonization or the "prior-socialization model" (Akers et al., 1977, p. 529). To put it in Schwartz's (1971, p.532) language, the former hypothesis might be called "indigenous influence theory",

which asserts that "social structural features or patterns of interaction endemic to the prison, rather than the attributes of the inhabitants themselves, determine a prison's rehabilitative or criminalizing potential". While the latter "cultural drift theory" holds that "because all members of the inmate community have exhibited persistent criminal behavior, antisocial values which they share before imprisonment are brought with them into the prison setting".

However, some studies have focused not only on pre-prison and prison life, but also extra-prison variables and post-prison life to explain inmate culture (Thomas, 1977; Thomas and Foster, 1972; Wheeler, 1961). Additionally, evidence to support certain aspects of the first two perspectives has been considered in some research (Wellford, 1967; Schwartz, 1971). Some scholars have discovered that the structural characteristics of prison (i.e. treatment versus custody) have a significant effect on the rates of socialization into inmate subculture (Grusky, 1959; Berk, 1966).

2.1. The Deprivation Model

The deprivation model focuses on pressures and problems inside prison and their influences on prisonization, which is closely associated with the work of Sykes (1985), Sykes and Messinger (1960), and Goffman (1961). Sykes (1958) argues that all prisons contain a systematic structure of roles or sociocultural orders which is imposed upon inmates and creates deprived and frustrating circumstances. According to Skyes (1958, p.64) "The deprivations or frustrations of prison life today... viewed as punishments which the free community deliberately inflicts on the offender for violating the law ... that can be just as painful as the physical maltreatment... [and] appear as a serious attack on the personality, as a threat to the life goals of the individual, to his defensive system, to the self-esteem, or to his feelings of security". The loss of basic needs such as liberty,

autonomy, security, privacy, and heterosexual relationships pushes inmates toward adherence to the inmate code, which results in internalizing criminal behaviors. As Tomas and Petersen put it (1977, p.49) "Once such a [subcultural] response occurs, an inmate society begins to take form, a society that includes a network of positions which reflect various types and levels of subcultural norms as well as adaptive reactions to the problems of confinement, a system of rewards and sanctions that encourage compliance to the normative expectations associated with these positions, and a socialization process which is directed toward the goal of increasing the level of appreciation for and responsiveness to the prescriptions and proscriptions of the inmate code." In fact, based on the deprivation model, the entire vehicle of the inmate subculture can be considered a constant effort to alleviate deprivation in the prison.

It has been found that these sorts of deprivations, as well as particular characteristics of prison life, force prisoners to create a world which is more like the outside by offering roles, status, values, attitudes, and ritualizing activity to "provide some anchoring for identity" (Onojeharho & Bloom, 1986, p. 424). As Schwartz (1971, p.532) asserts, the prison environment is a "homogenizing setting", wherein, as Sykes (1958) states, a wide variety of frustrating situations that are indigenous to the nature of imprisonment affect inmates' psychologically. Therefore, "inmate behavior is immediately referable to the inmate community and, ultimately, to the very fact of imprisonment" (Schwartz, 1971, p.533).

According to this model, prisonization is a consequence of the "depersonalizing and stigmatizing effects of legal processing and induction into the prison, coupled with the alienative effects of the coercive power exercised by prison officials in their attempts to maintain social control within the prison" (Thomas, 1977, p. 137). In fact, the social process of controlling

institutions such as prisons could produce different patterns of conforming or adjusting to prison life. “Pains of imprisonment” influence the emergence of a central collective solution to deal with the surrounding difficulties (Sykes, 1958; Sykes and Messinger, 1960). In other words, according to Akers et al. (1977:538), “the inmate culture represents a generalized adaption to the irreducible deprivational conditions of imprisonment in whatever society that imprisonment takes place”.

Although the deprivation model as a “closed-system” has been criticized by the importation model, many studies based on the deprivation model have examined the correlation between prisonization and various factors such as the length of incarceration (Akers, Hayner, and Gruninger, 1977; Clemmer, 1940; Wellford, 1967; Wheeler, 1961), communication among prisoners or interpersonal involvement with other inmates and their social roles (Clemmer, 1940; Wheeler, 1961; Garabedian, 1964; Sykes and Messinger, 1960; Akers et al., 1977), the degree of alienation (Tittle, 1964), and the organization and institution’s structure and characteristics (Akers et al., 1977; Berk, 1966; Cline & Wheeler, 1968). The deprivation model is restricted to the influences of the prison’s environment on prisonization, which is challenged by the importation model.

2.2. The Importation Model

The importation model or cultural drift theory emphasizes the effects of pre-incarceration socialization and offenders’ experiences with their adjustment to prison life. As Schwartz (1971, p.533) states, prison is a “differentiating setting wherein individuals express the different backgrounds they bring into it”. According to this model, the most important determinants of adaptation depend on the period of involvement in criminal value systems in pre-incarceration and the different criminal behavior patterns that accompany them to the prison (Irwin, 1970; Irwin and Cressey, 1962; Thomas and Foster, 1972; Thomas, 1973). Irwin and Cressey (1962) suggest that

different types of adaptation to inmate culture can be traced back to the prisoner's life history. Similarly, Giallombardo (1966) states that the individual's attitudes and interests associated with sex roles in society have a direct impact on the patterns and content of the inmate's role system in prison. According to Owen (1998), imprisoned women shape the environment of the prison based on their pre-prison experience. In other words, they tend to create an environment that relates to their traditional social roles. They formulate the structure to cope with the rules and demands of prison and to give them some control over their lives (Banks, 2003, p. 48). Therefore, their gender roles as a sister, mother, and wife are replicated in the prison environment. Studies based on the importation model have examined the correlation between prisonization and a variety of factors such as the criminal involvement history of the offenders before incarceration (Zingraff, 1980), age, race, and pre-incarceration employment, and educational status (Schwartz, 1972; Thomas, 1977).

It is important to consider that the existence of an inmate subculture or, as Akers et al. (1977) state, "inmate solidarity" does not imply that all prisoners become highly prisonized. The claim that there is a social system in all prisons around the world does not mean that all prisoners are affected by it because "as with any structure there are core participants, leaders, followers, and isolates" (Akers et al., 1977, p. 528). "The typical inmate may be one who remains relatively insulated from the culture and unaffiliated with the social system" (Akers et al., 1977, p. 529). However, the fact is that the existence of inmate subculture and the prisonization process is pervasive enough that it warrants recognition and exploration.

2.3. Integration

The deprivation model was one of the earliest theories that has been proposed to explain the emergence of the sociocultural subsystem in prison. Later, the importation model or cultural drift

theory was developed as an alternative explanation for the prison subculture. Although the importation model was in contrast to the deprivation model in the studies, it was not dominant. In fact, the deprivation and importation models complement one another rather than detract from each other (Thomas, 1971; Thomas and Petersen, 1977). Even Schwartz (1971) states that both theories are wrong whenever these theories start to deny or refute each other. As Thomas and Petersen (1977, p. 51) state, "the deprivation model identifies certain structural conditions that may be viewed as a sufficient condition for the emergence of some type of adaptive response, but that these conditions are not sufficient to predict the nature of the response." It is better to say that engaging in prison subculture to some extent relates to pre-prison socialization experiences. To put it another way, some inmates represent more fertile soil for getting involved in the inmate subculture because of their pre-prison experiences. Considering this, both models have a key role in understanding the process of prisonization.

Despite the large body of literature regarding prisonization and inmate subculture, information on prisonization in Middle Eastern countries is limited, and scholarly analysis has been conducted in only a few countries. Since most available studies have been conducted in Western countries, which generally have a more "enlightened prison system", studying and investigating socialization and prisonization processes in Middle Eastern countries, which are less developed and often struggle with diverse crises and wars, is necessary. There are several informal and formal sources that report the numbers of drug-related crimes and executions in Iran and around the world. However, there are few studies and reports regarding inmate subculture and the consequences of prisonization among drug-related offenders.

3. Conceptual Framework

One of the most important parts of a qualitative study is identifying and refining the key concepts of the research. Conceptualizing often emerges by starting the observation and interview process in Grounded Theory and then is refined by collecting data and interacting with the data (Bachman & Schutt, 2007). According to Corbin & Strauss (1991), concepts and their definitions are generated from qualitative data. In other words, definitions are extracted from properties and dimensions of categories. Additionally, "we shall often state positions, counter positions, and examples, rather than offering clear-cut procedures and definitions, because at many points we believe our slight knowledge makes any formulation premature" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1). By gaining experience in the setting, the definitions of concepts will gradually shift. Using previous research assumptions and concepts to sensitize them to look for specific issues in the specific context is the initial step in Grounded Theory research. As Blumer (1954, p.7) states, "A definitive concept refers precisely to what is common to a class of objects, by the aid of a clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed bench marks… A sensitizing concept lacks such specification of attributes or bench marks and consequently it does not enable the user to move directly to the instance and its relevant content. Instead, it gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances". Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts equips GT researchers with a set of general concepts, which are "points of departure" to use when listening to participants and when looking at and analyzing data (Charmaz, 2003, p. 501). According to Charmaz (2003, p.259), "sensitizing concepts offer ways of seeing, organizing, and understanding experience; they are embedded in our disciplinary emphases and perspectival proclivities. Although sensitizing concepts may deepen perception, they provide starting points for building analysis, not ending points for evading it. We may use

sensitizing concepts only as points of departure from which to study the data".

According to Blumer (1954), although sensitizing concepts can be tested and refined, the purpose of Grounded Theory is not to test or improve such a concept. Rather, sensitizing concepts form the foundation for analyzing data. Sensitizing concepts, based on a review of the literature, form the conceptual framework of the research and can be considered as measurable variables and construct "the analytic frame, serving as a point of reference and a guide in the analysis of data with theory-producing potential" (Bowen, 2006, p. 15). Although the logic of Grounded Theory invites researchers to extract concepts, definitions, attributes, and properties from the qualitative data, in my own research, it is necessary to define briefly the complexity of "prisonization".

3.1. Prisonization

A prison is a self-contained world (Clemmer, 1940), or as Oleinik (2003) states, it is a "small society" that has its own structural criteria that are vastly different from the rest of society. To use Clemmer's (1940) language, "prisonization" occurs due to adaptation to the prison circumstances. According to Clemmer (1958, p. 299), every offender who enters a prison is affected by "prisonization" to some extent. New entrants have to be ready to accept a subordinate role, develop new habits of eating, dressing, working, and sleeping, and adapt to the new patterns of language. As Sykes (1958) argues, prison is a society within society that involves hundreds or thousands of offenders working, sleeping, eating, and living together, often for many years. This community provides an opportunity for prisoners to constitute a social system and expand the informal social order, which differs from the social order commanded by the officers. Prisoners are a mass of isolated individuals that are aggregated instead of being a social group or a society. Prison is shaped by its surrounding social environment and reflects the state's dominant ideology.

For Foucault (1979), prison is not an isolated building in the city; rather, it is integrated into the city. As he argues, the mechanisms of discipline and the strategies of power and knowledge that operate and control offenders in prison also control citizens outside of prison. Thus, we can say that a prison is not an autonomous system of power. It does not exist in isolation, and its institution and setting are mixed with that of its surrounding society despite the definite boundary of the prison's walls: "It appears that total institutions do not substitute their own unique culture for something already formed: we deal with something more restricted than acculturation or assimilation" (Goffman, 1961, p. 13). "A total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life" (Goffman, 1961, p. 11). In fact, "disculturation" happens in prison, which involves "untraining which renders him temporarily incapable of managing certain features of daily life on the outside, if and when he gets back to it" (Goffman, 1961, p. 13). Additionally, the degradation ceremony on the first day of entering the total institution strips away the inmates' name, usual appearance, and identity, a process that Goffman refers to as the "mortification of self". It is important to consider that prisonization is the intermittent social process in prison. That is, during the process of the "mortification of self" and disculturation, some parts of an inmate's identity remain intact. According to Goffman (1961, p.12), prisoners come to prison with a "presenting culture" that has emerged from their "home world". Additionally, the degree of prisonization varies throughout the inmate population.

One of the most important components of all the above-mentioned empirical and theoretical studies is that prisonization is a principal concern in criminology for two reasons. As Thomas and Foster (1972) assert, an explanation of prisonization or the adaptation process in

prison is highly important for those who seek to explore and explain the dynamics of inmate society. Although prisonization is conceptualized and considered an independent variable, it has considerable consequences inside and outside of prison. Prisonization provides opportunities for drug-related offenders to become aware of the values and norms of criminals. As Oleinik (2013) states, for offenders who are convicted of drug-related crimes, prison plays a principal role in re-socialization. This situation can be made worse by group imprisonment. The Islamic Republic of Iran keeps most of its convicts in groups. The incarceration of drug-related offenders affects their lives after prison not only because of becoming familiarized with the prison subculture, but also because it makes the desistance process more complicated. As Laub and Sampson (2001) argue, desistance is crime cessation. It is not an event but rather a process in which the frequency of criminal acts decreases dramatically. In fact, "inmate informants corroborated that prisonization was the most detrimental factor affecting post-prison adjustment" (Gillespie, 2001, p.53). Thus, exploring the life experiences of people who use drugs as an 'unwanted' group in the prison and NGO context is necessary.

4. Research Method

4.1. Research Paradigm

To understand the philosophical perspective from which the research questions of this qualitative research were explored, the paradigm or worldview will be explained. A research paradigm or worldview is "the lens with which one sees, approaches, and manages the research process and influences the specific research paradigm chosen to conceptualize, conduct, and interpret the research" (Ponterotto and Grieger, 1999, p. 52). Research paradigms come from a critical, constructivist, positivist, and postpositivist theorethical perspective. As Mackenzie & Knipe

(2006) state, a constructivist paradigm holds that the lived experience of humans develops meaning and aids the researcher in understanding the phenomenon from the participants' points of view. The research questions of the current study adopted a constructive paradigm because the main objective of this research was to understand the lived experiences of people who use drugs from their own point of view.

4.2. Grounded Theory

This study attempts to examine the complexity of prisoners' lives in comparison with the life experienced by drug users as members of NGOs (e.g. 'Narcotics Anonymous', 'Sun House', and others). Since qualitative methods value the importance of context in gathering and analyzing data and emphasize participants' lived experiences (Manuel, 2007, p. 185), I intend to utilize Grounded Theory (GT) in my research. Therefore, participants' experiences, understandings, and perceptions about their lives have been central when conducting in-depth, semi-structured and open-ended interviews.

GT was introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. According to classic Grounded Theory (1967), a theory has to has five requirements in order to be a "fit" (categories must be easily applicable to the data and indicated by the data) and in order to "work" (categories have to be both relevant to the data and have an ability to explain target behavior): 1- the ability to predict and explain human behavior; 2- "useful in theoretical advance"; 3- useful in practical explanation and prediction and gives the researcher control and understanding of the situation; 4- provides a view of behavior; and 5- provides a specific guideline and style for research about a particular behavior. Grounded Theory meets all these requirements in social research.

Since one of the most important features of GT is the use of inductive strategies in analyzing

data, as Charmaz (2003, p.497) states, it provides the opportunity for researchers to focus initially on participants, ideas, and their understandings and experiences of their own lives and incidents instead of focusing purely on theory. According to Constructive Grounded Theory, GT attempts to capture the worlds of participants by describing how their stories about their own lives, concerns, feelings, and thoughts shape the form of the research (Charmaz K., 2003). Therefore, participants' voices are central to the results, which are extracted from the data. GT is an inductive research method which "begins at the bottom of the research circle and then works upward" (Bachman & Schutt, 2013, p. 51).

Another reason I have chosen GT as a research method is because, as Glaser & Strauss (1967) state, there is a paucity of theories that cover all issues of social life and all social contexts. In fact, sometimes theories that are not based on grounded data do not fit and work and are not adequately appropriate in the specific context and situation. According to Cho and Lee (2014), investigators are not restricted to pre-existing theories and literature; rather, GT allows creativity in the approach of the researcher when theories about the topic are limited and fragmented. GT provides fertile ground for investigators to analyze the phenomenon with new eyes and form new viewpoints without being restricted or limited to prior hypotheses and theories.

Although GT has several characteristics that encourage its selection over other qualitative research methods, it can be challenging for investigators for the following reasons. According to advocates of GT such as Glaser, as much as possible, investigators have to put aside their theoretical and analytical hypotheses to let the new theory emerge from the data. In this case, Charmaz's (2006) approach, which emphasizes the reflexive role of researchers, may be useful. Additionally, researchers are faced with the difficulty of determining saturation – the moment a theory is sufficiently detailed. To solve this problem, according to Creswell (2007, p.68),

"discriminant sampling" is the best strategy when moving toward saturation in GT. This approach refers to gathering more information from participants who are like those participants initially interviewed to ensure the accuracy of the information that has emerged.

4.3. Research Design

This study was conducted in two different settings: governmental organizations (e.g. compulsory drug treatment camps, the Isfahan Association for the Protection of Prisoners, Kerman Court, Isfahan's central prison, voluntary drug treatment camps) and non-governmental organizations (e.g. Narcotics Anonymous, the "Sun House" women's rehabilitation center, the "Rebirth Charity Society"), which were located in four different cities (i.e. Isfahan, Kerman, Mazandaran, Tehran) of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Compulsory treatment camps (state-run camps) as governmental insitutions were designed to lock arrested 'street' and 'homeless' addicts into a treatment environment instead of incarceration to force them to quit drugs. Street addicts are periodically arrested and sent to the compulsory treatment centers for one to three months. The objective of the Isfahan Association for the Protection of Prisoners *(Anjoman-e Zendaniha)* is to financially support prisoners' family members on the one side and to help prisoners, after being released, to find a job. Narcotics Anonymous "is a non-profit society of men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem." The 'Sun House' (*Khaney-e Khorshid*) is a women's empowerment center that facilitates women's reintegration process into society and family. The center was established in 2006 as a harm-reduction center for addicted women in Tehran. However, due to various barriers to providing services for addict women, (e.g. police enforcement regularly showing up, complaints from neighbours, a lack of facilities to financially support drug-addicted women) this center navigates its objectives toward empowerment and reintegration for recovering addict women. Another treatment organization called 'Rebirth Charity Society' (*Tavalode-e*

Dobareh) was established by Mr. Foruhar Tashvighi in 1999 and was based on NA's 12-step program. The 'Rebirth Charity Society' is an NGO whose main goal is to improve the quality of life of substance abusers, recovering addicts and addicts' family members. In line with fulfilling these goals, 'Rebirth' conducts various integrated programs and interventions, from specialized training and educating peer counsellors, to work in the areas of treatment and harm reduction, to advocacy, promotion and the production of specialized content to affect policymaking and planning for the addiction field at national, regional and international levels. Most of the data in the current study were collected in private camps (short-term and medium-term treatment centres) in which drug users voluntarily spend 21 to 28 days to go through the detoxification process. However, these camps are under the control of the Welfare Organization and have a close relationship with the police. Thus, according to the manager of one of those camps in Isfahan, whenever the police collect drug users in the street and there are no available beds in the compulsory camps, they send them here; however, most of them are sent to compulsory camps that are designed as an alternative to prison. The managers of voluntary camps believe the drug users have to come into the center of their own free will, as otherwise they will escape. Thus, the owners of voluntary camps try not to accept addicts who have been arrested by the police. According to Ghiabi (2018, p.292), compulsory camps (state-run camps) are legislated under Article 16 of the 2010 drug law, which is supported by the Law Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran (*Niroy-e Entezamiy-e Jomhoriy-e Eslamiy-e Iran*), welfare organizations, and the Ministry of Health. It is funded through the Iran Drug Control Headquarters and has recruited social workers, police officers, and medical professionals. It provides detoxification, methadone, and NA support for targeted street drug users and homeless drug users. It is referred to arrested drug users and is free of charge. Meanwhile, voluntary camps (private camps) are legislated under

Article 15 of the 2010 drug law. They are managed by private organizations, charities, and associations and are funded through donations from families, members' fees, and welfare organizations. They recruit recovering drug users and NA members and provide detoxification, the NA 12 steps, and therapists and are targeted at lower-middle class drug users referred on a voluntary basis and have negotiable fees.

4.4. Entering the field

Accessing the field of study in this case is not just about finding the most appropriate and informative location and initiating the interviewing process. Since the central themes of the current study (i.e. illegal drug use and the role of NGOs) are sensitive, critical, and also potentially political, access to participants and institutions has not occurred without struggling with the "nuance of power" (Skeggs, 1992, p. 14 cited by Malloch, 2000). The initial group of participants were recruited in the summer of 2017 in different ways, each of which has its own limitations. To access as many subjects as possible, several requests were sent to different organizations and institutions from governmental to non-governmental ones. Those attempts were met with silence, so while I was waiting for a response, I sent other requests to other institutions in different locations either in person, by phone, by email or through gatekeepers. Different responses from different organizations were received, most of which were negative and discouraging. Most institutions, even non-governmental organizations, wrote back or called back asking for official permission from a university in Iran, and once they realized I was a female researcher who was a student in a western country planning to do research in Iran on this politically sensitive subject, they did not even answer my phone calls. When communication over phone was futile, I travelled from Isfahan to different cities (i.e. 446 km to Tehran, 1156 km to Mazandaran, 676 km to Kerman) to consider all other opportunities. Most often, when I called or met with the manager of organizations, I did

not mention my affiliation and just told them my co-supervisor is Dr. Masoud Kianpour from the University of Isfahan. In some organizations, especially the governmental ones, I did not dare disclose the fact that I was a researcher who was studying in a western university. It took time, about four months, before I found a non-governmental organization (*Tavalod-e dobare*) in Tehran where I felt secure and safe to disclose the reality regarding my educational affiliation.

At this point, I changed my strategy and negotiated with some judges who were trying to develop academic research regarding incarceration issues and also who could grant access to prisoners. Also, access to incarcerated individuals were frequently provided through released prisoners, who informed me about inmates who were on leave and connected me with them, or there were some interested officers within the Isfahan prison who tried to help through providing interested prisoners with phone calls to conduct phone interviews (those phone interviews were canceled because of potential security issues that might threaten the researcher). Additionally, based on my previous contact with prisoners' families (in 2012)[6], I knew some local gatekeepers who had trusting relationships with released or on leave drug-related prisoners. Gatekeepers were approached to explain the project to any interested drug-related offender with incarceration experience. My previous access to the prison in 2012 provided me with an excellent opportunity to observe and collect data in person, as I was allowed into the prison three days a week for six months. Gradually, I was considered a trustworthy person in the prison by both prisoners and guards. In other words, day by day, I became more of an insider than an outsider in the eyes of the prisoners. Since my previous research topic (i.e. mother and child interactions in and outside of prison) was not considered a sensitive subject to study, the trust road between me as a researcher and the guards was built more quickly than I thought. Most often, I spent a whole day with

[6] Please see page 59 for more explanations

prisoners, and could even visit other sections of the prison such as the library, consulting rooms, and visiting rooms.

It is important to keep in mind that getting official permission to access prison for me as a female researcher in 2012 could not have been possible without the full support of NGOs, which played a critical role in managing the kindergarten inside the women's division in the prison. In fact, the cooperation between Isfahan central prison and NGOs in providing prisoners with pervasive social and financial support was a fundamental reason behind getting me access to the prison. Also, the objective of the research was mostly centred around the role of children with their mothers in the prison because of the important role of NGOs and charities in funding the kindergarten. Since NGOs associated with the protection of children in need were financially supported by the charities and also the state, they provide an educational service for children in prison. This cooperation, which brought huge benefits for the prison as a governmental organization, provided an opportunity for me as a researcher to get access to the prison. However, in 2017, despite the fact that I had several connections with NGOs, I could not access the prison, since I was studying in a foreign country. Also, I was struck by the fact that it was sensitive to work on the issue of drugs in Iran and also to compare the circumstances of drug users in prison vs. NGOs. The point was not only to compare these two institutions but also to reveal the critical roles of NGOs and civil society in reviewing the definition of 'normal people' in society.

Getting access to addict women was controversial and difficult as well, since the researcher had to confront the dominant moral order in the society. Being an addict woman in Iranian society is considered as breaking several social taboos simultaneously, which will be explained in detail in the findings chapter. The person at the Welfare Organization in Isfahan who was able to give me official access to drug treatment camps for women in Isfahan believed that there are no

treatment camps for women. She believed that my research is morally wrong and might cause rumors regarding female addicts in the society, and she even encouraged me to change my research topic to another one such as children and youth studies. I did not even completely explain my research objectives to the employee of the Welfare Organization in Isfahan; immediately after hearing the word "women's addiction", she interrupted me to talk about the side effects of my research on society; she was offended by my research topic. One of her colleagues in the room jointed this interrogating process and asked different personal questions regarding my previous research, age, marital status, and phone number. Their reactions and their beliefs about female who use drugs were supported by the institutional power of the organization and also the state, thus they felt they are on a morally higher ground to force their beliefs on me. Had I not left that room, they would have asked another colleague to join them for further questions. This conversation happened exactly two days after I had found two treatment camps for women; however, I could not interview those women that day. I had a long face-to-face meeting with the manager of the camp in her room in the middle of the camp yard to convince her to grant me permission to access the field, as she was a former addict and also an active member of NA. She thought I was a trouble-maker and that my research could cause different challenges such as the camp being shut down by the authorities. She thought our cooperation regarding people who use drugs in Isfahan would get us nowhere but bring about my arrest "*saret ro to zendan zire abb mikonan*". Since that day, she has not even answered phone calls from her NA sponsor, who connected me to her.

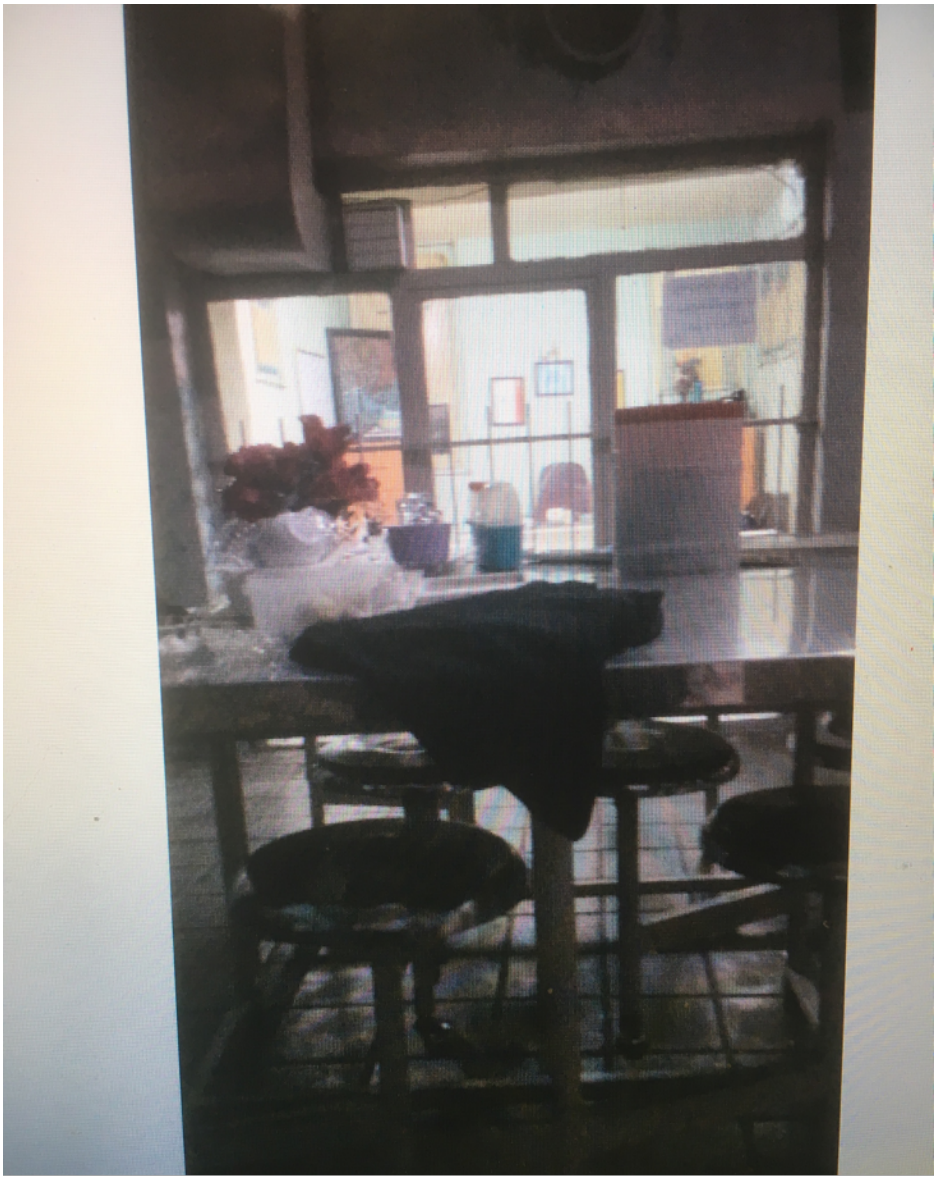
Figure 4. 1 People who use drugs consume and exchange drugs in the street close to the 'Sun House', where I conducted interviews with female recovering drug addict. Photo by author (2017).

The women's drug treatment centers are usually out of the city in marginal regions with high crime rates, such as *Shosh* and *Darvaze ghar* in Tehran and *Zeynabiye* and *Shahin shahr* in Isfahan. The opening hours of the night drop-in center in Tehran (Figure 4. 2 & Figure 4. 3) were from 7:00 pm to 7:00 am; it was not safe for women to go there after dark alone. Thus, for two weeks, I hired a taxi driver to take me there at 8:00 pm and return at 2:00 am. Almost all taxi

drivers looked at me strangely once I told them the address of the center. All of them had heard about it and did not have a good feeling about it. One day, one of the taxi drivers told me *"It is not good for you to go to those types of places. Be careful, you are young. Where is your 'mard' (e.g. husband, brother, or father)? If I were your family, I would not let you go into that place. Go back home, girl. If you want, I will take you back."* The most challenging part was returning from the center at 2:00 am. All the personnel of the centre wanted me to inform them of my safe return to my home. Every time I opened the center's door and came out, the taxi drivers looked at me with open mouths and wide eyes, wondering what business I had there at that time of the night. Even going to the drug treatment center in *Shosh* (Figure 4. 4), which I used to go to in the morning until the afternoon, was challenging. I had to pass drug users and dealers on street to get to the treatment center. Each time, one of the former drug users in the treatment center would accompany me once I wanted to go home. She always told me, *"Nahid, how do you dare come here alone? You don't have family in this city. Please go back to your city, Nahid. I know that you've got used to this situation after 10 days, but I'm so worried about you. Those days that you want to come here, I tell my friends to pray for you. Nahid, give me all your questions and just go home. I'll ask all of them for you and give back the answers to you."* In Isfahan, one of my family members usually accompanied me, especially when I had an interview with a former drug addict in the camps. Having interviews with male who use drugs in illegal camps out of town was also challenging. I received permission to access those participants from different gatekeepers, but they would not have let me in if I did not have those connections.

Figure 4. 5 Night Drop-in Center in Tehran. Photo By author (2017).

Figure 4. 6 Night Drop-in Center in Tehran. Photo By author (2017).



Also, according to the written and unwritten rules of each of those organizations, I had to manage dressing. In most governmental organizations, I wore a *chador*[7]. I also did not wear makeup in the governmental organizations and even changed my way of speaking and used

7 "a large piece of cloth that is wrapped around the head and upper body leaving only the face exposed, worn especially by Muslim women." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chador

specific titles; instead of using "Mr." to refer to a man in those organizations, I used *hajj-agha*[8]. However, when I had a meeting with a non-governmental organization's manager in Tehran, different, sometimes opposite, dress codes were required. Even in one of the night drop-in centers in south of Tehran *(Darvaz-e ghar*) I were advised to wear nail polish or makeup to make my appearance more similar to the clients of those centres, and they did not consider me as an 'outsider' who wants to observe and monitor them like the people from governmental agencies.

Interviewing NA recovering addicts was also challenging. Some recovering addicts, especially women, wanted to be anonymous, and so they did not even participate in the 'public' NA meetings. However, through the 'snowball' effect, some participants suggested other potential participants or encouraged their friends to take part. Some of the recovering addicts in NA were specifically invited to participate, for instance, the founders of NA in Isfahan. Also, the researcher communicated with recovering addicts or addicts in NGOs (e.g. night drop-in centers, Sun House, mother and child centers) through their daily activities such as book reading, cooking, caring for their children, washing, and educational classes to build trusting relationships and attract their attention regarding the project, and then they were recruited.

4.5. Descriptive Characteristics of Participants

The participants consisted of 38 males and 22 females aged 15 to 65 years who were on leave at the time of interview (5 participants), incarcerated and on their court day (4 participants), in compulsory camps (3 participants) in 'Rebirth' mother & child centers (7 participants), in 'Rebirth' night drop-in centers (5 participants), in 'Sun House' rehabilitation centers (5 participants), in voluntarily camps (14), a wanted criminal (1 participants), and in 'Narcotics Anonymous' (20

[8] "is a title which is originally given to a male Muslim who has successfully completed the Hajj to Mecca. It is also often used to refer to an elder, since it can take time to accumulate the wealth to fund the travel (particularly before the advent of mass air travel), and in many Muslim societies as an honorific title for a respected man. The title is placed before a person's name; for example, Joshua Omo becomes Hajji Joshua Omo." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki

participants). Almost all of them was Muslim (one of the participants was Christian). A large number of the participants were members of the NA program at the time of interview. The majority of participants reported the age of onset of abusing drugs as between 10 to 18 years old; however, 6 participants noted that they had begun abusing drugs between the ages 7 to 9. Most of the participants had incarceration experiences, and their crimes were more or less related to illegal drugs. More specifically, some were incarcerated for possessing illegal drugs (13 participants), some for abusing drugs (8 participants), some for drug trafficking (8 participants), and some for committing murder while high on drugs (7 participants). Those who had incarceration experiences (41 out of the 60 participants) were recidivists who had committed between 3 to 18 officially-documented crimes, most of which were drug-related offences (Table 4.1).

Table 4. 1 Participant Demographics (N=60)

Age	**15-25**	**26-35**	**36-45**	**46-55**	**56-65**			
	20	16	9	12	3			
Gender	Female	Male						
	22	38						
Education	Illiterate	No-high school	Diploma	Undergraduate degree	Graduate degree			
	9	21	14	7	9			
Province	Isfahan	Tehran	Kerman	Mazandaran				
	27	18	7	8				
Place of Interview	On- leave	Kerman Court	Rebirth centers	Sun House centers	Voluntarily camps	Compulsory camps	Narcotics Anonymous	wanted criminal
	5	4	12	5	14	3	20	1
Marriage History	Never	Married	Temporary marriage (*Sighe*)	Married more than one time	Divorced			
	9	18	12	7	14			
Incarceration history	Never	1-5 times	6-10 times	11-15 times	16 or more			
	19	26	8	5	2			
Incarceration length	Less than 6 months	6 months to 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	10 or more			
	11	5	12	5	8			

Punishment	Death penalty	Life imprisonment	Imprisonment	Temporary detention				
	12	5	20	4				
Crime	possession of illegal drugs	abusing drugs	drug trafficking	committing murder while high on drugs				
	18	8	8	7				
Religious affiliation	Muslim (Shia)	Muslim (Sunni)	Christian					
	57	2	1					

4.6. Data collection and data analysis

4.6.1. Interview Guide

There was a basic interview guide used while interviewing participants; however, the details were different for each group. The basic interview guideline included questions regarding: background information, social interrelationships, social life in general (e.g. loyalty of people, level of interpersonal trust, close friends, the duration of friendships, sources of social support, visiting friends and family, problem solving strategies, etc.); the informal behavioral guidelines or unwritten rules of behavior, the normative basis of everyday life (trust, family, work, property, etc.); priority in relationships with other people, etc.

The data collection procedures used in this study include theoretical sampling and semi-structured, in-depth interviewing. Interviews lasted between 45 to 100 minutes and were recorded

digitally. Also, they were conducted in different locations depending on the type of organization. However, all the interviews were conducted in a private, quiet space. Some of the participants preferred to talk in a car, while others preferred to talk at the nearest park to their home. All the interviews were transcribed into written for closer examination, and they amounted to about 140 pages of transcript. Then, data was translated from Farsi to English. Since research locations were remote from my hometown and in order to allow for intermittent data analysis, I traveled for one or two weeks and wrote the memos[9] throughout those weeks. Then, I took two weeks for data analysis, during which coding and memo writing were done.

Interviews were semi-structured and in-depth, which allowed participants to describe their experiences in their own terms. Being aware of the importance and significance of participants' viewpoints is the "hallmark of qualitative interviewing" (Hoonaard, 2014: 103). Additionally, according to Minichiello et al. (2008), the dynamic and flexible nature of discussing and questioning in in-depth interviews allows consideration of the importance of human experiences from the participants' viewpoints. Furthermore, social constructivists have claimed that social reality is the product of human interactions. Therefore, we can say that the interview process and participants' interactions with the researcher are sources of data, which not only include words and verbal reactions but, as Witcher (2010, p.124) argues, nonverbal signs, emotional reactions, and body language, which are important components that increase the trustworthiness of transcripts.

Another data collecting procedure that is an essential component of GT is theoretical sampling. According to Charmaz (2006, p.100-101), the purpose of theoretical sampling is to develop conceptual and theoretical aspects of the study rather than representing the distribution of a

[9] One of the most important tasks for developing Grounded Theory is writing memos or field notes regularly from the start of a project, which is, as Glaser and Strauss (1967: 108) state, "an immediate illustration for an idea" or, as Strauss (1987: 109) states, "in close conjunction with the data collecting and coding".

population or achieving generalizability. To achieve a high level of abstraction in Grounded Theory, investigators compare concepts and categories. In fact, the main purposes of constant comparative analysis are: "parsimony of variables and formulations and scope in the applicability of the theory to a wide range of situations" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 111). Theoretical sampling is, according to Glaser & Strauss (1978, p. 36) "the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides which data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges". Therefore, data collection is guided by "theoretical sampling" in GT studies.

4.6.2. Theoretical Sampling

According to Glaser (1978, p. 45), in the very first stages of data gathering, the researcher will "go to the groups which they believe will maximize the possibilities of obtaining data and leads for more data on their question. They will also begin by talking to the most knowledgeable people to get a line on relevancies and leads to track down more data and where and how to locate oneself for a rich supply of data". The purposeful selection of samples is an inevitable part of theoretical sampling in the initial stages of grounded theory. As Glaser (1992, p.102) states, "groups are chosen as they are needed rather than before the research begins". However, one of the most controversial debates on qualitative studies is about knowing where to initiate sampling. According to Chenitz & Swanson (1986, p.9), in theoretical sampling, the sample is "not selected from the population based on certain variables prior to the study; rather the initial sample is determined to examine the phenomena where it is found to exist. Then, data collection is guided by a sampling strategy called theoretical sampling".

The first stage of sampling in this study occurred among recovering drug addicts in NA, which is called 'the final chance of people who use drugs'. Then, by collecting, analyzing and coding data from the first stages of sampling, I decided what data to collect next. In the current study, different groups and institutions were added during the collection of data; in other words, I used theoretical sampling to define, elaborate and expand the categories and to continue further sampling to develop more categories or add new questions as the study progressed.

After initially analyzing and coding the emerged data from interviewing people who use drugs with an incarceration history and already-incarcerated people who use drugs to explore their life experiences, I moved on to collect information in alternative governmental institutions that were established specifically for people who use drugs in Isfahan. Those prisons that were designed for people who use drugs and separated them from other types of criminals were a source of enriched data regarding the sub-culture of governmental total institutions. Then, after the emerging category regarding the shifting identity in governmental institutions, people who use drugs with experiences in the state-run camps, which were temporary, prison-like institutions, were interviewed to explore and compare their experiences as former prisoners. Although state-run camps and prisons with specific designs for people who use drugs have not been included in the list of institutions, they were discovered during the interviews. One of the most important purposes of state-run camps and drug addicts' prisons was to protect people who use drugs from the criminal subculture, thus interviewing those participants clarified the similarities and differences between the subcultures in those institutions. Most of the participants had been a part of those institutions at some time. Also, the same pattern for generating categories of Narcotics Anonymous as well as discovering voluntarily camps as treatment centers and harm reduction centers contributed in generating and developing the concept of "stretching normality" (see findings chapter) in this study. According

to Strauss & Corbin (1990, p.183), “some questions or foci with which you entered the interview or observational site will quickly get dropped, or seem less salient, or at least get supplemented”. As Glaser (1978, p. 39) states, “while in the field, the researcher continually asks questions as to fit, relevance and workability about the emerging categories and relationships between them”.

During the interview process, new questions emerged regarding the experience of addict women during the rehabilitation process and after joining the NA program, which led to the sampling of groups with gender-based rehabilitation difficulties, those who left NA because of cultural barriers, those who did not participate in any public programs of NA, and those who do not work as volunteers in NA. Each of those groups led to more discoveries, questions, and categories. During the initial stages of sampling, I applied maxium variation sampling and snowball sampling to collect the most informative and richest samples to provide me with enough information at the first stage. I examined those cases who had a lot to say about the subculture of NA and prison.

Also, those participants who did not answer the question in the expected manner were interviewed to add extra variation to the data. According to Silverman (1985), “researchers have to pay special attention to deviant cases because they enhance the reliability and inclusiveness of the analytic plan. Coding is one of the best solutions to use to recognize deviant cases in research. By categorizing or classifying data, the complexity of the social reality among the highly deviant cases is handled. Once researchers encounter a high number of deviant cases in the data that do not fit into the coding schema, the schema has to be changed or extended so that all variations are accounted for” (Silverman, 1985, p. 21). If the respondents or the participants of the study do not answer the question in the expected manner, this does not mean that all other results are false. Researchers have to find out why the participants did not answer as predicted by the hypothesis.

Researchers have to include and add the extra variations to the result (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 423). Considering intracultural variability in results or emergent theory in grounded theory "makes the theory more conceptually dense and makes the conceptual linkages more specific" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 423). "A major intent of grounded theory strategy is to systematically seek the full range of variation of the phenomena under scrutiny" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 423). In the current study, deviant cases were everywhere, even among recovering addicts in NA. The contradictory responses to the questions, especially among NA participants, guided me toward interviewing varied samples in different cities. Almost all the female recovering addicts in NA explained and described different barriers in the way of rehabilitation and reintegration into the society, while there were some cases who could manage the rehabilitation well. Also, the concept of trust in the NA community was one of the most controversial. Some of the participants find trusting relationships in NA in the very first days, while almost all of them restricted the concept of trust to specific principles of NA. Those contradictory cases emerged in different categories such as gender-based reintegration in NA and restricted and exclusive trust.

The male and female recovering addicts in NA were the first participants, and the first categories emerged from those particpants' data sets. The initial open coding of the first transcripts (n=13) led to the emerging of different concepts and codes, which guided me toward theoretical sampling. Those initial codes, concepts, and categories provided me with guidelines to lead me toward the richest and most informative cases (i.e. participants and institutions). Because one of my most important concerns during sampling was theoretical sampling, in all stages of the research after initial concepts and categories emerged, theoretical sampling was used across the study. Sampling was not restricted to one city in Iran; different cities were added across the study such

as Mazandaran, Kerman, and Tehran. Also, different additional data sources such as state-run camps, night drop-in centers, and voluntary camps were added.

4.6.3. Open Coding

The processes of data collection and analysis in GT occur simultaneously. According to Straussian Grounded Theory (1990), open coding, axial coding, and selective coding are used to analyze data in GT studies. The first stage of analyzing data in GT is called open coding. Open coding is the process of identifying concepts and their dimensions. The first stage of analyzing data in grounded theory is called open coding. Open coding is the process of identifying concepts and their dimensions. The most important step in analyzing data in GT is open coding because, as Strauss & Corbin (1998) state, through open coding, the text is opened up, and the thoughts, ideas, and meaning are revealed. Therefore, data are broken down and provide opportunities for the researcher to examine the data and find similarities and differences. Then, actions, behaviors, occurrences, events, and objects that are related in meaning or conceptually similar are categorized into the same group. Each category has a specific name that is an abstract representation of actions, behaviors, happenings, events, etc. The conceptualization of phenomena helps researchers to group similar events together and discriminate between different ones, which is the first step in theory building. Through the process of abstracting or conceptualizing, data that have been broken into different events and objects are given specific names. Then, during the process of analyzing data, if the researcher comes across events or objects with the same properties or characteristics, they will be given the same names. We want to recognize "the range of potential meaning" in the words that have been mentioned by participants to develop their properties and dimensions. Once concepts have been recognized in the text, the researcher might recognize some concepts that can

be grouped together with the abstract higher-order concepts. Categories are not anything less than the emerged and extracted concepts. The names of the categories are based on the research context, the research focus, and the investigator's perspective. Thus, the investigator has to start the processes of categorizing concepts under the most abstract terms once the concepts begin to accumulate. Once the categories are identified and named by the investigator, the properties, and dimensions of the categories have to be developed.

During the first phase of the analysis (open coding), I was able to understand the complex and confusing information, and I tried to extract the initial codes. Participants told me about when they started abusing drugs, becoming addicted to different drugs, being excluded from their family, losing family support, living alone, losing jobs and friends, seeking drugs constantly, being incarcerated, struggling in prison, being separated from their children, and being sexually abused. The participants' journeys documented in this study were complex, chaotic, and convoluted. The goal and objective of open coding was to create categories through line-by-line analysing. Once the interviews were transcribed, open coding started. The sentences and statements within the collected data revealed multiple concepts and layers of meaning. For example, one statement in the data was coded as "talking frankly", "un-monitored testimony", and "fearless testimony". Also, the codes and concepts that explained the meaning of what was occurring in the lives of people who use drugs in Iran were mostly the same words used by the participants. Table 2 provides a summary of the results from the open coding. The number of concepts initially had more than 205 codes; however, using a constant comparative method not only assisted me to reduce the number of codes to 136 for both sets of data (i.e. governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations) but also facilitated the process of extracting new codes. Below are some of the examples of the open coding carried out in the first stage of this research (Table 4.2).

Table 4. 2 Examples of open coding

Statements	**Concepts**
Amir: Everyone applauded for five minutes. As they were clapping, it was like injecting a painkiller in me.	Applauded newcomers, acting as a painkiller
Mzandaran1: NA can be kept alive through newcomers; if they do not come to NA, the meetings will die off.	NA will die without newcomers
Narges: One of the long-term members of NA gave me hugs and love. They repeated the pamphlet after me, and I thought "how much they love me." Mazandaran 1: Newcomers have to receive love and hugs once they enter the NA meetings, because all of us as addicts are always excluded and isolated.	Giving love and hugs to newcomers, being loved
Amir: There is no hierarchy in NA; the oldest members of NA receive respect and in return they respect new members the most. Amin: Although I am now a ten-year member of NA, there is no room for me being superior; we all are the same in NA. Mahin: no matter who you are or what your belief is, we do not care. We are all the same. Just tell us what you want. Mazandaran 1: Even being a long-term member does not attract more respect. We are all the same. Even long-term members can lose sobriety by smoking one cigarette.	Newcomers respect long-term members and vice versa, no hierarchy, all are the same
Mazandaran: We are not talking about how wealthy you are or whether or not you are wearing ties or any special clothes.	Money and clothes do not matter

During the process of open coding, there were connections and shades of implicit homogeneity among some concepts, which resulted in a category. I started to see similarities between some incidents that might be different objectively but have the same essence or at least implicit similarity. Thus, they were grouped together and led to evaluation of the category, which is in this example, "fighting to provide essential needs" (Table 4.3).

Table 4. 3 Examples of open coding (continued)

Statements	**Concepts**	**Sub-Category**
Amir: Most of the fights in the prison occurred over drugs. Farjad: In the 3 months when I was incarcerated in the prison, I had to fight around 400 times for drugs. Ali: When drugs were prohibited in the prison, prisoners set up a protest to fight and beat guards to force them to make them free.	Fighting for Drugs	Fighting to provide essential needs
Farjad: You have to fight with someone who did something wrong to you; otherwise, he will misuse you constantly.	Fighting to stop potential victimization, fighting to support friends	
Shahram: One of the most important rules in the prison is that you have to fight for your cellmate or your old friends to prove your *lati* identity. Prisoners who do not fight for their friends are *lashi* or *shefteyi*. Shahram: If you fight to support your friends, next time that you are incarcerated, all of your ex-cellmates support you and give you a bed and food.	Fighting to support your friends to prove *lati* identity	
Maryam: A lot of fights happened in the prison over sexual partners. Sometimes powerful prisoners broke up with one partner for the sake of another, so they fight with each other. Akram: She had to fight 6 or 7 times because of her sister, who attracted other prisoners. Mohsen: One night, all the prisoners in one gang invaded our cell to take one of the prisoners as a sexual partner. A big fight happened between two districts for just one homosexual prisoner.	Fighting for sexual partners	

4.6.4. Axial Coding

The relating and linking of categories to their subcategories is called “axial coding”, which is the second step in analyzing data in grounded theory studies. The purpose of axial coding is to complete explanations about the phenomenon by reassembling data that were broken down into a series of activities. “By doing this, the analyst begins to build up a dense texture of relationships around the axis of the category being focused upon” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 124). During the

process of axial coding, investigators attempt to find answers to questions such as why, when, how, and so forth and the relationships among categories. Answering these questions helps the investigator to conceptualize the phenomena within a particular structure; in other words, by answering these questions, the investigator is able to relate the process through a structure. According to Strauss & Corbin (1998), it is necessary to relate the structure or conditions to the process or phenomenon, because conditions such as issues, events, and happenings set the stage for arising phenomena. In other words, to find out the nature and the complexity of phenomena, it is necessary to combine the structure and process or to consider the inextricable linkage between structure and process, revealing the dynamic nature of the event.

This part of the study began by grouping and relating sub-categories into the main categories. Through the process, 11 main categories, which are representative of the addict participants, were extracted from the data. As an example, “shakeable trust”, “exclusive trust”, and “restricted trust” were grouped into the main category labeled “restricted and exclusive trust”. This main and encompassing category is based on the required areas of understanding discussed by addict participants. The “restricted and exclusive trust” included information about what was the degree and type of trust they were talking about (e.g. trust of society or trust of NA members), the impact of “restricted and exclusive trust” (e.g. fear of testimony, seeking help with hesitation, shakeable trust as an ongoing project), what causes “restricted and exclusive trust” (e.g. being under constant control by the society, isolation and exclusion, being seen as “others”) (Table 4.4).

Table 4. 4 Example of Axial coding

Statements	Concepts	Sub-categories	Categories
Amir: Fear of disclosure in front of others always followed me. Amin: The first three years, I did not tell the whole story about my life. I could not trust, because people exclude me always.	Fear of disclosure, being excluded all the time	Shakeable trust	Restricted and Exclusive Trust
Mahin: I thought I was being tracked by police, even in NA. I could not trust anything in society.	Fear of being arrested by police, unable to trust society		
Zohre: It was difficult to believe that all the beautiful and polite women there were addicts in the past. Mahin: I told them "you are all liars, you all use drugs," and I was serious; I did not believe in them. I did not believe in anything. Arash: I did not trust them. For 18 months, I thought they do not know anything, and I am more knowledgeable than them.	Difficult to believe NA members, NA members are liars		
Habib: After a while, I trusted exclusively in NA members to talk about my feelings and thoughts. I did not trust people in the society. Mazandaran 1: In society, I do not trust people. My trust in the society has its own restrictions and limitations.	Do not trust people in the society, trust comes with restrictions and limitations	Exclusive trust	
Mahin: Trust is not in individuals; rather, it is in NA's principles, which all of us practice step by step. Habib: I do not trust the individuals in NA, I don't trust thieves, murderers, and drug traffickers; rather, I trust the rehabilitating pathway in NA. Habib: We are weak individuals. We have been addicted to drugs for so many years. We have been incarcerated. I do not ever trust individuals in NA.	Trust toward NA principles, not recovering addicts	Restricted trust	
Habib: I trust them within the framework of NA but no more. We can help each other to stay clean so in this matter, we all have the same target, so I trust them around this specific matter.	Trust recovering addicts restricted to our disease		
Maryam: The relationship between the sponsor and sponsee is restricted to the NA principles. Their relationship has to circulate around their common target and no more. If it goes beyond, they will face several problems.	Restricted relationship between sponsor and sponsee		

4.6.5. Selective Coding

According to Strauss & Corbin (1998), during the process of open coding, the major task of the investigator is to generate categories. In axial coding the principal step is linking categories with subcategories, whereas in the selective coding process, the task of the investigator is an extracting theory. In the later phases of grounded theory study, through the process of unifying and integrating categories, the core categories emerge. The principal phenomenon of the research is explained by the core category that emerges through the selective coding process. In other words, the main claim of the research is represented by the core category. The core category is extracted from the already defined categories or the new, more abstract ones that can explain the main phenomenon of the results. The applicability of theory, or more accurately the generalizability of theory that emerges from data in grounded theory depends on the degree that the core category is abstract (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). According to Strauss & Corbin (1998), the central category has to be central, appearing frequently in the data, evolving out of the existing categories, assigning as much of an abstract name to the central category as possible, and developing the explanatory power of the central category through defining and integrating concepts. Moreover, the variations and the main points of the data can be explained by the central category.

On the basis of the categories, memos, and diagrams, which were developed after six months of analysing, coding, and writing the data, I have realized that all the addict participants, from those who ended up in the compulsory camps and prison, to those in NA and volunteer camps, constantly struggled with multiple identities. Some of those identities are going to fade, but most of them are salient parts of the addicts' lives. Most often, identities are in contrast and against each other, which creates an ongoing war aganist addicts, even for recovering ones. The roots of identities start to run and spread all over the life of addicts like 'rhizomes' and represent a form of identity reproduction. Any time addicts decide to eradicate one of those identities from their life

through the NA 12-step program, from a piece of the identity rhizome behind other identities, new ones can emerge. Although contested identity is an inseparable phenomenon in the life of addicts, it becomes more controlable by the recovering addict in the NA program, especially for men.

Finally, coding processes can be done either manually or electronically, and there are several types of software available to facilitate, enhance, and speed up the coding process in qualitative studies such as QDA Miner, which I intended to use, but eventuallly realized that it does not support the Persian language. Thus, I decided to analyze the data manually.

4.7. Reflexivity

It has often been argued that qualitative research is not based on objectivity, reality, and is not value-free or unbiased (Kvale, 1996). Objectivity in qualitative studies does not refer to controlling variables; rather, it refers to listening what participants are saying, seeing what participants are doing, and reporting these results as accurately as possible. It means that researchers have an understanding, and this understanding is based on the values, culture, and experiences that accompany them into the research setting. Thus, complete objectivity at least in some phases of research is impossible. According to Weber (1949), the social sciences are not value-free; however, they can have some degree of objectivity by putting distance between researchers' points of view and results. To be objective in research means ensuring the absence of the researcher's values in research. However, "there is no absolutely objective scientific analysis of […] social phenomena independent of special and one-sided viewpoints according to which expressly and tacitly, consciously or unconsciously they are selected, analyzed and organized for expository purposes" (Ibid, p.72). The integral role of the background and set of values of the researcher in interpreting social situations and processes is undeniable; in other words, interpretation is not only based on the situation itself, the researcher's backgrounds also play a significant role.

Since the values, beliefs, and backgrounds of researchers are inseparable and integral parts of their personalities, they can not eradicate them from their research. Thus, researchers have to be as reflexive as possible; this requires explicitly and completely bringing their background into the foreground to provide the opportunity for readers to evaluate and assess the effects and influences of the researcher in the research. In other words, the reflexive role of the researcher in interpreting information has to be clear. Researchers must facilitate readers by leaving some "tracks" to show their own hand in the conclusion and interpretation. Reflexivity in qualitative research refers to the process of clarifying the effect the researcher has on the research for themselves and the audience (Gentles et al., 2014). According to Guillemin & Gillam (2004), there is a reciprocal and mutual relationship between the researcher, participants, data, incidents, and activities. In other words, the reflexive researcher does not report just data on the research; rather, he/she is actively involved in interpretation and generating theory. They declare that reflexivity is an active and ongoing process that will affect all stages of the research; this means that as a researcher, our social, cultural, and political status will affect our research. Charmaz (2006) is a constructive grounded theorist who emphasizes the significant role of reflexivity in grounded theory. Since the roles and effects of researchers on the representations of research results are not addressed adequately in qualitative studies, "qualitative research reports are not so straightforward as their authors represent them to be" (Charmaz K. , 2003, pp. 268-269).

According to Willis (1997), in qualitative research methods, there is a reflexive relationship between the researcher and his/her subjects. Data is not collected through the purity of the scientificism of its method; rather it is collected through the social relations, interactions, and contradictions between what actually happens and what is collected, between the researcher's background and cultural codes and those the researcher is representing and reporting. Since

researchers and participants are in the same world and affected mutually, the act of research is social rather than a one-sided process (Gentles et al., 2014). The reciprocal relationship between the researcher, participants, and the world they are occupying reveal the fact of reflexivity in social science studies.

As a matter of fact, although theoretical sensitivity has an important role in the rigor of GT, incorporating reflexivity in GT plays a crucial role in enhancing rigor (Hall & Callery, 2001). In other words, adding reflexivity to grounded theory studies improves rigor through valid results. In fact, clarifying the effects of the researchers/participants' interactions during the process of data collection and analysis creates a more rigorous form of grounded theory. As Hall & Callery (2001) state, since Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Glaser (1978) consider the natural world as available for observation and analysis without assuming the active involvement of the researchers and researchers/participants' interactions, their declaration about the rigor of Grounded Theory study is problematic. Considering reflexivity in Grounded Theory is necessary because one of the most important parts of Grounded Theory which takes place before starting the research involves reading and studying the conceptual and theoretical background of the target topic to establish a base for the new theory and concept that will emerge from the data. Additionally, the research interview is a conversation between two partners about the mutual topic of interest which results in knowledge emerging through a dialogue (Kvale, 1996). During the process of interaction between investigators and participants, the data are produced. Thus, the nature of relationships and interactions between investigators and participants has to be seriously considered in a GT research. The work of Strauss and Corbin (1990) pushes Grounded Theory toward a more constructive paradigm, but there are not enough supportive arguments in their work about reflexivity.

A new approach to Grounded Theory has been developed by Charmaz (2006) which is based on a constructive perspective. According to Charmaz (2006), a constructivist Grounded Theory is based on the fluidity and open-ended features of pragmatism, and the researcher is expected to interpret the world being studied rather than just reporting the data. Additionally, the constructivist paradigm will affect and guide the practices and actions of research. Thus, according to Guba (1990, p.17), "constructivists not only abjure objectivity but celebrate subjectivity". Also, it is well documented that since we use language to understand and interpret the meaning or observed realities, and since language shows values and norms, neutrality in research is impossible. Marking a strict distinction between objectivity and subjectivity creates unsolvable difficulties in the process of collecting and analyzing data in qualitative studies. The fact is that individuals cannot be separated from their values and beliefs, and those backgrounds accompany them during the life course. Therefore, researchers have to be as explicit as possible regarding their own roles throughout the whole process of conducting research. There are strategies, according to Strauss & Corbin (1967), that help researchers to avoid bias and gaining distance while maintaining sensitivity, which include: comparing incident to incident in data, finding examples of the same issues in the literature, achieving multiple viewpoints of an event, gathering data in different ways, stepping back and asking "what is going on here?", and checking the assumptions with the participants.

4.8. Motivation

My interest in the contested relations between the state and the civil society, the 'forgotten' and 'unaccepted' people in the society, and the pivotal role of NGOs in expanding the notion of normalcy, goes back to 2008 in Kerman, where I utilized a participatory action research (PAR) method to study the experiences of Afghan refugee children and adolescents in Iran as a host

country. As a result of the former Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan in 1978, hundreds of thousands of Afghans took refuge in Iran. They are 'outsiders' or 'others' who have not been welcomed in the host country. They were living in disadvantaged communities that were characterized by high rates of mobility, poverty, population density, and heterogeneity, which was worsened by a decrease in the chance of having an opportunity to attend schools as Iranian citizens. The undocumented and unregistered Afghan refugee children were not allowed to register in public schools in Iran. Thus, non-governmental organizations such as the Association for the Protection of Children's Rights in Kerman established an "Independent Moshtagh School[10]" to provide educational facilities for not only Iranian children but also unregistered immigrants in Kerman province (i.e. the most important destination of Afghan refugees in Iran). The perception and stereotypes in the society were that Afghan refugees are all 'troublemakers' who are 'uneducated' and 'unemployed', and 'criminals' who do not have any right to occupy any position in any institutions, from school and university to the labor market. The empowering program of refugees in Kerman indirectly constructed and expanded social capital around their families as well. Thus, the marginalized and 'unwelcome guests' who have not received any financial and social support either from the state or the society have been re-defined as a 'human' in need instead of being considered as 'abnormal', 'criminal', or 'bare life'. This could not be possible without the constant support of non-governmental organizations that almost exclusively have been funded by charities. The experiences of the Afghan refugee child laborers in Iran broadened my horizons regarding the discriminatory policies of the state and how those policies construct the perception of normal citizens regarding the 'unwanted' population and also the role of non-governmental organizations

[10] http://bachehayemoshtagh.blogfa.com/

in stretching the definition of normal citizens in Iran. Since then, I have been curious about the role of the state in making a distinction between 'them' and 'us'.

Thus, I utilized Grounded Theory and conducted interviews with 11 married female survivors to investigate the self-immolation phenomenon in the Lorestan province of Iran in 2012 and how their life experiences as women in a community push them toward setting fire to themselves. Furthermore, in 2012, I utilized Grounded Theory and conducted interviews with 16 incarcerated mothers in one of the medium-security prisons in Iran to explore the consequences of incarceration not only on maternal distress, but also on the living circumstances of their children in prison (e.g. struggling with unstandardized equipment, the low quality of the physical environment, health issues, overcrowding, getting birth certificates, and learning bad habits) and outside of the prison (e.g. behavioral, mental, and physical challenges; escape; poverty; the dilemma of caring; and the dilemma of mother-child visitations).

Since I had several research experiences regarding exploring and examining the life experiences of marginalized and unwanted people in Iran, and also the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations in constructing or reconstructing their identities, the life experiences of people who use drugs in governmental and non-governmental organizations is another way to not only explore the subculture of those institutions, but also the interaction of the state and non-governmental organizations in shaping people's lives.

4.9. Credibility

Credibility "deals with the focus of the research and refers to confidence in how well data and processes of analysis address the intended focus" (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 109). In other words, credibility refers to the extent which the data accurately reveals the multiple layers and diversity of phenomena (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As a result of an overemphasis on the verification

of theory in sociology, which has accompanied the growing attention given to rigor in quantitative methods, theory that has been generated through flexible qualitative and quantitative studies has often been discredited. According to (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 223) "the qualitative research is generally labeled 'unsystematic,' 'impressionistic,' or 'exploratory,' and the flexible quantitative research 'sloppy' or 'unsophisticated." The criteria of judging the credibility of the emergent theory in Grounded Theory is based on the whole process of gathering, coding, analyzing, and presenting data.

Glaser & Strauss (1967, p.224) have explained the importance of credibility in Grounded Theory from two points of view: the point of view of analysts who extract the theory from data and trust the results to the extent that they want to publish it; and the point of view of the readers and the way they judge the emergent theory and the discovered theory "related to its further rigorous verification". Firstly, being constantly involved with the process of data gathering and data analyzing in Grounded Theory brings the research close to the researcher. Once the researcher believes the conceptual frameworks that are extracted from data form the systematic theory, the researcher can publish the data and results with confidence, and other researchers can use the emerged model or theory to guide them in a similar area of study. In fact, the researcher in this stage believes in his/her knowledgeability, and this is not based on the arbitrary judgment of the researcher; rather, it is based on the researcher's constant attempts and efforts from the initial process of gathering data to generating theory. In fact, the emergent theory is in "one sense equivalent to what he knows systematically about his own data" (Ibid, p.225). By the end of his/her investigation, it is hard or nearly impossible for the researcher to doubt the discovered and emerged results, because the results are not based on scattered and unsystematic analysis.

Secondly, during the process of publishing the results of the study, the researcher is faced

with conveying the credibility of his/her discovered and emergent theory. The first sub-problem refers to getting the readers to realize the theory and conceptual framework that have been extracted. The best strategy is an extensive abstract explanation of the overall emergent theory in the beginning and at the end of the paper through sociological perspectives and terminologies and even the emerged concepts. The second sub-problems refer to explaining and presenting the data in a way in which the readers can see and hear about the participants' experiences as the researcher did. To achieve this goal, the researcher has to present evidence from the data to reveal how the researcher extracted the theory or model from them.

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), several aspects of the presentation of the results of Grounded Theory studies play a significant role in how the readers judge the credibility of the emergent theory. Firstly, if the presentation of the result affects the reader in such a way that the reader feels he/she was in the field study, then the possibility that the readers will be convinced by the theory will be increased. Secondly, the credibility judgment of the reader about the results of the research is significantly based on how the researcher comes to a decision. The readers may consider the comparison of diverse groups in the research, the range of events, and the number of participants.

Quantitative researchers are concerned with validity and reliability, whereas qualitative researchers focus on the credibility of results. The validity and reliability of quantitative studies are treated separately, while they are not considered separately in qualitative studies; additionally, concepts such as credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness are used in qualitative methods instead of validity and reliability (Golafshani, 2003). The most important point is that the validity criteria in qualitative research are considering the distinction and differences between criteria as "the standards to be upheld as ideals in qualitative research" and techniques as "the methods

employed to diminish identified validity threats" (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001, p. 528). Primary criteria such as credibility (correct and precise interpretation of the main claim of the data), authenticity (adequate depiction of the respondents' experiences and meanings), criticality (critical evidence of appraisal and assessment of the entire research process), and integrity (repetitive checking of the investigator's valid interpretation of the data) are the basic requirements for all qualitative studies, while secondary criteria such as 'explicitness', 'vividness', 'creativity', 'sensitivity, etc., are other criteria of quality, but are practical for only specific studies. For example, both formal theory as "abstract knowledge" and substantive theory as "localized knowledge" (the distinction between the theories which has been stated by Glaser and Strauss, 1967), are necessary to demonstrate the primary criteria (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001, p. 529), while localized knowledge needs further benchmarks of quality such as vividness and thoroughness.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1981), the criteria needed to ensure "trustworthiness" and "rigor" in the qualitative research are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. As Snyder (2002) state, the credibility and transferability criteria in Guba and Lincoln's (1981) work are parallel to internal validity (adequate representation of truth) and external validity, respectively (ability to generalize). Also, Guba and Lincoln (1981) have suggested specific strategies such as negative cases, member checks, persistent observation, audit trails, and peer debriefing. In line with this statement, the rigor of the research can be evaluated by evidence of member checks, audit trails, and so forth. Additionally, the credibility of Grounded Theory results can be increased through constant comparison of "theoretical constructs with the data in different sites and situations", because it helps researchers to recognize biases and distortions (Gasson, 2004, p. 96). In the current study, the level of credibility has been enhanced by utilizing constant

comparison among different contexts (e.g. prison, forced labor camp, NA, and treatment centers), locations (i.e. different cities in Iran), organizations (i.e. governmental and non-governmental organizations), and institutions (e.g. night-drop in center, treatment center, harm reduction center, mother and child care center). Additionally, I constantly, in various social contexts, searched for those who think differently from others to conduct interviews with them. By recognizing one or two variations in the results, participants with the same perceptions were interviewed to fully understand the variations to extract new categories or subcategories. Although, as Clarke (2003) states, the complexity and messiness of the actual world or fields of study are avoided in the final report in some studies and simplification and universalization are preferred, I have given serious attention to postmodern approaches that consider heterogenity and complexities. In addition to utilizing constant comparision and conducting interviews with negative cases to enhance my credibility, I tried to find representsative key informants who could help establish reliable information about a variety of cultural patterns within the target group. A high level of interinformant reliability helps researchers ensure the validity of results.

According to Corbin & Strauss (1990), the relationships among categories have to be developed and verified during the process of research as much as possible. Whenever it is necessary, the investigator has to return to the field of study and recheck and monitor the relationships among categories. The relationships among categories are constantly revised "until they hold true for the phenomenon under study, as evidenced in repeated interviews, observations, or documents" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 422). As Corbin & Strauss (1990) state, the verification and discovery procedures in Grounded Theory are part of the search for "negative or qualifying evidence". Although some scholars such as Morse and his colleagues (2002) are against member checking to ensure the rigor of a study, Corbin & Strauss (1990) suggested that explaining the

results of the research to other people or opening up the findings to the scrutiny of others decreases the possibility of bias and increases theoretical sensitivity, which results in collaborative analysis.

In this qualitative study, participants' voices are at the top of the results; however, the integral role of the researcher's values, beliefs, and background in interpreting data is undeniable. In fact, member checking will provide the opportunity for my participants to engage with and add to the results several months after the data collection event to reduce researcher bias by actively involving participants in confirming the results, to ensure that the participants' meanings and perceptions are represented in the results and not the researcher's own values and beliefs, to increase the chance of transferability of results to the wider community by increasing the internal validity of the study, to be considered evidence of changing practices with a high level of reliability, and to develop new concepts and meanings throughout the process of member checking. Thus, member checking through Skype, in the current study, was also utilized as a technique for addressing, exploring, and enhancing the internal validity (i.e. the accuracy of data or adequate representation of the truth). Participants who gave me phone numbers and showed a willingness to participate in the continuing process of this research were called and were provided with the findings. Then, all changes were affected in the final report of the data. Since participants of this study were residents of different cities (i.e. Isfahan, Tehran, Mazandaran, and Kerman), it was rather expensive to travel. In addition, considering the recent political circumstances in the Islamic Republic of Iran[11], most of the participants preferred to have an interview for member checking

[11] Several public protests in various cities in Iran began on 28 December 2017 and continue into 2018. The most important causes of the protests are economic hardship and criticizing the government for systematic corruption. According to the Washington Post (2018), "protesters' chants and attacks on government buildings upended a system that had little tolerance for dissent, with some demonstrators even shouting 'Death to the dictator!' — referring to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei — and asking security forces to join them." According to Mahmoud Sadeghi, a reformist lawmaker from Tehran, as of 9 January 2018, around 3.700 demonstrators were arrested during the protests in different cities.

through Skype instead of face to face; they constantly feared being interrogated and arrested. To guarantee the safety and security of participants and also the reasearcher, the member checking was done by Skype.

The success of any grounded theory study is judged by its results. The evaluation is based on redefined ordinary criteria, which are specific procedures and should be considered as part of the evaluation process. There are some components and information in the Grounded Theory publication which facilitate the judgment process by readers, including: core categories, the indicators of core categories, the basics of theoretical sampling, the grounds for testing and formulating hypotheses, the reasons for selecting core categories, whether concepts are generated or not, whether concepts are related or not, whether concept categories are well developed or not, whether adequate variations are built into the theory, the significance of theoretical findings, and so forth (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). At the end, the credibility of results in Grounded Theory can be increased through long-term interaction and communication with participants, triangulation of the data (i.e. using multiple methods or data resources to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research topic), sharing the drafts of final categories, results, and transcripts with participants, analyzing negative cases, and assisting peer debriefers (Brown et al., 2002).

4.10. Ethics

Ethical concerns are an inseparable part of each stage of the research process, such as designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, and reporting, and may relate to crucial issues, especially in qualitative research studies, which are investigating participants' lived experiences and opinions. Increasingly, it is agreed among scholars that commitment to ethical principles while doing research is essential to protect subjects' dignity and rights as human beings. Although scholars argue on the benefits of globalization for bridging the gap between different cultures in order to

apply universal ethical principles, cultures including traditions and religious beliefs penetrate the everyday life of people around the world. Therefore, applying basic principles of ethics requires some degree of flexibility and paying attention to the context. The foundation of ethics in research is the value of respect, which varies from culture to culture: "what is understood by human dignity in one culture may be considered indignity in another" (Oleinik, 2016, p. 630). Human dignity is experienced and interpreted differently from the point of view of an Iranian university student and theological and religious authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. As Kianpour (2016, p.719) argues, "the university students look for general moral notions as respect, love, equality, and so on to define human dignity, whereas the seminary students look at human dignity as a religious concept, a God-given gift, whose actualization depends on the believer's endeavor to obtain it". However, according to Kvale (1996), there are three ethical guidelines common to all societies which must be respected and considered: informed consent, confidentiality, and consequences, each of which will be described in detail below.

As Thompson (2002) states, three elements are included in the legal definitions of informed consent: capacity (the ability of participants to make a rational decision), voluntariness (free from restrictions and coercion), and information (being informed and advised about the process of participating in the research). Informed consent refers to informing research participants about the "overall purpose of the investigation, the main features of the design, and any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project" (Kvale, 1996, p. 112). More specifically, "informed consent means the knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar unfair inducement or manipulation" (Berg, 2001, p. 56). He states that there are two types of informed consent: when

participants of the study “knowingly” participate and when participants of the study “voluntarily” participate.

According to (Snyder, 2002), once the researchers have a plan to conduct the identified project, they have to consider four principles regarding informed consent: 1- the limitation of the constructive paradigm in ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of participants during the process of research, especially in identified projects in which participants and staff know each other well; 2- participants must have the opportunity to read and study the primary information and findings of the study, not only to check the accuracy of results, but to remove any identifying information; 3- the researcher has to check the desired degree of anonymity and confidentiality with the participants; and 4- the researcher has to design individual-based consent forms in order to consider participants’ wishes.

One problem I identified when I interviewed incarcerated women in 2012 was the issue of ‘informed consent’. In fact, all too often, participants were asked to participate by officers in the prison, which made it unclear how many participants had the ability to refuse their requests. Nevertheless, all participants in the previous study in 2011 were told about the purpose of the research and that confidentiality was guaranteed. However, in the current study, there was not any issue with informed consent, and it was clear that all participants had enough confidence to refuse participation, even in the middle of the interview or after the interview had begun. Almost none of them were recruited through the managers of the institutions, thus the researcher was sure their participation was of their own choice.

Confidentiality and anonymity have distinct meanings. Confidentiality is “an active attempt to remove from the research records any elements that might indicate the subjects’ identities” and

anonymity means that “the subjects remain nameless” (Berg, 2001, p. 57). During this study, participants had an option to be called by a pseudonym, and this name was henceforth used throughout the study. However, some of the participants disregarded this option and asked me to call them by their own name.

There are several strategies to safeguard confidentiality that are most practical in conducting research of this nature; for instance, keeping identifying records no longer than is necessary and promising not to talk to anybody about the information gained at the research sites. Additionally, disclosing private and confidential information (e.g. name, address, types of crime and sentence, etc.) related to other offenders is not allowed during the interviewing process. Therefore, this has been one of the central requirements of interviewing in this project, which should be accepted by participants before starting the interview. This strategy might decrease the emotional or social problems that may affect the participants once they return to the community after the interview.

Investigators are constantly faced with unforeseen dangers or risks related to physical, emotional, and ethical issues, especially when conducting research with criminals (Noaks & Wincup, 2004). According to Denzin & Giardina (2008), in qualitative research methods, the interview is the most important tool for gathering data, and risk and harm not only threaten participants but investigators as well. In other words, the interview process, especially when involving marginalized people, may emotionally engage and involve the investigators.

Most of the participants, whether they were incarcerated during the time of study or not, provided information regarding the use of drugs in prison, which might cause security issues for the participants. However, participants had my guarantee that their information would not be disclosed in a way which could lead to them being identified by others. According to Kelly (1990),

it is important for the researcher to be aware of any possible consequences of a study for participants. This is often more challenging when the study is about drug abuse and prison, which emphasizes the need for sensitivity. As researcher, I was aware of all potential problems that might impact participants if confidential data were disclosed. Thus, confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed and maintained throughout the study.

The intense and emotional stories and participants' distress and worries may trigger emotional responses or memories in the investigators, which can result in tiredness. If the researcher is not reflexive complications may arise. In my research about drug-related offenders, the emotional intensity of some interviews were particularly high, as it was difficult to hear some of the participants' emotionally-charged stories. The investigator should endeavour to be reflexive and should understand how to manage unforeseen emotional scenarios during the interview process.

Interviews with participants, regardless of their gender, became emotional when they started to talk about their difficult experiences while they were addicts and losing everything including family members, jobs, friends, and other valuables. Despite the efforts of the researcher to emotionally support the upset participants, this was not successful in the limited time. Thus, the researcher had two or three appointments with some participants. Also, the researcher conveyed information about any helpful resources that could assist participants. For instance, I passed contact information about NA meetings in one of the villages around Isfahan to someone who was a drug addict.

Interviewing is not just about emotional risks but physical risks as well. In some qualitative studies, researchers may be faced with dangerous participants who insult the investigator verbally or physically. There is a potential threat from participants that have a history of violent crime and

drug use. Thus, being exposed to undesirable behaviour is an integral part of qualitative research, which can be unpredictable. According to Tewksbury (2013), studies of active criminal offenders, drug users, or political groups may pose a physical danger to or threaten the well-being of the researcher, but these dangers can be managed. For example, in my research, I could maximize my protection by having a colleague (e.g. NGO staff) accompany me on the site. One of the possible solutions to avoid and prevent this kind of inappropriate behavior by participants is monitoring and controlling the emotional state of participants during the interview and by providing some breaks to help the participant control his/her emotional level. To decrease the risks, investigators have to employ several strategies, such as: acquiring the appropriate interviewing skills, including knowing when is the best time to offer to stop the interview; building a trusting atmosphere between the investigator and participants and creating empathetic relationships before starting the interview; explaining the purposes and procedures of the research and the possibility of discomfort and the right to refuse or even stop the interview; and being aware of all potential community resources for assistance in the case of danger (Denzin & Giardina, 2008).

During the process of data gathering in my fieldwork, there was a possibility that participants would be affected emotionally. Initiating a relationship between the researcher and interviewees, and maintaining, managing, and ending it professionally are challenging issues in qualitative research (Tewksbury, 2013). The relationships and interactions between researchers and participants are ongoing and complex (Thompson, 2002). The expectation of friendship is one of the first difficulties and most challenging circumstances relating to consent when participants expect friendship relationships from an investigator. Having close relationships at the time of interviewing with some of the offenders would “significantly interfere with my ethical obligations to the other participants” and participants might also feel the researcher is being disloyal by leaving

the study setting (Hoonaard, 2015, p. 55). Extended involvement with participants, especially the disadvantaged and marginalized participants in my research, may pose emotional risks for them. In fact, this emotional involvement of participants can be expected from marginalized groups who do not receive adequate social and economic support. Although some researchers in this situation suggest that the researcher disengage from the lives of participants to reduce the risk of exploitation, in my opinion, researchers have a significant responsibility to manage and control the situation and avoid escaping the difficulties posed by the site. I did not suddenly disengage myself from the lives of my participants; instead, I always asked the consultants or social workers in the prison to support subject before deciding to disengage. According to Smith (1992), it is morally wrong to interview participants and then abandon them with emotional vulnerability. In my own research, I attempted to contact and visit participants for one day following an interview to ensure that no distressing effects remained.

Additionally, one of the most important principles of ethics in research is balancing harm and benefit. According to Weinberg (2002) finding a balance between giving credit and preventing harm is challenging in qualitative research. To bring some benefits to the participants, I asked the participants whether they would prefer to be kept anonymous or named in the final reports of my research to give them credit in the research. None of the participants in this research wanted to be named in the report. Everyone asked to be kept anonymous. Additionally, participants of this study will have access to the information and results. Those participants who expressed their interest in being informed regarding the final results will be provided via email a brief version of the result in Persian. Not only do participants of the study have to be given credit, but the agency and institutions may look forward to gaining advantages and benefits from the research. Additionally, the risk of harm to the research participants should be as limited as possible; in fact, the potential

benefits for participants and the significance of the obtained knowledge should outweigh the risk of harm to the participants (Kvale, 1996).

5. Findings

5.1. Drug Use Trajectory Pattern

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experience of people who use drugs in two different settings (i.e. prison and NA) located in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The goal was to explore the sub-cultures of these two institutions; however, the pathway to drug addiction is depicted in such a way as to make the whole addiction story tangible. Most people who use drugs have more or less moved along similar pathways to drug addiction; they all have struggled with the same challenges such as sexual and emotional abuse, domestic violence, parental divorce, addiction in the family, constant negotiation in the family, and contact with addict friends. At the end of the road, however, different destinies await them (e.g. prison, NA, hospital, drug treatment clinics, shelters for drug treatment (*Garmkhane*), temporary accommodation centers, compulsory camps, private camps, night drop-in centers, etc.).

5.2. Accursed pathway

Although the primary functions of family are the socialization and supervision of individuals, family can also be a facilitator of crime. In other words, families who are characterized by an excessive drug abuse history, incarceration history, physical and psychological violence, and poverty are known as crime-facilitating environments. Being involved in these circumstances often leads individuals toward the addiction pathway. A number of studies (Beaver & Wright, 2007; Willis & Rushforth, 2003; Javdani et al., 2011; Dalley, 2002) have emphasized that family

problems are a key turning point leading to deviance and concluded that the family can be a facilitator of crime.

Most of the participants, more specifically, 97% of participants, were constant witnesses of conflict among family members. Some of the participants left home because of abusive and aggressive fathers who beat them constantly. Akram was a recovering addict, a 28-year-old woman who was repeatedly target of physical and psychological violence by her father. She was one of the participants who chose being homeless over living with family.

> "*My father has mental issues, and he was very religious. He did not accept the new lifestyle at all. He always beat me, and my mother was too weak to stand up against him. I left home occasionally, and my friends who smoked cigarettes sheltered me. Those friends became my life. In spite of being beaten by my father every time I smoked drugs, I did not give up. I felt peace with my friends, I didn't want to be at my home anymore."* (began abusing drugs at the age of 12)

Some participants did not even receive basic support from their parents (e.g. physical affection and discussing their problems and personal issues). In fact, their unengaged families, who were characterized by weak monitoring skills, especially among men, pushed them to use illicit drugs. They suffered from the unresponsiveness and unsupportiveness of their parents, which was called "cold parenting" and "careless parenting" by participants. Nastaran was one of the youngest participants of this study and had four other sisters, all of whom had a drug-free lifestyle, unlike their father. The father had been an addict since Nastaran could remember, and he was one of the biggest influences on Nastaran to start abusing drugs. She was the last child of their family, and all her sisters got married before she got to know them. She said:

> *"My mother did not even know how old I was or which grade I had to register for in school. One of our neighbours came to our home on the first day of school and told my mother that she would have to register Nastaran at school. My mother answered: "How old is she?" It does not matter for her that I am using heroin or methamphetamine or drinking too much alcohol. She knows everything about my drug life. But there was no reaction. I had a boyfriend who provided me with illicit drugs and whatever I wanted. My mother knew him*

and did not even bother to tell me to break up with him. She did not even suggest it. Nor did she teach me about relationships with men; I mean, she did not explain private issues and what sexual relationships are about. She found out that I had sex with one of the guys in our neighbourhood, but she did not advise me in any way. One day, my cousin came to our home and my mother left me alone with him and went grocery shopping. My cousin raped me. When my mother came back and I told her, she just told me not to say a word to anyone." (began abusing drugs at the age of 9).

The results show similar patterns for addicted men; however, women are more sensitive to authoritative and directive parents who restrict, monitor, and control them. Some of the participants' experiences come not only from uncaring and unsupportive parents but also authoritative and tough ones. Mahnaz, who was 55 at the time of the study and had three children, was one of the most informative participants of the current study. She was addicted to heroin, was a drug dealer, had trafficked drugs from Hormozgan to Isfahan, and had been a sex worker for 30 years. In the last 5 years of Mahnaz's life, she had lost everything she loved most, from her husband, children, boyfriends, and the worst part was her deteriorating tendency to abuse drugs. She was abandoned by her family and was just one step away from death, as she described. According to Mahnaz:

"*My father was a military man and always expected everything at home to be organized, but he did not even hug me during his life. He managed and controlled every step we took in our life; he controlled my sisters and I. I really needed to be free and live for myself for just a second, but he did not let this happen to us. I always thought about getting married to set me free from my father's prison, so I decided to say yes to the first suggestion. However, my husband was addicted to heroin. My mother did not seem to see me at home, she just paid special attention to my older sister because she was so organized and clever, and she had a good performance at school. My mother never looked at me, she always punished me and my brothers for nothing. She locked us in a dark washroom for a full day. When I got married, she was so happy to not have to see me again. I felt lonely; I did not receive any support from my family. Even once I found out my husband used illicit drugs, my family decided to be passive in this situation as well. To set me free from an authoritative father, careless mother, and addict husband, I started to use heroin."* (began abusing drugs at the age of 18).

Some of the participants began to use drugs for alleviating anxiety and chronic pain, drugs were even offered to them to solve their physical and psychological pain. Zara lived with her

parents, who were political activists during the Islamic Revolution. Her father set a reading schedule for his daughters to read the top 100 historical books in the world. They had to write a summary of the books weekly. Her father always told her, 'Zari you have to be a writer; you have to be a productive and important person in your country.' However, she had fallen in love with a man in their neighborhood. Her father did not agree to their marriage because of the prevalence of drug abuse in his family. Her father always told her, 'Zari, I'm sure you will fall into the drug trap if you get married to him'. Despite all his disagreements and resistance, she got married. According to Zara:

> "*I always suffered from chronic pain during my period, and all the time my father-in-law and my husband, who were both addicted to heroin, suggested I should use drugs to relieve my pain. One time, when I could not find painkillers, I began to use heroin, and since then I have used the drug for 10 years."* (Female participant, began abusing drugs at the age of 18)

Most participants have been witnesses to drug abuse among their loved ones and family members from a young age. They indirectly have been taught that the best way to avoid or ignore the problems and issues around them is just to be passive and use drugs. They felt powerless to change or even live their own lives. In fact, they used substances to cope with all the problems and struggles in their life. Some of the participants declared that they did not just want to try illicit drugs or experience them, but they wanted to escape, to find a way to cope, to wrap up their problems and emotions. Thus, most of them in drug recovery NGOs or institutions told me that they could not analyse their emotions, feelings, and thoughts.

> *"I feel like I have just been born - I do not know my emotions, I do not know how to manage and how to solve the problems in my life. I always put a cover on everything in my life by using drugs constantly. During the recovery process, I was faced with a huge range of emotions, from anger to love, which I had not allowed to surface before. I put a barrier on top of them, using drugs to mask them. I have started to know myself just now. Everything has become clear just now. I found out why my family left me, and why I lost my job and my best friends. I can analyse all those tragedies now."* (Male participant)

The most clear and transparent memory which was constantly repeated by the interviewees was the availability and common use of drugs in the family. They were not only eyewitnesses of the drug abuse among their family members, but they were also the ones forced to become involved in the dealing process. However, most of them did not even know what was wrong with their family members or what was in the box in their hands or pocket to deliver; they interacted directly or indirectly with drug users and step by step were approached to try drugs.

> "I *always smoked my father's cigarettes at night, and then one night I decided to try the opium in his pocket. It was relaxing; for hours, I did not feel any of the pains of my life. Every night, I would steal opium from his pocket until he left us, and then I abandoned my home to find drugs. My boyfriend was the next supplier of illicit drugs for me."* (Female participant, began abusing drugs at the age of 9)

When parents or siblings abuse substances, not only does it increase the availability of illicit drugs and the chance of using substances among the other members of the family, but the possibility of being abandoned as well. According to the interviews, out-of-home placements were the inevitable result of substance dependence or abuse. Participants used to live alone, as most often their family members left them periodically without even any warning or discussion, which resulted in multiple caregivers taking care of them.

> *"We lived in the storage facility of a factory outside of the city; we literally lived in the desert. Around the factory there was no existence except us. We lived in poverty. My mother constantly told my father that we were hungry and needed food, but my father responded with violence and anger. Every month he left us for more than a week, and we had no idea how to survive in that scary place. The situation became worse when my mother decided to leave us. I cried and followed her and begged her to come back. I told her that I was scared, that I could not live without her, that I would die. But she did not care. She left us for weeks and then came back and the same story was repeated over and over for years."* (Female participant, began abusing drugs at the age of 9)

> *"Besides all the fights between my parents throughout my childhood, being alone at home always troubled me. Different people took responsibility to take care of me, but I hated that situation. Even neighbors felt sorry about my situation and tried to give me some attention. My grandmother was another person who I had to live with for months. There was no papa, no mama."* (Male participant, began abusing drugs at the age of 15)

Some of the participants did not hear about or see drugs until they got married. Then to make their marriage work and avoid any conflicts with the spouse's family, adopting their lifestyles was imperative:

> *"Although I had not seen drugs before in my life, my wife's family atmosphere and my foolish thoughts and ideas about being a good husband for her pushed me toward using drugs. I thought it might be a perfect strategy to present myself as a cool man in my wife's family. In addition, even if I did not want to use drugs, drugs were an inevitable part of all their parties. That was so tempting."* (Male participant, began abusing drugs at the age of 22)

The fact is that even if they had not become familiar with drugs through family and marriage, drugs could be found through the community. Some of them found their friends and neighbors as a well-fixed substitute to family members. It is not only family that acts as a trigger on the addiction path, but also the "isolated" features of communities and societies have a significant role in persuading or pushing people to addiction (Sampson & Lauritsen, 1994, p. 43). The negative effect of friendship groups can be reinforced in disadvantaged neighborhoods where illegal activities such as drug dealing and use may be common (Zahn, 2007, p. 460). According to one study, (Maghsodi, Anaraki, & Boostani, 2016, p. 8) two participants were brought up in a family devoid of drugs. However, one participant ultimately became familiar with drugs through her friends. In fact, according to Maghsodi et al. (2016) some participants came in contact with drugs through their social surroundings, although they did not claim that their families' norms included such behaviours, nor were any of their family members a convicted felon.

> *"I had gone to one of my friends' homes whose brother was smoking drugs. It was there that I tested it and started smoking drugs."* (Male participant, began abusing drugs at the age of 16)

Almost all participants took the same pathway to addiction; however, the time, process, and strategy of drug withdrawal might be different. Since the first days of being trapped in the

addiction, the process of being excluded, stigmatized, and isolated began. The so-called 'war on drugs' or anti-drug campaign in the Islamic Republic of Iran is not only the state's strategy to combat drug-related offenders or drug users, but ordinary citizens with drug-free lifestyles use the same strategy to combat them through "poly-exclusion". According to Sanders (2014, p.31), "the most stigmatizing social policy to date is the so-called war on drugs." In fact, before excluding and stigmatizing by the state is necessary, family can take charge of this mission; even those with a drug history. Drug users in all institutions (e.g. family, education, religion, politics, economics) are considered "human waste". The fact is that being an addict justifies, rationalizes, and legitimizes any abusive behaviour by the state. People who use drugs in Iran are the target of social, political, and economic attacks. Family members and loved ones cannot stand beside the addicts, not because of their using illegal drugs or being physiologically affected by drugs, but because society defines them as 'abnormal' citizens. There is so much fear and shame in the hearts of the addicts' families that they dare not even consider the addicts as their family members any more. The vehicle of the dehumanization of people who use drugs is uncontrollable when 'normal' citizens go along with the views of the state.

> *"My father just found a small packet of opium; instead of talking to me or even asking about the owner, he called the police and I was arrested. He did not even want me to explain; I was trash to him, and he was ashamed of me."* (Male participant, 8 years of incarceration)

As I mentioned earlier, the title of 'abnormal' citizens legitimizes all or at least most of the state's violence toward its citizens. At least today, NGOs are the voice of 'isolated' citizens and give them various recreational and educational facilities to remind them of their rights and dignity. In this study, the lived experiences of people who use drugs who have an incarceration history or who have been part of NA were explored and compared. Some participants have had both experiences (i.e. prison and NA) and thus were the most informative participants of the study.

Participants with both experiences unintentionally have begun the conversation through comparing both environments. 60 interview transcripts were analyzed. During in-depth analysis, 7 categories for prison sub-culture and 4 categories for non-governmental organization sub-culture were extracted. The relationships and linkages among 11 categories, which led to the development of the core theory, will be explained below.

5.3. Dehumanization Ceremony

There is an adjustment process followed by new inmates at the time of entrance into custody. According to Goffman (1961, 1962), stripping self-esteem and the degradation of prisoners are considered elements of the prison as a 'total institution'. Newcomers in the prison are subjected to informal social norms, which requires an adaptation process. Although learning to live according to inmate social orders and codes sounds 'arduous' (Vaughn and Sapp, 1989), prisoners quickly understand that adaptation to prison sub-culture mitigates the pains of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958).

Drug addicts who are locked up in prison or compulsory camps have experienced a systematic 'dehumanization' process. Once addicts are caught by police or anti-drug enforcement police in Iran, they are locked in temporary detention. Although temporary detentions, according to the manager of the Kurdistan prison, are designed to protect potential offenders from the negative effects of incarceration, the 'dehumanization' ceremony is initiated from the first day of detention. Then, addict offenders are processed to quarantine for almost one week and transferred to group cells. Most of the cells in Isfahan prison were 30 meters with 10 three-storey beds; however, at the time of the study, almost all the participants said that about 60 or even 70 prisoners were kept in each cell. Some of them have beds, but most sleep on the floor on the 12-meter carpet. They are called '*Kaf khabha'* ("floor liers"). At lunch time, just 30 of them can sit on the floor to

eat their food, and the circumstances were even worse for the mother and child units. Incarcerated mothers and their children cannot even use the second and third storeys of the beds in their cells. Those are useless for them, since they might be dangerous for their children. Some of the participants state that there was not enough space even on the floor, thus they "slept" in the corridors for the first days of their incarceration. All the prisoners were stripped of their clothes, personal belongings, suffering humiliation and the violation of their identity. The dehumanization process begins once addicts are caught by the police. Some of the participants even declared that they were lashed and then transferred to quarantine because of a positive addiction test.

Asghar was a recovering addict in the voluntarily camps who experienced the detoxification process more than 8 times in different clinics and camps (e.g. compulsory and voluntarily). He loved his wife and his children, and he did not want to bother his family with his incarceration, especially because he had been lashed.

> "*I did not want to tell any of my relatives and friends that I got incarcerated. I did not even let my wife know about my incarceration because the length of incarceration was short, and I did not like that people would get to know about that. Once I got incarcerated, I got 35 lashes for being an addict. When I got released, I could not sleep on my back, so my family learned that I had been lashed and imprisoned."* (Male participant, 6 months of incarceration)

Likewise, Akbar was an incarcerated drug addict arrested on street for consuming drugs and possessing 15 grams of heroin. Although he used to live on street and was a '*karton khab*' (literally, "cardboard lier") for several years, he was still disturbed by the inhuman behaviours in the prison.

> *"When I was incarcerated, I was ordered to wash the washrooms; I guess it was a tactic used by managers to ruin our pride and dignity. Prisoners are all made to wear Kurdi pants, which were called government pants. If you have any rings or hair style, you should give up your rings and you will be shaved. Also, you do not have any telephone coupons during the first week of incarceration."* (male participant, 5 years of incarceration)

The circumstances in prisons that are designed for drug-related prisoners are far beyond just being under psychological pressure during the first weeks. In 'Dastgerd Prison' in Isfahan, prisoners are not even provided with their own basic needs in terms of beds, food, and clothes.

> *"The situation in Dastgerd Prison (located in Isfahan) was awful. There was not enough food there, and I did not receive any toothbrush or underwear when I entered the prison. I washed my clothes and put them onto the heater to dry and then wore them again. I did not have any spare clothes. They did not give us a pillow, so I put my clothes under my head."* (Female participant, 3 years of incarceration)

Also, some of the participants such as Ali were even tortured physically by being put into extreme cold and hot rooms. Ali killed one of his friends while he was high on heroin and was sentenced to death. At the time of incarceration, he was just 19 years old and grew up in a religious family with no incarceration or addiction history.

> *"I was addicted to heroin, and I was sentenced to the death penalty for murder. I remember that I was in the police-enforced solitary confinement for 17 days. I was beaten so much there. They tortured us by moving us from extremely hot cells to extremely cold ones. Once I was moved to the prison, I was not given any appropriate clothes or even a towel. I was physically inspected. I was in quarantine for one week. That was torture because they humiliated us."* (Male participant, 6 years of incarceration)

Then, after the 'dehumanization ceremony', the process of prisonization starts. Seven categories were extracted from the data to explain the sub-culture of prisons in Iran: (1) unstable pyramid, (2) captive as a society, (3) battle zone, (4) hegemony of drug-related networks, (5) multiple identities, (6) instrumental relationships, and (7) two sides of the same coin (Figure 5.1).

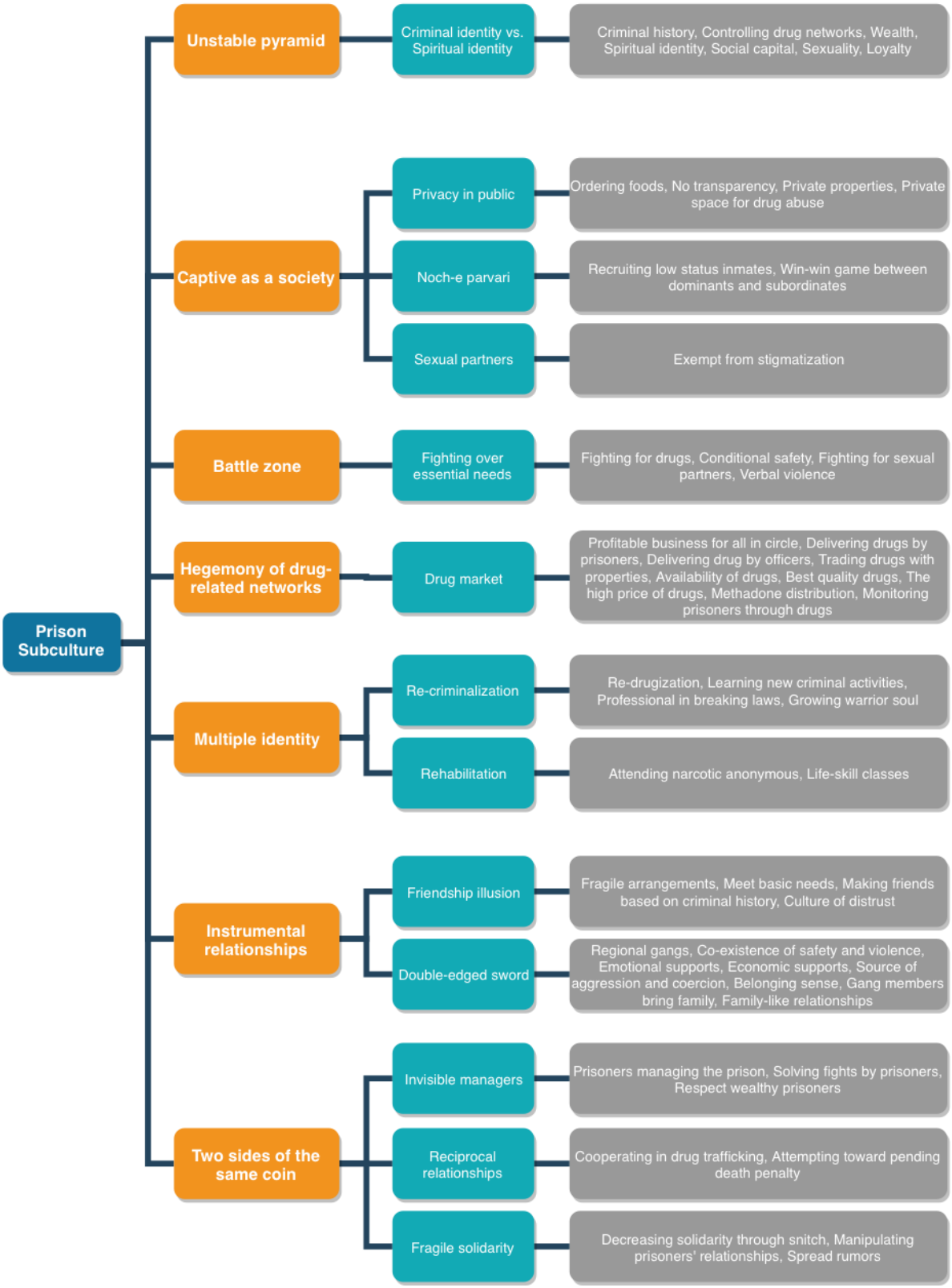

Prison Subculture
Unstable pyramid
Criminal identity vs. Spiritual identity
Criminal history, Controlling drug networks, Wealth, Spiritual identity, Social capital, Sexuality, Loyalty
Captive as a society
Privacy in public
Ordering foods, No transparency, Private properties, Private space for drug abuse
Noch-e parvari
Recruiting low status inmates, Win-win game between dominants and subordinates
Sexual partners
Exempt from stigmatization
Battle zone
Fighting over essential needs
Fighting for drugs, Conditional safety, Fighting for sexual partners, Verbal violence
Hegemony of drug-related networks
Drug market
Profitable business for all in circle, Delivering drugs by prisoners, Delivering drug by officers, Trading drugs with properties, Availability of drugs, Best quality drugs, The high price of drugs, Methadone distribution, Monitoring prisoners through drugs
Multiple identity
Re-criminalization
Re-drugization, Learning new criminal activities, Professional in breaking laws, Growing warrior soul
Rehabilitation
Attending narcotic anonymous, Life-skill classes
Instrumental relationships
Friendship illusion
Fragile arrangements, Meet basic needs, Making friends based on criminal history, Culture of distrust
Double-edged sword
Regional gangs, Co-existence of safety and violence, Emotional supports, Economic supports, Source of aggression and coercion, Belonging sense, Gang members bring family, Family-like relationships
Two sides of the same coin
Invisible managers
Prisoners managing the prison, Solving fights by prisoners, Respect wealthy prisoners
Reciprocal relationships
Cooperating in drug trafficking, Attempting toward pending death penalty
Fragile solidarity
Decreasing solidarity through snitch, Manipulating prisoners' relationships, Spread rumors

Figure 5. 1 Prison Subculture

5.4. Prison Sub-culture

5.4.1. Unstable Pyramid

According to Sykes et al. (1960), the main goal of a prison code is maintaining prison solidarity and cohesion. Thus, the more the inmates adopt the prison code, the more the stability and solidarity between prisoners is guaranteed; otherwise, a 'war of all against all' will be inevitable. However, in Iranian prisons, adopting informal rules causes solidarity and instability simultaneously (disobeying those informal codes causes instability). Prison stability is manipulated through three different routes: (a) Informal prison rules are disobeyed by inmates on different occasions; for instance, members of gangs do not always support other members in committing violent acts and try to not put their safety in jeopardy, which undermines the cohesion of the gang. In other cases, inmates do not always respect the king of the prison (*Vakil Band*), and some prisoners use physical violence, even against those with dominant status, and defeat him/her, which results in changing the dominant groups, changing social orders and subsequently shaking the solidarity skeleton. Most often, this challenges the general roles of prison; (b) gangs are the second route for challenging solidarity, as power struggles pit gangs against one another to take authority in the prison. Prisoners do not always show respect for the rules and norms established by the dominant gangs; (c) one of the most important reasons for instability in the pyramid in prison is the recruiting of informants by prison administration. Informants transfer security-related information, which results in decreasing loyalty and trust among prisoners. An overwhelming lack of solidarity and the social dynamics of the prison atmosphere put prisoners in an emergency zone in which social orders are produced and re-produced constantly.

Thus, dominant status is not static or fixed in prison and hierarchy criteria seem to change over time, since social orders follow the negotiations of social construction and social orders and norms are transformed by changing those who control resources and make decisions in the prison. Living in an unstable/shifting zone in which nobody can be a king forever pushes prisoners to have to face the constant challenge of adopting to new orders and norms once the dominant group is changed. Struggling with multiple identities is not only a phenomenon that prisoners struggle with when being incarcerated but a continuing project.

> "*We have to admit that the dominant group in the prison was not stable. Likewise, in society, everything is updated every day. The criminal skills and drugs are being changed over time. When I was incarcerated, we did not know about methamphetamine, but during recent years, young people from the wealthy regions of the city who are familiar with new drugs and new forms of crimes are the dominant group in the prison. Forms of managing the prison, even fighting, languages, everything, are being changed gradually. Sometimes, a group of prisoners will set up a fight with the dominant group in the prison, and if they win, they take their position, then all the prisoners will be under their wing. What I mean is that managing is not in the hands of one group always; it has been changing as time passes."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

The clash between conflicting identities in a 'total institution' is not just a struggle between the previous identity and the institutional identity, but also the 'yesterday' identity and the 'tomorrow' one. This means that prisoners feel like they are living in quicksand, requiring constant adjustments to new orders; this is even true for long-termers. For dominant groups to fulfill their aims and govern inmates in a full manner, cooperation must be obtained from prisoners through highlighting the new informal code of conduct. The challenge of adapting to the new sets of rules pushes them toward a multiple identity. Although criminologists believe that the former identity of inmates is deteriorated gradually during incarceration periods, the results of this study reveal that incarcerated addicts have constant struggles due to the coexistence of multiple identities. The former and previous identities neither deteriorate nor are stripped; rather, they fade, but they remain alive.

Inmates are exposed to unstable or even contradictory circumstances. Once they are incarcerated, they have to manage the inner conflict between the orders of the outside and inside worlds, even if they were used to a criminal lifestyle before incarceration. The circumstances can be more challenging for drug users who are not familiar with the criminal sub-culture, as they have not necessarily been in contact with criminals. Once they are incarcerated because of possessing 30 grams of heroin, they will be sentenced to death, requiring them to live in prison as their second and last home and adopt an institutional identity.

> "*If you are just a drug abuser, you are nothing in the prison. You have to be a criminal and drug dealer to change others' minds toward you. Once I was imprisoned, I was like trash; nobody communicated with me. I did not even know how to talk and whom to talk with. I did not know how to manage my life among those criminals. I was scared. I did not belong to this place. I was just a drug user who carried 30 grams of heroin for my own usage. I was shocked once I heard about the sexual relationships between women in the prison. I just could not believe how it might be possible. I heard about the drug trafficking in the prison, but I did not see it. I slept in the corridors. I did not see anything. I was not allowed to see anything. They assaulted each other constantly. The words were so strange to me. It took months and months for me to get used to this situation. I tried to put aside everything that I knew and started from scratch."* (Female participant, 2 years of incarceration)

Some of the prisoners, especially incarcerated women, are incarcerated and sentenced to death penalty just because of trafficking drugs in order to provide for their children. Most of them are the principal breadwinners of the family who were abandoned by drug addict husbands. The only dreams they had were to raise and feed their children and save them from misery.

> *"I was arrested for delivering 1 kilogram of heroin from Bandar Abbas to Isfahan to afford to live. I have seven children whose lives are in my hands. I was the breadwinner of my home, as my husband was an addict, and he abandoned us three years ago. I was addicted to opium myself, but it was pervasive and usual in our tribe that people use opium. I did not know anything about crimes and criminals. One day I decided to do something for my children to make them happy, because I could not afford even their food. My sister and I, she had five children and her husband was also addicted and decided to transfer drugs to another city, and in return, we were promised that we would earn 500,000 Toaman ($100CAD in 2017). That was so much money for us. We did it, but we got arrested in*

Isfahan. I cannot forget the day my sister and I got imprisoned in the central prison of Isfahan. We did not know anything; I mean anything about the life in the prison. We were scared to the extent that when we entered the prison, we did not even go to the yard for one month. My sister, she's older than me, she told the guards that we didn't know how to survive in this place and asked them to help us. As time passed, every day we changed. We became another person. We still have difficulties getting used to the prison life because it is completely new in our lives. I did not know how to find drugs in the prison, I did not even know that you could find it in the prison easier than outside. I was a mother, and I had seven children. How could I deal with criminals every second? Those challenges made me crazy. The day the judge told us you are sentenced to the death penalty, we fell on the floor. We are on death row now after five years of living in prison and I barely visit my children. I have to say that it is not our place; it is not." (Female participant, 9 years of incarceration)

Even murderers declared that they did not have regular contact with the criminal culture before being incarcerated. Most of the incarcerated drug addicts were involved in violent acts while they were high on drugs, not because they had a pre-defined plan to murder someone. Thus, this indicates that almost all of them were not familiar with the criminal code of behaviour before being imprisoned.

"*It is true that I am a murderer, but I did not have constant communication with criminals. I was addicted to heroin and when I was high, I killed my friend in a fight. I entered the prison and did not know what to do. I was a murderer and all the prisoners expected me to act as a murderer, but I did not. I was not a murderer. I did not know how murderers act or behave. My personality was torn apart. I lost myself. Every second in the prison I reminded myself that you are in the prison and must act as a murderer. You are not outside. These struggles still follow me, even now after 9 years."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

Prisoners are dealing with unstable and contradictory circumstances simultaneously; the contradiction is not only limited to the inner contradiction between the previous identity and the continuous new ones. However, the contradictory criteria of hierarchy push prisoners to show respect toward the conflicting identities in the prison. Violent criminals who are brutal, financially independent, managers of the cells and powerful enough to control drug networks have to be respected. Also, prisoners who are innocent, sources of calmness, seniors, *Loti* (being honorable

and high-minded), and mediators *(Rish Sefid*) should be respected as well. Thus, the accumulation of contradictions leads prisoners to live in a 'limbo' and always being ready to act contradictorily. Different studies have been conducted regarding the inevitability of informal hierarchical organizations emerging within total institutions (e.g. Crewe, 2005; Trammell, 2012; Garabedian, 1963). The status of prisoners is determined based on seven factors: (a) Criminal History, (b) Controlling Drug Networks, (c) Wealth, (d) Spiritual Identity, (e) Social Capital, (f) Sexuality, and (g) Loyalty.

5.4.1.1. Criminal History

It is well documented that criminal history is a principal factor through which the status of inmates is determined (Vaughan and Sapp, 1989; West, 1983). Violent criminals (e.g. murderers and drug traffickers) have higher status, authority, and control, which differentiates them from others.

> *"Someone who got imprisoned because of trafficking a considerable amount of drugs received respect."* (Male participant, 4 years of incarceration)

Although newcomers in the prison were not even seen as human beings, those who were incarcerated because of murder or drug trafficking were respected once they entered the prison.

> "*My cellmate was incarcerated for trafficking one tonne of illegal drugs. She was a king in the prison. Nobody dared treat her with anything other than respect. That was enough for her to become a new boss in the prison. She entered the prison one day and became our boss the next day."* (Female participant, 4 years of incarceration)

> "*Like all organizations in society, the prison has a hierarchy. The most violent criminals with long-term incarceration will be a manager and boss of 400 prisoners in one section of the prison. So, all prisoners are under his command. Like ordinary life outside the prison that requires emotion, money, and affection, the boss of the section demands all of these from the prisoners. Prisoners who are under his control have to provide all those to them. You have to be a victim in the prison or try hard to gain power to be a boss."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

Particular types of offences such as petit robbery *'dale dozdi'* (petit robbery), and '*khorde forosh*' (small-scale drug dealing) degrade the inmates' status in the eyes of other inmates. In general, non-violent criminals have low status, especially if they do not have any personal possessions (e.g. money, drugs for personal use, or cigarettes). Also, street drug addicts who were incarcerated due to petty offences (i.e. consuming drugs or possessing drugs) were exposed to the most exclusive lifestyle.

> "*Those who were incarcerated because of minor drug offences had no respect. Someone who did a petty crime was treated as a piece of shit. They even do not have a bed for sleeping, so they have to sleep in the washrooms. Washrooms for petty crimes."* (Male participant, 6 years of incarceration)

> *"I was just a drug user. I was weak, and I was not even able to talk. Attention and ideas toward drug users who were criminals as well were completely different. If I had entered the prison as a criminal who was addicted as well, everything would have been different. I was in a bad physical situation. I had a lot of pain, and also, I was emotionally weak and vulnerable. Most prisoners were criminals. They were not the same as me at all. I wished I was a criminal or drug trafficker, so I could have a better life in the prison. I had nothing, just pain in the prison."* (Female participant, 1 year of incarceration)

Most drug users who got incarcerated because of abusing drugs or possessing drugs were 'silent' victims in prison. They were tortured not only by society but also by prisoners in the smaller society; in their own words, "*they did not belong to prison*." Most of them had constant contact with their providers or with other people who use drugs on street; they were not directly involved in any criminal activities.

> "*I used drugs in our neighborhoods with my friends. We slept in the street, but in a specific part of the town with specific rules. I remember the day I wanted to change my street and go somewhere else to sleep. My friends in the street told me that you have to stay here because in this place, we know you and your father. If you know the person's background, you can communicate with them. It is not the same in other streets. You cannot know about the criminal histories of them. You should not communicate with them. Whatever we do in the street, at least we are not criminals. We just use drugs and sell drugs. Once I was incarcerated, I told myself that the street was safer than the prison. I did not expect this many murderers or drug traffickers in one place. I was addicted to methamphetamine, and despite all the connections I had in the street with people who use drugs, I could not find*

drugs in the prison because I did not know anything about the prison and their connections. If you do not know anything or anybody in the prison, nobody cares about you. They just live their own life. They simply ignore you. I did not even have a place to sleep. In the drug units, prisoners do not have enough beds, clothes, and food. The only thing you can find in large quantities was drugs. Thus, if you are a poor drug abuser with no criminal skills and no connections, you have to sleep in washrooms and corridors. There is not enough food, so mostly you will be hungry. You will not even have any spare clothes. This is the situation of people who use drugs in the prison." (Female participant, 2 years of incarceration)

Most addicted women claimed that they created a small prison for themselves by not visiting close family members and people in society during the time they were addicted. Most of them do not have any contact with criminals and offenders to even buy drugs. In fact, their close family members or boyfriends provide them with drugs to keep them hidden at home to protect their 'honor'. As a result, they were not familiar with the criminal culture before being incarcerated, as they were incarcerated at their own home beforehand.

"My husband told me repeatedly to just stay at home and let me know if you need drugs. I was threatened several times, as he said that if I leave the house, he will kill me. He told me that I embarrassed him. He provided me with drugs for more than 10 years. I did not even see my provider myself. But nobody cared about me in the prison. They did not consider me a human being. I was like trash or garbage to them. I begged them to give me drugs or food, but none of them would look at me." (Female participant)

Inmates sentenced to death or life imprisonment were called '*sahebkhane'* (landlord). The status of an inmate who has been in prison for three years is higher than an inmate who has been there for 12 months. Inmates with less than 6-month sentences are not just incarcerated and isolated from the outside community but also from the inner prison world. Thus, they become double outcasts and the waste of the wasted. Most drug traffickers and murderers who were long-termers are knowledgeable enough regarding the social actions in the prison structure, and their knowledge gives them power to oppress others. The prison social structure invests in violent criminals who are permanent residents of the prison. Short-termers, especially poor and addicted ones, are not

worth investing in; they are considered strangers who will leave this home before getting anything from the prison culture but degradation, fear, dehumanization, and being addicted to methadone.

> "*There was a prisoner who was incarcerated for 20 years; he had dignity and respect. I was not scared of him; actually, I respected him because he was forced to live in the most difficult situation in the prison for 20 years. In fact, we respected his incarceration length and his broad knowledge about prison life. There was a difference between someone who was incarcerated for 6 months and someone with 20 years' incarceration. Prison has a tough atmosphere. They deserve respect. For example, you have to respect the older ones who have been incarcerated for a long time in the bathroom and washroom line. That was not meaning that we were scared; we just respected their age, experiences, knowledge, and length of incarceration"* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

Inmates with longer sentences play a key role for inmates and correctional officers simultaneously (this will be explained in detail in a section titled: Two Sides of the Same Coin). They exercise informal power in managing and controlling the prison, and are usually recruited by high-status prisoners and correctional officers to act as a '*Nemayande*' (representative or leader) of units.

> "*Prisoners who committed the most violent crimes will be sentenced to life imprisonment or the death penalty, so they act as a boss in units (Nemayande)*." (Male participant, 4 years of incarceration)
> "*Even managing the prison depends on the criminal history of prisoners. Sometimes we witness that 50 prisoners who are gang members manage 10,000 prisoners, just because two or three of them have been the most violent criminals in the prison, so they were selected through leaders or officers to act as a manager."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

One of the requirements for being considered a powerful and high-status inmate is having adequate knowledge about prison relations, values, norms, rules, codes, orders, and obligations. Possessing information brings safety, drugs, and status; for instance, being knowledgeable about drug networks in the prison provides opportunities for prisoners to access drugs safely and securely. To be aware of different aspects of the prison's structure requires a long-term incarceration experience, which creates social capital in the prison. Being in prison for several

years assists prisoners in getting to know the social structure of prison and building social ties with prisoners, which leads to obtaining knowledge. Since inmates with longer sentences are considered 'invisible managers' of the prison, all drug importing is done under their constant surveillance. Prisoners are not allowed to simply transfer drugs to the prison without getting permission from them; prisoners who do not have high status in the prison have to get permission and then share drugs with the 'invisible managers' as a token of obedience. Newcomers in the prison, especially drug users with no criminal history, have a lack of knowledge about the organization, which increases their vulnerability.

> "*I was just a drug user when I was incarcerated, and I did not engage in any criminal activity. Once I got imprisoned, I did not even know how to get drugs for my own usage in the prison. I did not know anyone or anywhere in the prison. I was there for 45 days, and I was so weak. Sometimes one woman in the next cell talked to me and gave me food; otherwise, nobody gave me even one gram of any kind of drug."* (Female participant, 1 year of incarceration)

> "*They know everything about the prison; you have to just ask them. You become a master just by spending some months in the prison. You cannot imagine what has happened to someone who has spent 9 years in prison. They are the landlord. They are the president. They are the bosses."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

The most sensitive and high-security positions in prison are assigned to high-status inmates. In fact, they have already carried the title of violent criminals, and they have been equipped with another title (high-status job position), which doubles their respect and criminal activities in the prison subsequently.

> "*I got the best job in the prison since the duration of my incarceration was long. For example, we were mediators between the outside and inside of the prison. There was a possibility that prisoners who were not violent criminals and were not sentenced to long incarcerations were offered this type of position, but it completely depended on their criminal record and their behaviors in the prison; there was a metaphor in the prison that 'nobody should feel the smell of your mouth' (do not say any inappropriate, unnecessary, or impolite words). We were addicted to heroin in the prison, but we did not engage in any violent behavior or bullying in the prison. We minded our own business. As a result, we were*

mediators in the health section in the prison. Our duties were filling out the basic health information forms for new prisoners and taking appointments with physicians for them in the prison. All the responsibilities of taking care of medicine and pills were on us. We always misused our opportunities and our position. We were also responsible for giving Loratin to heavily addicted prisoners to deal with their hangover periods. We had a list of prisoners who needed specific medicine, and every night we dropped by their cells and made sure they took the pills. Because we had a lot of those types of pills in the health section, we transferred them to the prison sneakily. We gave them to prisoners, but because we had connections with the outside and had opportunities to import other types of drugs such as heroin, we provided ourselves with not just those pills in the health section, but also heroin." (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

Offenders who repeatedly got imprisoned for petty crimes were assumed to not have sufficient criminal skills and knowledge, thus it was considered shameful to make friends with recidivists in prison. Recidivists lost their status in the eye of prisoners and correctional officers as well. However, if recidivists build strong connections with leaders and drug dealers, they build social capital, get more information about inmate social life, and get permission from leaders to import drugs each time they are incarcerated to achieve respect and status.

"Prisoners with a heavy criminal history and long-term incarceration period had a really comfortable life there because the prison was their home. In contrast, for recidivists, criminals who were incarcerated 10 times, 'their Hana did not have color anymore' (i.e. they did not have any respectful or valuable status). Most of the thieves and drug dealers were included in this category. The situations of those types of prisoners completely depended on themselves. If they made friends with a high-status prisoner and offered him a drug delivery to the prison each time they were released, they would have respect. Also, the high-status prisoner would offer him a respectful position in the prison while he was in the prison. So, if the recidivist was brave enough to deliver drugs after each incarceration, he would have a good status in the prison. They had to be fearless to transfer drugs each time; otherwise, they had to sleep in the corridors or washrooms. We set up a goodbye party for prisoners who got released after years of incarceration, but not for recidivists who were released and then after a few weeks came back. Being incarcerated was like being on leave for them. Every few weeks or months they came back, and we asked them the question. Do you go on leave in the prison or the outside? We told them that the prison lost its honor because of prisoners like you guys. They did not have status among us, but if they tried hard they could find someone to talk with. However, they were considered a prisoner like others in the eyes of the guards and ward, so they could participate in classes in the prison. My friends and I did not let any prisoners such as them be a member of our group. We let them be a shahrdar (i.e. servant/someone who cleans the room, washes dishes and clothes, and in some cases cooks) in our cell." (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

5.4.1.2. Controlling the Drug Network

It is well documented that drug dealers in prison earn respect and achieve high status (Crew, 2005, 2006). Although Crew (2005) and Mjaland (2014, 2016) related that respect and status were given by inmates toward prisoners who put their life at risk to import drugs into prison, in the current study, the most important reason behind the respect and status was that they were providing basic needs (i.e. drugs). It is important to note that not all prisoners are allowed to deal with and import drugs into prison; rather, a basis for power such as having a violent criminal history or strong connections with high-status criminals is necessary. Otherwise, drug possession would not bring power, status, or respect.

> *"You have to fit into a certain position for importing drugs into the prison; in other words, these clothes (drugs) have to fit on your body. Someone who has drugs or delivers drugs to the prison should have a special personality or characteristics. I mean, he has to be someone who others can count on, he has to be a violent criminal such as a murderer, and he has to be tough and serious. Otherwise, he must have connections with powerful criminals within the prison. I was a murderer, and I did not have a strong body, but the way that I behaved with others meant that nobody dared to bully me. I would say 'hi' to others reluctantly. Others told themselves that he is a murderer, how do I dare to tell him something inappropriate. I was a person who could deliver drugs. Also, I had strong connections with 'tighdarha' (violate criminals)"* (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

The status of inmates is changed by transferring drugs. Leaders (almost all of whom are drug traffickers and murderers) who are treated as gods have an exclusive right to import, distribute, and control drugs in custody. High-status drug dealers not only have an exclusive right over drugs but also inmates in custody.

> "*I was incarcerated for more than 25 years. I transported drugs from Afghanistan to the north of Iran while I was in the prison. Nobody dared to transfer drugs into this specific region of Iran. It was my territory. Yes, I was in prison, but I had constant control over drug trafficking in my city. I delivered drugs to the prison every time I was on leave, and also I had four fellows who imported drugs. There was not anybody in the prison who I was supposed to respect, even the correctional officers; the officers, even those guys, should respect me. You know what? They did know how powerful I was. All the prisoners asked for*

drugs from me and if they themselves wanted to deliver drugs to the prison, they first asked me." (Male participant, 30 years of incarceration)

"We not only had control over drugs in the prison, but also we governed the prison through drugs. We governed the whole prison system through drugs. We were eight prisoners who had possession over all the drugs in the prison. Every two weeks, one of us went on leave and brought back drugs to the prison." (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

Since correctional officers showed compassion to murderers because of their being on death row, most often murderers were not inspected or searched by officers; thus, their units were the most secure and safe ones in which to store drugs. Most often, the highest-status inmates do not put their lives at risk to deliver drugs into the prison; rather, they recruited '*anbari'* (storage) who carried the drugs inside their body cavity.

"*Most of them are untraceable, and you do not know by whom or when the drugs will be delivered to the prison or."* (Male participant, 5 years of incarceration, NA representative in the prison)

5.4.1.3. Wealth

Both drug possession and money are sources of economic capital, which creates a circle of social capital around inmates. Wealthy inmates, regardless of their criminal history and possession of drugs, attract a large amount of respect and occupy a high status in prison, since they can afford to cover all the expenses of inmates in their unit. Most participants used the idiom "*Pol dashte bash koft dashte bash*", which means "have money no matter what". However, the mentioned idiom is prevalent in society as well to illustrate the importance of being rich. Money in either society or prison in Iran brings unconditional power and respect. In society, being rich means the capability to act as God and your acts are thus legitimized by default. Money plays a pivotal role in society to some extent, such that even misbehaviour or law-breaking can be overlooked. Hanging out or communicating with rich inmates in the prison guarantees drug, food, respect, and safety. Inmates with no money cannot even afford their daily needs such as food, let alone drugs. In drug-related

units, new convicts with no money and no drugs have to spend the very first weeks in the halls and washrooms until they find some connections and friends to support them. Most of them will work in the prison as a '*Shahdar*' (servant). They cook food, wash dishes, and clothes to receive drugs and food in return. Being a servant of other inmates is common among addicted and poor inmates in order to receive drugs regularly.

> "*I did everything to have one gram of methamphetamine in prison. I had just entered the prison. I knew nobody, and nobody cared about new convicts. I was out of drugs and money, and I could not stand those feelings. My body became wracked with pain, and I went crazy. I had to beg for food and drugs. One of the managers of the cells offered for me to be the servant of the cell to earn food and drugs in return. I cooked food and washed dishes every day to have one plate of food and one gram of drugs. Sometimes they did not give me drugs, they just shared their drugs with me."* (Male participant, 2 years of incarceration)

> *"The prison atmosphere is the same as the outside; if you have money you will be fine. The best beds were sold to the wealthy ones. They were not expected to wash their dishes and clothes, as someone else gave them those services. Other prisoners did not let anybody in the prison give the wealthy ones a bad look or assault them. What I mean is that everybody gave special attention to the wealthy prisoners. On the contrary, everybody assaulted the poor ones, and they were not capable of protecting themselves. It is enough for bullies to see slight misbehaviour from the poor prisoners; they forced them to be a servant for one month as a punishment."* (Male prisoner, 8 years of incarceration)

Since prisoners in some sections of prison, especially the drug-related criminals section, had to buy drugs, extra food, a bed, clothes, and cigarettes from the high-status prisoners, having money means having power, which brings respect. Prisoners prefer to communicate with someone who has a deposit in their account, because they can afford to help them occasionally.

> *"People in the prison care about you if you have money; they support you and respect you because you have money. You can buy something they could not buy. This means that if someone on the outside cares about the prisoner, then she has support. She could buy drugs for you if you wash her dishes and clothes. She could afford my life, too. Prisoners who do not have money have to wash others' clothes and dishes to have one pack of cigarettes or one plate of food. Nobody respects them."* (Female participant, 5 years of incarceration)

Other prisoners declared that prison can be as comfortable as a hotel if you have money in your account.

"*These days, if you have money then prison is going to be like a hotel for you. Also, you might have servants. They respect you because of your money."* (Female participant, 2 years of incarceration)

5.4.1.4. Spiritual identity

Possession of either criminal identity or spiritual identity brings about the most respected and powerful positions in the penal system. As debated earlier, the contradictory social structure of prisons requires contradictory social actions and performances. While being violent and harsh in prison is valued, being honorable and high-minded (*Loti*) is considered as a means to maintaining superior status.

"There are some prisoners who always act violently in the prison towards other prisoners in every situation, so most of the prisoners do what they order. But this is a temporary status, because there might be the possibility of the emergence of another prisoner who is more violent than him, so he could lose power and respect. Then, most of the prisoners will start to obey the second prisoner's commands. We had one of this types of violent prisoner who scared everyone; all other prisoners were forced to respect him and were scared of him. After two years of holding a dominant position, a young prisoner who was just 18 years old entered the prison and, in a fight, injured him badly with a knife. After this, nobody was scared of him and nobody respected him anymore. The dominant violent status has been held by that young man ever since that day. If the prisoners do not put a limit on their violent behavior and if they do not control themselves and if they constantly force prisoners to obey their command, they will lose respect day by day. For example, if you bully an older prisoner and force them to do something against their will, you lose your respect. If you are the cause of a lot of the bullying in the prison, for sure one day someone who is crazier will come to the prison and defeat you. You have to be 'Loti' in the prison, which means being the hero of humanity and dignity, being half a kilo (i.e. not having much physical strength) but being a man and never bully." (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

According to the interviews, there are a group of prisoners who are violent criminals but do not act as criminals in the prison; they act as mediators between inmates. They are called '*Rish Sefid'* (literally means one with a "white beard" but in fact means a man of wisdom who can solve problems by being a just mediator), and it is not a matter of age but a matter of spiritual identity. In fact, respecting '*Rish Sefid'* is one of the exceptional occasions in which the concept of respect

is not an illusion. Respecting violent criminals, wealthy prisoners, and drug possessors implies the illusion of respect, which is hidden behind basic needs. Mediators are not only problem solvers, but also, if they are wealthy enough, they can afford to help with other prisoners' lives; they provide financial support for inmates.

> "*At the first stage, in order to be considered by other prisoners, you have to have a violent criminal history. Also, you have to behave and act violently as if you are superior and harsh on some occasions. On the other hand, there are some who are high-minded and honorable in prison. There are some prisoners who are so young, but they are so respectful. They do not force anyone to do anything; they do not order anyone around. There was a young man in the prison who was just 26 years old. He had murdered someone by shooting them 9 times, and that was one of the cruelest murders among all the prisoners. But in the prison, he was a fixer between two different groups who were constantly fighting. When he gave advice to solve the problem of the fighting, nobody declined or ignored him. All the prisoners obeyed his advice and suggestions, just because he was an honest and trustworthy man. Even the managers of the prison stood up in front of him and respected him. Even if a prisoner wanted to start a fight against another group, they talked with him first. You just knew his status in the prison was stable. They always had the respect of others because of his honorable behavior."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

> "*Mediators are not only there to take care of their cellmates' expenses but also, if the prison needs something, they are the first to volunteer to buy it. They even financially support their friends to protect them from selling themselves for the sake of drugs. They are wealthy, but they spend money on the prisoners. All prisoners know that he sacrificed his money and time to gain the credit and honor of others. He was the one who even had the respect of the warden."* (Male participant, 8 years of incarceration)

There are some prisoners who received respect parallel to '*Loti'* and '*Rish Sefid'* in the prison; they were called '*Fardin'* (i.e. innocent prisoners who took responsibility for their guilty loved ones' crimes and got imprisoned on behalf of them), and they had the most respect. Additionally, some of the senior prisoners in some units (i.e. mostly on death row) are considered as a source of calm and hope. Their cells act as a shrine in the prison where they can spiritually support other inmates.

"There was an old prisoner who was a drug trafficker, and he was incarcerated for 15 years. All prisoners respected him because he prayed for all of us and kept us calm and gave us hope." (Male participant, 3 years of incarceration)

"*When I got released, all the prisoners were happy for me because I read the Quran for them to help them relax. I was a story-teller. They all respected me."* (Female participant, 2 years of incarceration)

5.4.1.5. Social Capital

Most violent criminals have been excluded by their family members since they were imprisoned. Even those who were drug addicts and were incarcerated for possessing a small amount of drugs did not receive any attention from their families.

"The reality is that every day in the prison we were faced with being ignored by our family members outside the prison. They did not care about us. Whenever I called them, they immediately started to yell at me and assault me. They did not help me to endure the prison circumstances. I asked them several times to make a pledge to set me free for a while, but they ignored it all the time. So, in this situation where we were not important for anybody around us, the only thing that can ease the pressure is to take drugs. We use drugs to release all our emotional pain." (Male participant, 3 years of incarceration)

In addition to the social, political, cultural, and economic impacts of society on the inmates' social world, the impact of family support, both emotional and financial, is undeniable. Inmates who have visits, phone calls, and letters from their families have higher status and respect than others. Having constant contact with the outside world implies that the inmate has enough money to buy drugs and food. Also, it illustrates that the inmate still has the emotional support of family members and has not been excluded from his/her small community, even if he/she has already been excluded by society. Having respect and status among family members and loved ones directly affects the status of a prisoner among others and even among the staff. Most of the incarcerated men considered family support as a credit, which is an automatic bonus in terms of prestige.

"*Prisoners who do not have visitors earn no respect in the prison because subsequently they do not have any deposits."* (Male participant, 4 years of incarceration)

The domino effect of exclusion from family, friends, and society have become an ordinary fact among incarcerated women, and while it impacts their behaviours, emotions, and feelings inside prison, it does not have even a slight effect on women's status in prison. Accepting the reality that they are the 'forgotten' members of their family and being treated as socially and emotionally 'dead bodies' can justify why family support is not considered as important as among incarcerated men. Being excluded from the family and then the society is a pre-accepted fact in incarcerated women's minds. They have been aware of the very fact that every slight misbehaviour might jeopardize their families' honor and subsequently push them into the isolation zone. According to the interviews, some of the addicted women had a temporary marriage with addicted men or drug dealers and have children and were also the breadwinners of their family. Because of this dishonorable behaviour, they do not expect their family to support them emotionally or financially while they are incarcerated. Their family excluded them during their addiction.

"*Once my family found out that I was addicted to heroin, my father kicked me out of the home. I could not come back to see my family, because every time my father saw me around he beat me so hard. He told me that I was the shame of the family. I was in the prison for five years, and I did not see my siblings in that time. After three years of begging her to visit me, my mother came to see me. My family did not even deposit money in my account. I did not have money to buy anything. It does not matter, I had been used to this kind of behaviour since I was 11. Since my father saw a cigarette in my hand, the exclusions and assaults started. They did not care about me ever; I did not exist. How could I expect them to help now? What can they say to the family? When I got incarcerated I was pregnant, and my family did not know. After two years, they found out that I was pregnant. Then, my mother called me and told me that if you tell any members of the family that you have a child, you will never ever see us again. I was an addict, I was a murderer, I got temporarily married to a drug dealer, and I got incarcerated. How can I expect them to visit me?"* (Female participant, 8 years of incarceration)

Several studies have been done regarding the interactions of incarcerated mothers and children both inside and outside of prisons around the world (Fritsch and Burkhead 1981;

Poehlmann 2005; Eddy and Reid 2002; Hagan 1996; Hissel et al. 2011; Foster and Hagan 2007; Hungerford 1993; Johnson 2009; Johnson and Waldfogel 2002; Murray et al. 2010; Scharff-Smith and Gampell 2011; DeFina and Hannon 2010). The only visitors that some women expect to have are their children; most often, incarcerated women are mothers of children and inseparable relationships between them are a usual and acceptable fact among women, though they do not bring any credit for them. Being in constant connection with the outside world, especially with children, decreases the pain of isolation and frustration. According to Anaraki and Boostani (2012, p.6), "The child's presence beside the mother made them calm, even sometimes helped them to fight the anxiety of bad events." It is important to consider that the only group of imprisoned women who were not involved in drug economies or power struggles in the inmates' social world were incarcerated mothers. Almost all of them were serious drug addcits, while incarceration either along with their children or while separated from them was a final push for them to change their lifestyle. Incarcerated mothers were locked up in separate units with their children, and there was no trace of drugs there. However, the most long-term, violent criminal among the mothers was assigned to manage the unit. All mothers started the process of drug withdrawal in the prison, since they felt guilty about leaving their children on the other side of the wall or having their children be part of the inmate world. The mothers' unit was exempt from all kinds of violence, social disorders, misbehaviour, and disobedience. The mothers' unit was less affected by instability as a result of changing leaders and social orders in prison. They are not considered as criminals in prison. Contrary to the feelings of society on the other side of the walls, their identity as a mother was the most salient among the multiple identities which were used to label female drug addicts in society. An incarcerated mother with her child has a respectful status in the prison, but this does not necessarily bring power and authority.

"*My children were the only visitors that I had. They came to see me despite all their financial issues. They missed me, especially when they found out that I am sentenced to the death penalty. They came to see me every month. Can you believe that they do not have any one to support them? They themselves work hard to afford their lives, and they even send me money. They are my only source of calmness, the only way that I can survive this circumstance."* (Female participant, 6 years of incarceration)

"I play with my kid all day and night and speak to him lovingly. I devote all my time to my kid." (Incarcerated mother, 5 years of incarceration, on death row) (Anaraki and Boostani, 2012, p.9)

"I really have fun with Hussein. We all care for our babies, wash their clothes, feed them, cuddle them as they return from kindergarten and play with them." (Incarcerated mother, 3 years of incarceration, on death row) (Anaraki and Boostani, 2012, p.9)

Along with the influences of the outside world on prisoners' lives inside the prison, having social capital and social ties inside the prison are both means of gaining high status and respect.

"I did not make a friend when I got imprisoned the first time, but in the next times, I made a lot of friends. I found that some of the prisoners have their relatives there. For example, one of them had her mother in the prison, who was a manager of one of the cells. So, they found that having a bed in the prison is easier than having no friends and relatives. I got to know some of the prisoners during different incarcerations. I got to know my friend's mom, and she introduced me to the manager of health care. Thus, the incarceration got easier and easier over time. I made friends with my friend's mom in the prison. It was not possible to make friends with others in prison while you are just a poor addict. The only way is to have some connection outside of the prison which gives you the opportunity to make a friend with someone. Anyway, my friend's mom worked in the health care center in the prison, and whenever I needed painkillers she immediately gave me one. During my first incarceration, I had so much pain because I did not have drugs. I asked for painkillers but because I did not know anybody there, I did not get even one painkiller to ease my pain. My situation in prison during the second and third time of incarceration was better than the first time, because I found several friends." (Female participant, 2 years of incarceration)

Social capital also plays a pivotal role in changing the status of people who use drugs in compulsory camps. Most of the addicts in compulsory camps were arrested on the street, since almost all of them were homeless. Although there are night drop-in centers for homeless sex workers and people who use drugs, especially in Tehran, most of them spend their lives on the street. Those who have a family who can reach out to them in the

compulsory camps received more respect. This is not because of the money that he/she might receive from the family while locked up in the camps; rather, the emotional support they receive is vital. Since most homeless drug addcits have been separated from their family intentionally or unintentionally, they suffer from not being supported by them. Most of them have not seen their family members for 10 years. One of the addict women in the night drop-in center in Tehran spent her life in the south of Tehran with only a bicycle. Her family forced her to leave home 11 years ago, and since then, they have never let her back, even to see her siblings. All her life was spent on a bicycle seat, and she was arrested by the police to be sent to compulsory camps more than three times. Each time she had to leave her bicycle somewhere in the street and get into the police car. She spent most of the nights in the treatment centers, except those nights she spent in the compulsory camps. She came to the center regularly at 7 pm and started by washing her clothes, bicycle and taking a shower. She states:

"*I used to be arrested and sent for a drug test and then moved to the compulsory camps. The camps are all like prison but even worse. At least in the prison there are some rules and red lines that nobody dares to cross. But in the camps there is nothing to control addicts but beating, beating, and beating. All of them were sent there to quit drugs compulsorily, and most of them count down the day to their release when they can start using drugs again. In this situation, if you have someone who can take care of you or at least have regular visits with family members, this changes everything for you. All other addicts in the camps are jealous of those who have someone who loves them or at least is willing to help them."*

5.4.1.6. Sexuality

It is well documented that homosexuality is a pervasive phenomenon in prisons across the world, and there have been several studies of homosexuality in prison (Hensley, 2000; Lockwood, 1980; Wooden and Parker, 1982; Nacci and Kane, 1983; Richmond, 1978; Saum et al., 1995; Struckman-

Johnson et al., 1996; Tewksbury, 1989). However, there is a lack of literature about homosexuality in the penal world of Iran. Since homophobia against homosexuality is pervasive in the Iranian society (Khoshnood et al., 2008), negative beliefs, values, and ideas are imported into prison as well. Homosexual activity in the Islamic Republic of Iran is punishable by imprisonment, lashes, and execution based on the Islamic penal code[12]. According to interviews, having sexual activity in prison is the most shameful act, resulting in the offenders having the lowest of the low statuses allocated to them.

Most often, homosexual relationships begin by just accepting a powerful inmate's offer of food, bed, drug, and protection. Most first-time inmates who accept those offers and accept being taken under their wing are surprised that they are expected to be a sexual partner in return. The inmates who accept having a passive (inferior) position in a sexual relationship are a principal target of stigma, while the active (superior) one is less affected by inmates' views.

[12] According to the Islamic Penal code: Article 233- "*Livat* is defined as penetration of a man's sex organ (penis), up to the point of circumcision, into another male person's anus." Article 234- "The *hadd* punishment for *livat* shall be the death penalty for the insertive/active party if he has committed *livat* by using force, coercion, or in cases where he meets the conditions for *ihsan*; otherwise, he shall be sentenced to one hundred lashes. The *hadd* punishment for the receptive/passive party, in any case (whether or not he meets the conditions for *ihsan*) shall be the death penalty." Note 2- "*Ihsan* is defined as a status that a man is married to a permanent and pubescent wife and whilst he has been sane and pubescent has had a vaginal intercourse with the same wife while she was pubescent, and he can have an intercourse with her in the same way [vaginal] whenever he so wishes." Article 235- "*Tafkhiz* is defined as putting a man's sex organ (penis) between the thighs or buttocks of another male person. Note- A penetration [of a penis into another male person's anus] that does not reach the point of circumcision shall be regarded as *tafkhiz*." Article 236- In the case of *tafkhiz*, the *hadd* punishment for the active and passive party shall be one hundred lashes and it shall make no difference whether or not the offender meets the conditions of *ihsan* [mentioned in note 2 of article 234], or whether or not [the offender] has resorted to coercion." "Note- If the active party is a non-Muslim and the passive party is a Muslim, the *hadd* punishment for the active party shall be the death penalty." Article 237- "Homosexual acts of a male person in cases other than *livat* and *tafkhiz*, such as kissing or touching as a result of lust, shall be punishable by thirty-one to seventy-four lashes of ta'zir punishment of the sixth grade." "Note 1- This article shall be equally applicable in the case of a female person. Note 2- This article shall not be applicable in the cases punishable by a *hadd* punishment under Shari'a rules." Article 238- "*Musaheqeh* is defined as where a female person puts her sex organ on the sex organ of another person of the same sex." Article 239- "The *hadd* punishment for *musaheqeh* shall be one hundred lashes." Article 240- "Regarding the *hadd* punishment for *musaheqeh*, there is no difference between the active or passive parties or between Muslims and non-Muslims, or between a person that meets the conditions for *ihsan* and a person who does not, and also whether or not [the offender] has resorted to coercion."

"*You may find a lot of prisoners in the washroom from late at night to the morning who have used drugs or had sexual relationships."* (Male participant, 5 years of incarceration)

"Homosexuality is a pervasive phenomenon in prisons, and homosexuals do not have the respect of other prisoners. They sell their bodies. They do not have any status in the prison. Their status is even less than that of a servant who works for other prisoners in order to buy drugs and food. We called them 'Arbab to Delly'. They sell their bodies for the sake of drugs. They are trash." (Male participant, 5 years of incarceration)

Also, many inmates do not have conjugal visiting (i.e. a type of visiting that is specified for married couples); consequently, they felt frustrated and overwhelmed in prison. As one participant declared: "*the only escapes for them are drugs, gambling, and sex".* These are most often high-status criminals, who intend to have situational sexual relations with the intention of filling the deprivation they experience. However, most of the prisoners (in a passive or inferior position) who get involved in sexual activities just need financial assistance.

"It is much better to beg for drugs and food than to be a sexual partner in prison." (Male participant, 4 years of incarceration)

"*Although a 'Shahdar' does not have any respect and status in the prison, they at least have dignity in comparison with those who sell themselves in return for food and drugs."* (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

"*Some prisoners who did not have financial support decided to wash others' clothes and dishes to earn money. But some others preferred to be a sexual partner of someone to be financially provided for. Although nobody dares to get close to him because of his owner or boss, he did not have respect in prison, and he lost his status immediately."* (Male participant, 5 years of incarceration)

There is a deeper stigma attached to homosexual activity among incarcerated women; they are called '*Golo Goldon'* (flower and pot). Although some studies report a less homophobic reaction to female homosexuality either in prison or society at large (see Hensley, 1995, 2000; Britton, 1990; Herek, 1988; Kurdek, 1988; LaMar and Kite, 1998; Price and Dalecki, 1998; Seltzer, 1992; Sigelman et al., 1991; Van de Ven, 1994; Kite and Whitley, 1996; Herek and Capitanio, 1999; Plugge-Foust, 2000; Giallombardo, 1966; Koscheski & Hensley, 2001; Ward &

Kassebaum, 1964), incarcerated women feel more negatively toward homosexual activity than men, and there are also strict unwritten rules applied as deterrents in women's prisons (i.e. incarcerated women are not allowed to wear make-up, change clothes in public, whisper with other inmates, put their head on their friend's shoulder, take their friend's hand, or write letters to other inmates). Incarcerated women in this study deployed two strategies in Iranian prisons to cope with separation from their family: pseudo families (will be discussed in a section related to gangs in prison) and homosexual relations. Most interviewees declared that homosexual activity among incarcerated women is used as an attempt to meet emotional needs. However, any sexual "deviance" will be stigmatized and punished by correctional officers (e.g. losing jobs, washing washrooms for one week, losing respect of the officers) and inmates (e.g. inmates start to spread rumors to drag her down from a high-status position). It is the best means in the hands of the enemy to take the power away from prisoners who have had positive influences on correctional officers and have been allocated a good position. The social and psychological pressure of stigmatization because of sexual activity acts as a fatal poison, targeting the status of inmates. In Iranian prisons all women are required to wear hijab, if they refused to do so they will be punished extremely[13]. Also, changing cloths in front of other inmates and wearing make-up are forbidden.

> "*In the women's prison, we could not build a close relationship with each other, because once you start a close relationship with someone else in the prison, other prisoners make rumors about you having a sexual relationship with her. The sexual stigma is something usual in women's prisons. Taking someone's hand and putting your head on someone's shoulder are forbidden, because once you do that rumors are started, and guards become suspicious. I wrote a letter for one of my friends in the prison, and someone found out and gave it to the guards. Since then, there have been a lot of rumors about me, and my story became one of the most important topics there. I cried several times because of the rumors. The punishments for any possible and potential homosexual behaviour included getting fired*

[13] As one of the homosexual participants indicated: "I was punished from the first day that I was incarcerated. I was arrested because of not wearing a hijab in the street, and the police officers who arrested me knew me well, since I hung out with boys and used drugs in the park. One day, they told me 'if we see you around one more time without a hijab, you will be arrested.' They arrested me and now that I am in a prison with all women, they force me to a wear hijab. I refuse each time, and I am punished. I am not a woman. I do not like to wear a hijab. It is ridiculous."

from my job, cutting off the in-person visiting, and cutting off the telephone coupons. If you are the favorite ones of the guards, they give you the option to choose your punishment, and if you do not choose anything, they tell you that you are a rebel and harshly punish you. I remember that I chose cleaning the bathrooms for one week. Guards told me that 'you have to clean them as a reminder that you are in prison even though you hold a high position'. All prisoners tried to hide their relationships in the prison. They punished me for writing a letter to a girl. In fact, homosexuality in the women's prison was limited by the control of emotional expression. Therefore, talking sexy and writing letters were forbidden. Some of the homosexual prisoners even continued their relations after being released, and they moved out together. The homosexual stigma does not just affect prisoners; guards are another target for this type of stigma. Some of the guards and employees in the prison are so cautious about what prisoners think and say about them, and it is important for them to protect their honor and dignity in the prison. Although we are all women in the prison, you are not allowed to change your clothes in front of others." (Female participant, 5 years of incarceration)

5.4.1.7. Loyalty

According to interviewees, the status of '*Mokhber'* (snitch/informant), those who were assigned by correctional officers to report on others, was not even equivalent to the status of inmates who were situationally homosexual in order to afford their life inside prison. The importance of information in the prison is so great that all prisoners are advised on the very first days of incarceration that secrecy is paramount; also, it is one of the most important indicators of loyalty in the inmates' social world.

"On the first day that I entered the prison, the boss of the cell told me in private that whatever you see you have to keep it to yourself. If you see a half kilogram of drugs anywhere in this prison, you should not tell anybody about it. You have to keep everything to yourself. If any prisoners talk, they will be excluded and thrown out of the cell. If a prisoner gets close to the warden, even if they have known each other from childhood, he will be considered as a snitch. It is even worse than being a sexual partner of someone in the prison" (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

The punishments for being '*Mokhber'* ranged from being excluded from the prison society to being killed by cellmates.

"Snitches are dead bodies. Their corpses will move out of the prison; *we will burn them with hot water."* (Male participant, 5 years of incarceration)

The former punishment is more torturous than the latter; in other words, prisoners who have been already excluded and isolated in the society and rarely have visits with their families will be excluded again in this last-chance society, the so-called 'total institution'.

> *"Nobody in the prison wants to be a cellmate with a snitch. When prisoners learned that somebody is a snitch in the cell, they do not even talk in front of him. We will do everything to force him leave the cell and stay in the yard the whole day. Nobody talks to him; he is like a ghost. His circumstances will be the worst if he discloses information and gets somebody in trouble. We will not let him stay in the cell for one more second; he has to leave. If he was lucky enough to not be killed, he will be alone in the prison."* (Male participant, 8 years of incarceration)

Some snitches are not only psychologically punished (i.e. being excluded and exposed to humiliating jokes), they are physically tortured as well. Drug networks in women's prisons are as serious and complicated as in men's prisons; the whole process of trafficking, dealing, selling, and using drugs in prison is considered as high-security information. Since drugs are considered a basic need in prison society, disclosing information regarding drugs is considered punishable by death.

> "*One of the inmates leaked information about the usage of methamphetamine in his cell, so his cellmates poured hot sauce in his anus and kicked him out of the cell. We accepted him in our cell, but we made jokes about the hot sauce and always laughed at him."* (Male participant, 3 years of incarceration)

Making rumors and disclosing information is a usual phenomenon in women's prison. One of the most important tools in the hands of women in prison is making rumors, as instead of using physical violence against each other, they cause mental torture. Although disclosing information is common among incarcerated women, most often this information involves the stigma of homosexuality.

5.4.2. Captives as a Society

Although various studies have discussed deprivation as a common characteristic of prisons around the world, this was not the case for leaders in Iranian prisons. Violent criminals, especially drug

traffickers, have adequate facilities and private spaces to create a palace at the heart of the prison, so they were called “kings of prison”. Although transparency and exposure to the public do not allow prisoners to have a private space, prisoners are all advised not to look in any cells or any beds other than their own, and also they should be open about their crimes.

> “*All prisoners without any exceptions have to be clear about their crimes, because whether they are or not, all prisoners will be informed.”*
>
> “*We fight because of petty issues. Someone entered our cell without our permission, so I threw a bottle toward his head.”*

Also, some cells have their own private place between the beds for using drugs; they called them ‘*dakhme’* (cellar). The peaceful coexistence of privacy and transparency in the prison causes a constant internal war for prisoners; contradictory of social actions in the prison, this acts as a barrier to the emergence of the unit-based identity in prison.

Having privacy in a highly transparent institution requires a criminal history, economic capital, and social capital within the penal world. Being a professional and wealthy drug trafficker has enormous financial benefits for both prisoners and correctional officers. The reality of having the authority to build a palace in the prison is hidden under the cover of respect; this is nothing but a basic need. Those types of prisoners, of whom there are only one or two in each prison, are considered kings not only in the prison territory but also in the drug community within the society. Incarcerating powerful drug traffickers not only expands their networks from society to the prison, which is the most high-demand place for drugs, but also brings financial benefits for correctional officers as well. According to one of the participants who had about 30 years of incarceration experience in all parts of Iran and had been one of the most important drug traffickers for almost 20 years in the region from Afghanistan to north of Iran:

"*I did not eat regular food in the prison; I ordered food and some of my friends brought my orders to the prison for me. The bars of my cell were always closed and were covered with a curtain. That was not usual in the prison. Nobody was allowed to cover their door with a curtain; they could not even cover their own beds with anything. Everything had to be as transparent as possible. Everybody is a witness to all your activities. However, that did not apply to prisoners like me. I remember one time when I got incarcerated, the correctional officers knew me well. I was notified that they wanted to come to arrest me, so I did not escape. I stayed in my house in the jungle and waited for them. When they came, I told them that I had to bring my private belongings into the prison. I was incarcerated in solitary confinement for 1 month with all my private belongings. They all knew me; whenever I was incarcerated they knew that a large amount of drugs would be transferred to the prison without a doubt. I ignored the prison's rules, but I made friends with the guards. Although they knew that by incarcerating me nothing was going to happen in the society, they still incarcerated me. Some of them were very cooperative with me when it came to delivering drugs."*

Kings of prison recruit young low-status inmates like a kind of prison "minions" (*noche)* to provide security information about inmates and correctional officers. The sub-culture of '*noche parvari'* (*noche* refers to a novice young man as a petit servant) is a pervasive phenomenon in inmate society. They have a subordinate position; however, in return for disclosing information, their boss provides them with the best-quality drugs, food, and beds. It can be said that '*noche'* exists in a reciprocal relationship between the powerful criminals and the subordinate inmates; the status of powerful prisoners is guaranteed through not only their criminal history, money, and possessing drugs, but also through their '*noche',* who increases the knowledge of their boss by snitching everywhere in the prison and vulnerable inmates are protected from victimization under the protection of their boss. Despite all advice regarding the importance of keeping information confidential and not acting as a snitch in prison, being a snitch for powerful prisoners does not have the same consequences as being the snitch of correctional officers. Every single prisoner knows who the *noche* is, and that they are protected by the most powerful leader in the prison.

"Prisoners such as me who are wealthy and take charge of drug trafficking in the prison have 7 or 8 noche around us. I did have noche outside of the prison as well. In the prison, they updated me with fresh news about events that had happened in the prison. They notified me of whatever they had seen or heard that might affect my position in the prison. I did not

give them money. I had a handkerchief that was soaked with heroin. I brought that into the prison; that handkerchief was drenched with a half kilogram of heroin. In return for protecting my powerful status in the prison by snitching and flattering, I gave them a small part of my handkerchief. I provided them with good-quality food and a bed in the prison and even helped them outside of the prison when they got released." (Male participant, 30 years of incarceration)

High-status criminals (kings), are the only exceptional groups in the prison who are not affected by the homosexual stigma. Likewise, there are reciprocal relationships between the boss (*arbab*) and the servant (*noche*), where the sexual partners support their boss (owners) emotionally and physically and receive food, drugs, and a bed in return. The low-status inmates who are sexual partners of the high-status ones have to tolerate all the weight of stigma in prison. Meanwhile, homosexual activities among the high-status prisoners are not only considered as having no shame or dishonor but are also considered a sign of power.

High-status criminals in women's prisons have sexual partners as well, and this is not a stigma, nor even a source of shame for them. Those who are being spied on or being stigmatized are low-status prisoners. The stigma of homosexuality can drag all types of prisoners down but not the high-status violent criminals who have control over almost all activities in prison.

"*Some of the leaders in prison, who have always been violent criminals, have sexual partners, but no one would dare to report any of their homosexual activities in the prison. They are violent criminals with long-term experiences in the prison. They are proud of having sexual partners."* (Female participant, 2 years of incarceration)

Homosexual relations in the inmate world do not always involve physical contact; high-status inmates who do not have any physical contact with their sexual partners, just companionship with them for satisfaction, are called '*rokh baz'* (someone who enjoys a beautiful face) or '*mashami*' (someone who enjoys good-smelling and good-looking people).

"*When the cell's boss takes a beautiful prisoner under his wing, it means that he belongs to him. Most of them are 'Rokh Baz', who do not touch their partners; it just feels sexy to communicate with these beautiful guys. When they cannot have intercourse, they use their eyes. Just by looking and smelling they gain sexual satisfaction."* (Male participant, 4 years of incarceration)

"He just gave me a bed and as much as food as I wanted. He gave me the bed closest to himself. He hired someone to wash my clothes. I did not do anything. He enjoyed my company. He did not let me do anything. I did not know what he wanted. Once I came to the prison, he chose me and told me that I had to stay by his side." (Male participant, 1 and 6 months of incarceration)

5.4.3. Battle Zone

Most of the fighting and physical violence circulates around three factors: drug, sex, and safety. Since drugs play a pivotal role in enduring and surviving the time behind bars, any slight disorder in the process of drug distribution is intolerable. Methadone was systematically delivered to inmates by the health department, which decreased any possible risk of violence as a result of prisoners suffering withdrawal. Methadone is the most common medication-assisted treatment form in prison, which consists of a daily dose prescription and cost approximately $7 per month in 2017. Methadone therapy was not only cost-effective but also the best treatment for heroin dependence; however, most of the prisoners claimed that not only did they use methadone, but other drugs available in the prison as well. In fact, the official policy of distributing methadone across prisons aims at two goals: treating addiction and decreasing violence in the prison. by paying just $7 monthly, some prisoners were able to receive a certain amount of methadone. Thus, every morning, the physician of the prison distributed methadone with different doses for different prisoners based on their drug abuse history. However, even though different efforts have been made to reduce drug-related violence in prison, it is still the hidden reason behind much of the fightings.

"*Most fights in prison happen because of drugs; for the 3 months that I was incarcerated in prison, I fought around 40 times over drugs. I remember one day when drugs were prohibited in the prison, prisoners set up a protest to fight and beat guards, forcing them to make drugs available. Drugs are like oxygen for us in the prison. Any slight move against drug use will face an extreme reaction from the prisoners. Nobody in the cell dares to protest against other*

inmates using drugs in the cell, or they will be beaten so hard." (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

"*Without the slightest doubt, most of the fights in the prison are due to drugs. About 80% of fighting centers around drugs. The rest (20%) concerns prisoners who are aggressive and violent. For example, they knife you if you just look at them in a way they do not like."* (Male participant, 2 years of incarceration)

"*I was in the 'Kanon' (a separate section in prison for youth) for 6 months. When turned 18 years old, I was moved to the central prison. One of the biggest and most violent rebellions I had ever seen in the prison happened in Kanon. The rebellion started from a small fight between two friends because of drugs, and suddenly about 100 prisoners started to fight. The chaos was so bad that the guards ran away. The prisoners exploded all the fire extinguishers. At last, at midnight, two buses full of guards with lachrymators invaded the prison. Beforehand, the ward of the prison with the Quran in his hand came to the prison and told us 'I swear on the Quran I will not do anything if you let me in.' We let him in, and he just moved the main perpetrators of the disaster, and we did not see them again."* (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

According to article 42 of the Anti-Narcotic Law of the Islamic Republic of Iran "the Judicature power is permitted to maintain some of the drug-related convicts in special camps (with tight or normal conditions) rather than prisons. The government has a duty to provide necessary funds, facilities and regulations for managing such camps in a period of one year." Thus, keeping with this strategy, two compulsory labor camps (*Asad Abad*) were established in Isfahan to house drug-related offenders in separate prisons. According to interviewees, those labor camps were the most chaotic prisons; all prisoners in this section were people who use drugs with no exception, being arrested directly for drug offences. Violence is a prevalent phenomenon in labor camps. Being surrounded with drug users and drug dealers, there was increased availability of all kinds of drugs at affordable prices (i.e. cheaper than in any other types of prisons), and the rate of death resulting from drug overdose was extremely high. These camps were nothing more than a locked up space for drug users in a chaotic world. Also, an interviewee described how drug users were employed in labor camps (*Asad Abad*); however, the minimum wage was $10 CAD, so the

majority of inmates refused to work. The privileges of working in factories located in prisons included free calls and visit opportunities with family. Those inmates in labor camps who chose to work gradually stole the factories' products and created a black market to sell them in prison.

> *"The drug-related units in the prison were the most dangerous and unsafe parts of the prison. To punish prisoners in other sections, especially murderers, they would exile them to the drug section. There were continued fights among prisoners who could not be controlled at all. Even with the methadone being distributed every day, there are several prisoners who need other drugs as well. Some of them did not have money, and they would do anything to get drugs. If one group of prisoners found out about the existence of drugs in another cell, they would fight to take their drugs."* (Male participant, 3 years of incarceration)

> "*I was in 'Asad Abad', which was established for drug-related offenders. Actually, I wanted to escape from that prison because it was unbearable. I went to sleep one night, and in the morning, my cellmate next to me had passed away; he had overdosed. It was difficult to see someone pass away next to you because of drugs. There were a wide variety of drugs in that prison, and the price was not as high as in other prisons. For example, if drugs were 100,000 toman in Asad Abad, they cost 300,000 toman in the central prison of Isfahan. The opportunity for using drugs in 'Asad Abad' was more than in the central prison. Although it was a true fact that all kinds of offenders, from murderers to drug traffickers, were incarcerated in the central prison, and they had to deal with violent criminals, in the 'Asad Abad' prison several people were murdered because of drugs. Therefore, there was no difference between these two prisons. Most of the prisoners in the 'Asad Abad' prison would even prefer to be in the central prison."* (Male participant, 5 years of incarceration)

The majority of male participants described being involved in acts of violence several times while incarcerated; however, women declared that they did not witness violent fights in the prison. Even though they were not the potential subject of a violent act in the prison, they tried to be silent and obedient as much as they could to avoid any possible danger. While physical violence is the most common strategy used among incarcerated men, verbal violence is more common among incarcerated women.

> "*I do not want to say that we did not fight or beat each other, but most often we were just insulting and making up rumors about each other.*" (Female participant, 5 years of incarceration)

> "*There were some rumors that some prisoners knifed someone to death, but we did not see or experience anything ourselves. We were scared of those prisoners, so we did everything*

that they wanted. We avoided any kind of fighting." (Female participant, 3 years of incarceration)

According to interviewees, sexual partners of high-status criminals were treated as their personal property. Invading the privacy of leaders is equivalent to causing a brutal fight in prison. As a result of the prevalence of physical violence and the importance of protecting property among incarcerated men, they are more cautious about the sexual partners of violent criminals than women. Although physical violence is rare, and homosexuality is the most concealed taboo among incarcerated women, a sexual partner is the subject of much fighting in men's prison.

"*A lot of fights happened in the prison over sexual partners. Sometimes high-status prisoners broke up with one partner in favour of another, so they fought with each other. If the sexual partner had secret relationships with another prisoner, then it could lead to a huge fight. My cellmate fought 6 or 7 times during one week because of her nephew who was deemed attractive by other prisoners. Most of the time she just yelled in the yard and assaulted them verbally, but on rare occasions she beat them to ensure the safety of her nephew."* (Female participant, 8 years of incarceration)

To obtain a certain degree of safety in the inmate world, fighting is unavoidable. However, prisoners' safety is always in jeopardy, and they always fear to lose it. Conditional safety has forced prisoners to fight to guarantee their safety. In two conditions, they have to choose fighting over acting peacefully: 1) In the case of being assaulted, beaten, or bullied by other prisoners; and 2) if friends or cellmates are in danger. To stop any possible aggressiveness in the future, fighting is the first preventative step. Also, to maintain their social capital, to be able to socialize with inmates, and to avoid humiliating labels such as '*lashi'* or '*shefteyi'* (e.g. coward and unworthy), prisoners have to support their cellmates by fighting when required. Moreover, fighting for cellmates, friends, or gang members is a requirement for keeping one's '*lati'* identity (i.e. characterised by toughness, masculinity, violence, aggressiveness) in prison.

"You have to fight with someone who did something wrong to you; otherwise, he will misuse you constantly." (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

> *"If you fight to support your friends, next time that you are incarcerated, all of your ex-cellmates will support you and give you a bed and food."* (Male participant, 3 years of incarceration)

It is worth noting that violence is a constant presence in the compulsory camps. Using violence is seen as the best strategy to control people who use drugs, as most of them are not ready to quit abusing drugs yet. In fact, most of them have not even committed any crime, and did not even possess drugs at the time of arrest. In the name of the 'purification plan' (*tarh-e paksazi*), anti-narcotic police officers arrest all those whose appearance or behaviour seems suspicious. One might even be with their children, but this would not deter the police to stop and interrogate them on the grounds of drug suspicion. One of the female addicts who had several experiences in compulsory camps and prisons stated that:

> "*From the beginning to the end of the process, we are victims of severe violence beyond your imagination. Police enforcement, in front of everybody on street, forced us to get into their car. They did not even pay attention to my four-year-old girl. The last time I was arrested in the street, I was with her. Can you imagine that they did not even look at my child? She cried and shouted in street until one of my friends in the night drop-in center saw us and came to pick her up from street. If you show resistance to getting in car, you will be beaten hard and assaulted. When they transferred us to the camp, we had to wait in a line for a drug test, and if it is positive, the misery begins. There is no soft language over there. You have to listen to the personnel or you will be beaten. The answer to even slightly bad behaviour is violence. You know why? Because none of the addicts there want to quit drugs. They break glass and throw everything. The personnel are forced to calm them down by threatening them or beating them.*

5.4.4. Hegemony of Drug-related Networks

Although the pain of imprisonment and the pre-prison life trajectories of prisoners have a direct impact on the emergence of an inmate code and informal social order in custody, the sub-culture of prison in Iran is affected to a great extent by the hegemony of the drug network. Prison staff have declared that most prisoners with serious drug problems maintain their drug habits in prison, encouraging others to follow them. Using drugs is considered a means of acceptance into the prison

community for most prisoners (i.e. to be eligible to socialize with other inmates in their gatherings). Moreover, most incarcerated drug addicts had habitually used drugs before incarceration to get rid of their anxiety and depression, a phenomenon called "self-medication" by Mjaland (2016). Although addiction to drugs is considered an important problem and an expected behaviour, prison circumstances (e.g. availability and prevalence) have a crucial effect on the extent of drug abuse. There is a wealth of literature regarding the prevalence and availability of drugs in prisons (e.g. Emcdda, 2012; Friestad & Hansen, 2005; Boys et al., 2002; Stover & Weilandt, 2007; Strang et al., 2006; Bullock, 2003; Plugge, Yudkin, & Douglas, 2009; Hucklesby and Wilkinson, 2001; Edgar and O'Donnell, 1998). Interviews with drug users, officers, consultants, and recovering addicts revealed that the availability of drugs in Iranian prisons is a controversial phenomenon.

> *"There were unwritten rules in the prison, and whether you like it or not, whether it is your preference or not, you have to accept and practice them. Drug abuse was a pervasive phenomenon in prison, and if you did not use drugs, you would undoubtedly be excluded. Imagine that from 10,000 prisoners, 9900 prisoners used drugs. I was in a cell with 12 cellmates, all of whom were addicts, and I had to use drugs to be a part of them. I had to live a life there for however many years; it was my home.*" (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

> *"When I entered the central prison, I was just 18 years old. I had to smoke something in the prison, because it was so inappropriate to not smoke. Because I was a murderer, I had committed a violent crime, and everybody respected me. If I did not smoke drugs in the prison, other prisoners would call me a 'pasteurized murderer'(a murderer who was too naïve and unprofessional to commit a murder). I did everything that was possible in the prison because of the atmosphere. Yes, I started to use drugs."* (Male participant, 6 years of incarceration)

When drugs are imported into the prison system through different channels, the dealing process, which involves a complex and complicated network and business, would begin. The highest-status drug dealers recruit inmates to sell and deliver drugs in different units. As I mentioned earlier, drugs in Iranian prisons become ten times more expensive than their usual price in the outside world. Inside prison, a 'patch' of heroin, which is enough for one-night's use for one

person, costs the equivalent of approximately 70 CAD in 2017. Most of the time, because of a lack of cash, buyers provided dealers with available and necessary products such as phone cards, food, and clothes. Some inmates asked for money from their family and friends outside to be transferred directly to a specific account provided by the dealers inside the prison. However, some inmates cannot finance their consumption even by trading their personal property, and they fall into two categories: (a) stealing from and bullying other prisoners, and (b) accepting to be a servant or a passive sexual partner of high-status prisoners.

One side of the coin is that professional dealers are taking advantage of the profitable drug business in the prison; however, it is not merely a matter of money that is turning the wheels of this drug trade. Rather, the point is that drug users become dependent upon the providers because as the only hope for meeting a crucial need (i.e. drugs). This dependency provides an opportunity for drug providers to expand their power and influence over inmates. As was indicated earlier, possessors of drugs have power and high status, which results in receiving more respect. As Crewe (2005, p.470) states, "power and respect are frequently conflated". All inmates, whether drug users or not, are drawn into this network and market of drugs. As interviewees repeatedly testified, 90% of inmates in each cell are addicted to illegal drugs, thus drug-free prisoners are affected by the influences of the dealers' power throughout units and are also bullied by their drug-user inmates to whom they are in debt.

Drugs in prison are considered an opportunity to exercise power over one's as well as others' daily life as prisoners. It is also the most profitable business. The network of drugs in prison is a target of power, and it is the only way to control the life of prisoners.; prisoners are provided with opportunities to express their desires for using or selling drugs, which, in turn, makes it easier for those in power (i.e. managers of prisons) to recognize, categorize, and identify prisoners and

control them. Social behaviours of prisoners revolve around drugs; their functionality rests on drugs. Therefore, instead of managing prisoners by employing educated correctional officers and rehabilitation programs, managers of prisoners relied on drugs as a multitasking tool. Controlling prisoners with minimum rehabilitation facilities in prison could not be possible except with the constant use of drugs. it is the most cost-effective and profitable strategy to use in managing a prison. Although some of the violence in prison is directly affected by drugs, regulating drug networks decreases violence overall. Using illegal drugs is a beneficial strategy to control the protests and violence in prison through controlling the prisoners' bodies and minds. High-status drug dealers do have ultimate power over an inmate's life; thus, constant negotiation and trade between them and correctional officers makes the control mechanism more efficient and accessible.

> "*All guards know who delivers drugs to the prison; this is exactly what they want."* (Male participant, 5 years of incarceration)

> "*All protests can be shut down by distributing drugs in the prison."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

> *"Fighting in prison is decreased by distributing drugs. Prisoners have to be kept busy by drugs and gambling."* (Male participant, 5 years of incarceration)

> "*All of the prisoners in our cell, about 80 people, used heroin. Even the wardens were witnessing our drug consumption in the yard and did not care at all."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

Methadone was also considered a control mechanism in prison, and it was distributed among prisoners constantly via the medical center of the prison. Almost all inmates considered methadone as another addictive drug.

> *"If we did not use methadone in prison, there was a fight every day. Methadone was distributed to calm down prisoners."* (Male participant, 5 years of incarceration)

> *"Methadone was distributed in prison at a specific time of the day. Methadone was distributed among prisoners for three reasons: 1) to medicate people who use drugs, 2) to*

make them calm, and 3) to decrease the risk of shared injections and HIV. Not only do they use methadone but also all other kinds of drugs." (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

Prisoners' behaviors and actions can be more predictable if they use illegal drugs. They become passive objects in prison as in society before their incarceration. Their dependency on illegal drugs continues in custody as well, and it might even increase as a result of having no communication with family members. The only thing that they can count on in prison is drugs.

"*It was impossible to cut the drugs from the prison, and no matter what section of the prison you were in you could find syringes. In our section, there were 700 prisoners who were all heroin addicts. If they did not have heroin, they turned into monsters. So, how could guards control them? Just by controlling the transferring of drugs into prison."* (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

"*5 years ago, a prison's warden decided to abandon drugs in the prison; there were a lot of protests against this decision and a lot of people were killed. Then, they did not ever abandon drugs. They found out that prisoners are more manageable by using drugs than without them."* (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

For drug traffickers, society is like prison and prison is like society. In terms of economic gains, however, selling drugs in prison was far more profitable. The penal world functions as the most economically secure region with the most profit for dealers. In other words, through incarcerating people who use drugs, the most profitable business is organized. A former prisoner declared that:

"The best-quality drugs with the highest price have been transferred to the prison, just to control prisoners."

Officers play a pivotal role in keeping this network alive in the heart of the prison. In prison, the only law ruling the drug network is: the more addicts are imprisoned, the more profit is obtained. Exclusively selling drugs at the highest price and always in one area is more manageable than in the outside world. There are no competitors in prison, so the drug business lies in the hands of the most powerful prisoners who earn the most profit. It is cost effective in terms of

transportation as well, as it takes only around five minutes to transfer drugs from one cell to another or from one section to another.

> *"You can buy drugs in the prison quicker and easier than outside; if it takes one hour to buy drugs outside, it takes just one min to buy and use drugs inside the prison."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

> "*If there was no bread in the prison, you could just use hashish instead."* (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

> *"I remember that guards discovered about 10 kilograms of opium just in one section of the prison."* (Male participant, 4 years of incarceration)

Also, officers' cooperation makes the process more convenient.

> "*It felt so bad to admit the fact that all prisons' managers tend to distribute drugs in the prison. They themselves kept some doors open to allow drug transferring to the prison. The most important reason was that, for example, in our section, there were about 400 prisoners without any sign of hope in their face; their family members were not there to emotionally support them. Most of them did not have any visits from their family. Along with that, the prisoners, cell mates, and guards do not have that much capacity to support each other. Thus, the only thing to keep them calm was drugs."* (Male participant, 6 years of incarceration)

Although property and strip searching (i.e. physically examining prisoners while naked) of inmates, especially drug users, happen regularly as a deterrent, the prevalence and use of illegal drugs in prison is an inevitable phenomenon. Also, in a case of searching or inspecting the units in prison, non-drug users are pressured to hide cellmates' drugs, since they are not suspected by officers. Different coercion strategies such as offering a pack of cigarettes or a telephone card were used to persuade them. There are three main routes for trafficking drugs into the prison: prisoners, corrupt officers, and through family members during visits. Being in and out of prison by leave or furlough, prisoners import drugs into the prison for their personal consumption. Also, there is a group of prisoners who are recruited by violent criminals to import drugs for their boss. Additionally, some inmates apparently expose themselves to be arrested intentionally so they can

be inside the prison and sell drugs.

> "*Some prisoners just set up a fake scene to be arrested and sell drugs in the prison to afford their family life outside of the prison.*" (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

> "*Kurdish prisoners are well known for delivering drugs by storing them in their body. They made fake scenes to get arrested and sell drugs and then get released. They come with just 50 grams of opium and get released with a large box of money."* (Male participant, 4 years of incarceration)

> "*Some prisoners do not want to get released. They want to stay and sell more drugs and earn money. The price of one gram of methamphetamine is $100 CAD, so it is worth it to stay there."* (Male participant, 6 years of incarceration)

> *"The price of drugs was 20 times more expensive than outside. Even the price of one pack of cigarettes was 10 times more expensive than outside. There were several on-leave prisoners who stored drugs in their body. The unit leader was one of the most common drug dealers in the prison, but the point was that due to his position (the manager of a cell) he was not identified by officers. Also, through any linkage between the prison and outside such as a 'health centre', we import drugs through the inmates who are recruited there. Once someone delivered drugs to the prison, first of all, he had to give a share to a high-status inmate, and then he kept the rest for himself."* (Male participant, 8 years of incarceration)

Also, family visit times were used to pass drugs between family members, especially spouses and parents, to prisoners while hugging or kissing them or to put the drugs in a box that contains food or clothes. Prisoners can hide the drugs under the carpet in the visit room, and then, the inmate whose duty is to clean up the room would deliver the drugs or hide them in their body before returning to the cells. The main purpose of this drug transfer through family channels was not personal consumption; rather, it was a way to financially support the prisoners and their family members.

The punishment for deliberate homicide according to the Islamic Law is death penalty (*Qisas*) or payment of blood money (*Diyat*)[14]. Thus, for those inmates who were sentenced to death

[14] "In cases of deliberate homicide diyat is due only when the nearest relatives of the victim do not insist on qisas …. Whenever the relatives insist upon the payment of diyat, it is to be in the value of one hundred camels….. Although diyat is originally fixed in terms of camels, it is almost universally admitted that it can be paid by an equivalent amount of money, either gold or silver, cows, sheep or garments" (Pervin, 2016, p. 145).

penalty and the victim's relatives do not insist on *qisas*, the best way to earn enough for blood money was by selling drugs in prison. Given the high price of drugs in prison, families pass drugs to inmates to afford the payment.

> *"My mother imported drugs to prison to financially help me. I wanted to sell the drugs to earn money and afford my life in prison and also to pay some portion of my debts and afford the payment of blood money. I stored them in my body where it couldn't be searched. After that, every time my mother brought me drugs. But, that was so risky, because sometimes we are searched nakedly, and the officers may find that."* (Female participant, 7 years of incarceration)

Prisoners are not the only group who make a living through selling drugs in prison, sometimes employees are also involved in this business of importing drugs inside the prison.

> "*Even the employees and guards delivered drugs into the prison to earn money. They earned a lot of money by transferring drugs. The money they earned was much more than their salaries."* "*It is one source of money. Guards deliver drugs to prison and make huge amounts of money. By delivering 50 grams of heroin, which cost $50 outside, they earn $500 inside."* (Male participant, 8 years of incarceration)

> "*Employees in the prison themselves deliver drugs into the prison. Last time, one of the employees delivered one kilogram of heroin into the prison."* (Male participant, 6 years of incarceration)

> "*It was unbelievable when I heard that one of the highest-status managers in the prison transferred 600 grams of heroin to the prison. He actually provides drugs for one of the prisoners just for money."* (Male participant, 8 years of incarceration)

5.4.5. Multi-dimensional Identity

5.4.5.1. Re-criminalization

When the last objective of prisons is rehabilitation and treatment, all efforts of prisoners are dedicated to entertaining themselves to survive the prison's circumstances. The most popular forms of entertainment among prisoners is bragging about their criminal skills and escapades while socializing and taking drugs simultaneously. The lack of a rehabilitation program is compensated by the re/criminalization process.

"Prison is the best educational workshop ever. All prisoners talked about their criminal activities and others were all ears to learn. I got put in prison because of a car robbery, and I got released with enough knowledge about housebreaking." (Male participant, 3 years of incarceration)

Even violent criminals who were supposed to have several contacts with criminals before incarceration admitted that the prison experience is incomparable with the knowledge they gained among street criminals.

"*I was an active criminal for ten years and got imprisoned more than 32 times. The information and experience I can get from one conversation with a violent criminal in prison cannot be obtained by being ten years outside the prison. Although I played soccer with a box of heroin, which my dad put in my hat for delivery, it did not make me a fearless person, but the prison totally turned me into a fearless criminal.* "

Inmates with longer sentences who accept the prison as their home become more professional in breaking laws than criminals outside of the prison. Inmates maintain their drug habits and deal drugs more quickly, more profitably and in even greater quantities than before incarceration. In other words, drugs are used and delivered under the close surveillance of educated correctional officers, thus it would be easier to maintain this habit after being released in society. Although some guards and officers have cooperation with prisoners inside the prison in terms of transferring drugs, it happens under close security controls. Not only are prisoners being educated in criminal skills, but they also become capable of practicing those skills in the most secured place (i.e. prison). Thus, it becomes much easier to traffic drugs outside prison without the constant control of officers and guards.

"Since I got put in prison, I have become more professional in criminal activities. I break the law in the prison in the heart of the law, so it is much easier for me to commit crimes outside. When I can transfer drugs from one section of the prison to another section fearlessly under the close control of guards from morning to evening with no chance of escape, transferring drugs outside is as simple as drinking water." (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

"*After the few months I was in the prison, I got used to the circumstances and was not scared anymore. So, I started all my habits and behaviours before I was incarcerated. All criminal behaviours get repeated there. Everything formed again with the same quality but with the one exception that I was in prison and not in society anymore. We found drugs through any possible paths in the prison."* (Male participant, 8 years of incarceration)

In women's prison and at socializing times, incarcerated women tend to talk about not only their criminal records, but their sexual relationships outside of the prison as well, especially if their partner was a well-known drug trafficker.

"*Most of the time they were talking about their sexual relationships with this guy and that guy. They tried to show off in front of other prisoners by describing their sexual relationships with popular drug traffickers."*

Even prisoners who were trained to carry out political assassinations adapted to the prison sub-culture.

"The guy who assassinated Sayad Shirazi[15] *was in our cell. He was incarcerated in solitary confinement for 2 years. He did not have any visitors. He was not supposed to be in our prison and in our cell because he was considered a political prisoner. But later he became our cellmate for a few months. Once he came to our cell, he did not even smoke cigarettes and he slept at specific times at night. He did not even eat food in the same dishes as anyone else. He had his own restricted and rigid rules. He resisted so hard against all the unwritten rules of the prison, but eventually he gave in. After a while, he became one of the most violent criminals of the prison. He became someone who gambled for more than seven months every night until 2 am."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

Although prisoners who are sentenced to a short-term incarceration due to petty drug offences are not accepted to socialize with others and are not welcome to participate in prison activities (e.g. religious classes, sewing classes, etc.), they will become familiar with the criminal culture if they are incarcerated repeatedly.

"For someone who spends a lot of time constantly in prison, prisons' rules become more stable in his mind than recidivist ones. Even those who were incarcerated 10 times in their life and were incarcerated for a short period each time become gradually the same as us

[15] "Ali Sayad Shirazi was a well-known military General, who served as commander of the Ground Force during Iran–Iraq War. He was assassinated in 1999 while serving as the deputy chief of the Iranian Armed Forces General Staff, the second-highest military office in Iran".

who were murderers, drug traffickers, or burglars. I mean, finally at the eleventh time, they were incarcerated because of murder, and they were sentenced to death. Then, he found a status in the prison." (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

However, there are prisoners who get incarcerated for a short period of time and are not involved in prison society. Most drug addicts who are sentenced due to possessing or delivering drugs are included in this category. They are not even considered human beings; they are forgotten and invisible prisoners who are considered outsiders in prison. However, they are the most vulnerable group who are exposed to the instability and constant changes of prison's environment.

"*I did not learn anything in the prison, neither criminal activities nor carpet weaving. There was not any spot for me. There were prisoners who were there for 10 or even 20 years who always participated in these types of classes with their fellows. They not only never asked me to come, but also if I wanted to, they would not let me in. Nobody counted on us. I did not talk to anybody because they did not even see me. We did not learn anything about the criminal activities because those groups and gangs did not talk to us. In return, by changing the boss, we were the first group who had to obey her new rules."* (Female participant, 1 year of incarceration)

Long-termers are expected to internalize all the requirements of being violent in prison, as one participant described

"growing a warrior soul in yourself", even if they do not want to be involved in any violent circumstances. In other words, prisoners have to practice and adapt to the peripheries of living among violent criminals. "*The unwritten rules of jail are that when you arrive in prison, prison becomes your hope home; it is your new reality. So, you have to build your life there. You have to match and adapt to its culture. I was not the man I've ever been and have never been involved in fights. But there, there were 400 prisoners who were violent. I had to be violent like them. I had to knife people. It was not needed, but the atmosphere expects it."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

"*I was not a violent person, but I was involved in 15 fights during the first two months I was incarcerated. What I mean is that the most important rule in the prison is that you have to adapt to the prison conditions. You should grow a warrior soul and consider either guards or other prisoners as enemies."* (Male participant, 8 years of incarceration)

Prison subculture affects prisoners' language style as well. Although some were already familiar with criminal language, most of them only learned to use this language while incarcerated. Using specific slangs among prisoners is a sign of being violent or at least appearing violent.

"The style of my speaking changed completely. I started to use different language and sets of words day by day. This showed that I was violent and tough and also a long-termer." (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

People who use drugs are not only exposed to the criminal lifestyle and subculture in prison (recriminalization) but also to different types of drugs (re-drugization). People who use drugs are exposed to a toxic atmosphere in the prison; they become familiar with new types of drugs and are persuaded to follow the drug business in prison. In other words, if a prisoner's drug of choice was not available or expensive, another drug or multiple substances were abused. Some people who use drugs become poly-drug addicts, depending on the accessibility and availability of drugs.

"I used opium and heroin, but I became familiar with methamphetamine in the prison." (Male participant)

"I was addicted to opium, but I became familiar with heroin in prison." (Female participant)

"I was addicted to crack, but once I got released, I started injecting heroin." (Male participant)

"I just used hashish before I got imprisoned, but while in there I used all available drugs." (Female participant)

Although Moradi et al. (2015) emphasize the constructive effects of prison-based methadone maintenance treatment to decrease drug abuse in prison and reduce shared injections, the prevalence of using other drugs even injection other than methadone was the clearest message of the majority of participants in the current study. Even non-addicts or recovering addict inmates registered to receive methadone to decrease their anxiety and stress.

"I tried methadone in prison for the first time, because methamphetamine was 10 times more expensive than outside. Once I was released, I started to use methadone and methamphetamine simultaneously." (Female participant, 3 years of incarceration)

5.4.5.2. Rehabilitation

According to Vaughn and Sapp (1989, p.73), "custody is taking precedence over rehabilitation,

leaving treatment providers with little moral or financial support. Due to budget restraints and burden- some overcrowding issues, treatment modalities are not receiving high priority from lawmakers." One of the consequences of the 'war on drugs' in Iran is considering prison as a punitive institution to create a 'healthier' society rather than treating it like a rehabilitative program. Thus, the custody/treatment duality pushes us to accept Martinson's (1974) hypothesis that "nothing works." Although prisoners are provided with limited rehabilitation programs that specifically concentrate on drug treatment and rehabilitation for violent criminals, those opportunities act as turning points in the lives of few prisoners. Narcotics Anonymous plays a significant role in the spiritual transformation of some prisoners. The coexistence of criminal subculture and NA subculture in the prison creates multiple identities inside recovering inmates in the penal system. NA runs a program weekly in the prison in addition to their rehab centers in the society; almost all NA recovering addicts who have an incarceration history became volunteers to present and introduce the program in the prison. Although correctional officers did not believe that NA principles could be understood by prisoners, some violent criminals changed their lives forever by participating in NA sessions.

> "*Guards did not believe in the function of NA in prison. They told us that prisoners do not understand the NA principles."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

It is not only correctional officers who did not believe in the function of NA in the penal system, almost all prisoners did not believe in the effectiveness of NA either and declined to attend the sessions.

> *"In our section, there were 400 prisoners, and fewer than 10 prisoners attended the program. In fact, from those 10 prisoners, just three of them came to the program every week, and the rest of them came rarely. Prisoners are not well-informed about the principles of the program unless they attend the class. In fact, making different rumors and jokes around NA holds some prisoners back from attending this program. We made a joke about the NA meetings and the members in the prison. Instead of Narcotics Anonymous, we called*

them Soldier Anonymous. I did not attend any NA meetings in the prison as I was afraid of being sent to the forced labor camp. Some prisoners heard of NA's influence in quitting drugs, and thus they decided to attend the sections." (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

Spreading the subculture of NA through recovering prisoners creates a contradictory atmosphere; prisoners thus practiced NA principles and struggled with the criminal sub-culture in prison as the same time.

"*It was a well-known idiom in the prison that 'even the gazelle does not feed his child' (nobody cares about anybody) in the prison; however, we as NA members in the prison attempted to encourage prisoners to not come back to the prison again. We actually tried to expand their horizons in the prison. I was a manager in one cell in the prison, I told all the prisoners in the cell that nobody has a right to smoke even one cigarette in this cell. I told them on any occasion that you are not allowed to fight, just have a dialogue. They were not allowed to sell drugs in the cell. All of them have to respect other cellmates' rights. I practiced all NA principles in the prison. And also, the number of people who use drugs who overcame addiction in prison is no more than 1 or 2 out of 400 inmates.*" (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

Although, as Crewe (2005) states, drug abuse can be considered "a largely individualistic response" to alleviate the pains of prison life, drug addiction in the prison is part of a social network that creates social capital around inmates or, more specifically, as Mjaland (2014, 2016, p. 159) states, drug abuse has "inclusionary and exclusionary functions." Prisoners form and construct social relationships based on their drug habits, and drug withdrawal decisions within prison are not easily accepted by others, since the social position, which has been structured based on drug abuse, is collapsed and connections and relationships are jeopardized. As Crewe (2005) states, inmates who quit drugs during their sentences have different social experiences of imprisonment.

"*I became a part of an association in the prison where I could share my thoughts and feelings with them. It was called NA. I had several friends and cellmates in the prison, and we did not have any problems with each other after I participated in NA meetings. I was sick of my friends, and I could not stand them anymore. Once I quit drugs, I remember, I did not know what I was supposed to do with my friends. Every time I came back from the NA sessions, they surrounded me and offered me drugs. They told me to come to use drugs. Fortunately, I was trained by NA to say NO simply and immediately refuse this request. All the prisoners*

are sick of using drugs, and they have lost everything already in their life, but they could not quit that. My friends did not fight with me during the rehabilitation process in the prison, because I know that they wanted to stop using drugs, but they could not." (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

Recovering addicts in prison most often go through the withdrawal process through the NA program, and they have reported restoring relationships with their family members who excluded them during times of addiction. Also, their family members start to communicate and even transfer money into ex-addicts' accounts to show their respect for their withdrawal decisions. In fact, many of the connections lost in the prison due to drug withdrawal can be compensated for by restoring, recovering, and repairing personal relationships with family and friends outside the prison. According to Wacquant (2002, p. 388), prison is only suggested as a 'distortive and wholly negative' force, while one can consider it "as a stabilizing and restorative force for relations already deeply frayed by the pressures of life and labor at the bottom of the social edifice."

In addition to the NA program, life skills classes were offered in prisons. These types of classes are often held for long-termers. The main objective of classes was training long-termers to be aware of social and cultural changes in society. Prisoners who are released after 10 years of incarceration have to be re-socialized about the culture of society, which might be forgotten by them. When incarcerated, they replaced the society's culture with the prison subculture step by step. Educating them gradually in prison before being released assists them to analyze the forgotten sets of norms in society.

"*When I got incarcerated, I was just 20 years old. The society was not the same, and also I was so young to be incarcerated and locked in a closed building for 10 years. I did not know anything about relationships between men and women, and once I wanted to figure it out, I murdered someone when I was high, and I got imprisoned. The society got turned upside down for 10 years. The only thing that kept me updated somehow, especially regarding girls and boys' relationships, was the life skills class that was held in the prison. Prisoners such as me who were incarcerated at such sensitive ages who did not get a chance to figure out and practice social skills were trained in those educational classes in the prison. They constantly repeated the fact that opposite sex relationships have changed dramatically, and*

if you see unmarried boys and girls in the street who are hanging out freely, do not lose your control, and do not overreact, because this phenomenon is getting more normal than in the past, I mean 13 years ago." (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

According to interviewees, for almost all inmates who were sentenced to death penalty, this acted as a turning point in their life, changing them into theists, believers, and faithful observants of religion. Most prisoners are nonbeliever or "sinner" at the time of incarceration, however they convert to true believers during their imprisonment (Maruna et al., 2006; Clear and Sumter 2002; Thomas and Zaitzow 2006). [16]

"*The fact that the prisoner was a murderer outside in society does not mean that he is inherently destructive and a trouble maker. They did not believe in God, and once they were incarcerated they realized that he is a loser. Prison becomes the end of the road for them, so he is not able to do anything in the prison other than change themselves. In the murderer section, about 300 prisoners were kept there. You cannot imagine that just one prisoner each year got released and 3 prisoners each week got executed. The first day of incarceration for us is like the first night of the grave. We realized that the game is over right now. We wanted to get back to society and ask for forgiveness from the victims. In this section, they know and pray to God more than anyone because they touch God everyday by witnessing their friend's execution. I prayed every day and asked God to have one day's leave to see my mother for the last time. I knew that I was never being released, and I will be executed sooner or later."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

5.4.6. Instrumental Relationships

5.4.6.1. Friendship Illusion

Inside the prison where inmates' lives are in the 'hands of power', everybody attempts to provide for their own life and survive incarceration. Prisoners plan their acts according to safety and drugs, thus making friends is based on providing safety and obtaining drugs; otherwise, nobody cares about each other's lives outside of this golden rule.

"*I entered the prison while I was yelling and crying. I was scared of everything that I had heard about prison. I heard that nobody cares about anybody in the prison and 'even the gazelle does not feed her child in prison.' Everything I heard was true. If anyone has a financial problem or if anyone cannot afford anything, even food, and has indigestion,*

[16] Religious conversion, specifically conversion to Islam, is a well-known phenomenon in American and European prisons. About 80 percent of those prisoners who seek faith in the US prisons convert to Islam (Ammar et al. 2004; Waller 2003).

> *nobody cares. Everybody minds their own business."* (Male participant, 4 years of incarceration)

All rules and relationships in prison are based on needs, verbalized in concepts such as trust, friendship, and respect. Prisoners deal with instrumental relationships in prison, which are based on interim arrangements, matching pairs and meeting basic needs. It is important to remember that the rare trust, solidarity, respect, and relationships established in the prison all are for the sake of drugs and safety; in other words, they are based on mutual advantages. Inmates repeatedly testified that they were aware of the nature of respect and power in the prison. They declared that personal possessions and power bring respect until high-status inmates meet prisoners' needs.

> *"You cannot have that much solidarity in the society outside, as this solidarity is unbreakable for the sake of drugs. The reason behind the constant presence and prevalence of drugs in the prison is just the solidarity of prisoners who prevent any disclosure and any solidarity is based on protecting and providing drugs."* (Male participant, 8 years of incarceration)

Relationships in temporary societies are not based on any other purposes than the fulfillment of basic needs, because everyone is attempting to survive. Thus, relationships in the prison are usually temporary arrangements, especially among short-termers. Their relationships are limited to incarceration periods and last no longer.

> "*I made friends in the prison, but those relationships vanished once I got released.*" "*All my friendships in prison were like a fog; once I was released, they all disappeared."* (Male participant, 4 years of incarceration)

Being involved in 'fragile' relationships in prison depends on the duration of incarceration. Inmates often prefer to communicate and socialize with prisoners with long acquaintanceships through either a long length of imprisonment or previous incarceration experiences. Additionally, inmates consider the social background (e.g. financial status, the region of living) and the criminal history of other inmates before choosing them as an inmate. Usually, new prisoners, especially

those who are serving less than six months, are not appropriate to be mates. There is just one exception: if the new prisoner is rich or has drugs, he or she gets some attention. Even in this case, a new prisoner is not allowed to distribute or use drugs without the permission of the main distributer of drugs in the prison.

In some rare cases, prisoners manage to keep relationships with each other even after being released; sometimes they become members of the same gang who decide to be criminal partners.

> *"When I was released, I found my cellmates for a bank robbery."* (Male participant, 5 years of incarceration)

Most often, long-termers who were sentenced to life imprisonment and death penalty kept relationships with their friends even after getting a chance to get released (see page 156). prison is a home for long-termers, and even if they get released they keep relationships with other prisoners. In addition, there are prisoners who became members of NA in prison and continued their relationships with other NA members in the prison and outside once they were released.

> "*I was incarcerated for 10 years. I had a good relationship with the NA members in the prison, as there were only four of us. We are still in contact with each other even after being released. All NA members in the prison keep their relations with other members after incarceration."* (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

Also, they make friends with prisoners with the same criminal history as themselves. It is risky to make friends with short-termers since they will leave the prison sooner or later before becoming known and getting known. Therefore, making friends with prisoners in the same categories increases the chance of meeting their basic needs, from safety to drugs.

> *"Prisoners who committed violent crimes never ever made friends with us. They did not care about us. They always made friends with the same criminal categories as themselves."* (Male participant, 4 years of incarceration)

> *"It was not safe to have any contacts with the short-termers, since they did not still know prison rules and the possibility that they would break the rules and create problems for you*

was high." (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

Long-termers keep their relationships in a gray zone (i.e. "the status that is neither white nor black; living with others in a 'no peace no war' situation) to make the incarceration period tolerable. The most important reason behind keeping relationships in the gray zone is mutual needs. They have to deal with each other for the sake of safety and drugs as long as they are living in the prison. Additionally, relationships and making friends with the cellmates act as a backup plan in case of fighting. It is not just obtaining drugs which keeps relationships in a gray zone, as safety is another reason.

> *"It is better to have some relationships with your cellmates in the prison just in case. If you have enemies in the prison and you do not have any friends, you are a dead body. You have to have friends to stand up for you. Most prisoners just make friends based on being scared about loneliness in fighting."* (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

5.4.6.2. Double-edged Sword

Most prisoners belong to a gang in prison. These gangs are based on different regions in the city and different criminal histories; however, the region of residence before incarceration plays a crucial role in the requirements of a gang. The sizes of gangs in prison vary from 30 to 50 individuals. Almost all the gangs in the prison are named after a region in the city; for example, there is a region north of Isfahan called '*Sabzemeydon'*, and there is a gang in Isfahan prison with this specific name. These gangs can be categorized into two different categories: the upper-class districts and the lower-class districts. It is not necessarily the rule that the upper-class regions take control of the prison or have the power to compete with lower-class district gangs. This all depends on the number of violent criminals in each gang. As one of the participants stated about Isfahan prison, "for years, the lower-class district gangs had control of the prison and set their own rules to manage the prison; however, recently, the upper-class district gangs had taken control. The upper-class district gangs in Isfahan introduced a new version of illegal

drugs and new criminal skills, and through their knowledge, they controlled the whole prison". Prisoners are advised to join their own regional gangs to receive all the privileges of the group. If the prisoners prefer to join the other regions' gangs just because they have power or control over others, they will not have the gang's support in a fight. In other words, joining other regions' gangs is perceived as a betrayal. As a matter of fact, those prisoners are under the close control of not only their own region's gangs, but also the gangs they joined without specific affiliation; in case of fighting or conflicts, the first person who will be alone and will be the target of violence are those prisoners. Struggling with gang violence and drug trafficking are inseparable parts of being a member of a gang. Although the concept of the gang is connected with violence behind bars, being a gang member automatically brings emotional and economic support, safety, and further aggression and coercion. Violence and safety are two sides of the same coin. Gangs consisted of members with the most violent criminals and a high status can take control over the prison. In fact, a high number of violent criminals in a gang gives credit to all members of that gang.

> *"There was a gang in prison that was originally from 'Sabzemeydon' in Isfahan, and they took control of the prison for years, just because its members were the most violent criminals in the prison.*
>
> *All the prisoners did not dare to disobey those gang members in the prison for years."* (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

Gaps between safety and violence get blurred every day in prison, so much that it makes it difficult to recognize each of them. None of these concepts are recognizable in a full manner in the penal world, as their boundaries disappear. Violence for the sake of safety and safety for the sake of violence create multiple identities among prisoners. Each member of a gang is supported

emotionally based on their status in the hierarchy of the gang. Most often, the high-status gang members expect to receive more psychological and emotional support from the rest.

> "*Like ordinary life outside the prison that requires emotion, money, and affection, the boss of the section demands all of them in the prison from the prisoners. Prisoners who are under his control have to provide all those for them."* (Male participant, 5 years of incarceration)

Being a gang member is like living in a safe ship in a stormy sea. The ship provides a safe environment for the members, even if this safety is fragile. Thus, it provides its members with psychological and emotional support.

> *"It is an important fact that you have to join gangs of your own region (district). For example, if you are from southeast of Isfahan, the rational decision is that you will join their gang and be a part of their group instead of joining other groups. If any fighting and conflicts happen against you in the prison and you are in the gang, which does not inherently belong to you, you will be injured and hurt bad. In fact, in this particular situation, there is nobody to support you, and all of the prisoners who come from the same region will keep each other's back, and you will be left alone with no supporters."* (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

Being a member of a gang brings identification, a sense of belonging, and status in prison.

> *"I was in my uncle's gang in the prison, because I needed their emotional support. I felt safe among them. They gave me an identity, and I was not empty in the prison anymore. They approved of me, whatever I did."* (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

Some of the prisoners did not have any contacts with their family members and friends in society, as most of them were forgotten members of their family. Thus, being a gang member created a sense of family for them and gave them support.

> *"I did not have anyone. Nobody called me while I was in the prison. They all hated me. I was an addict and hurt them so much. I deserved this misery. But the only chance I had was the gang, and I found myself there. My true identity, I found myself there. They approved of me. All of them were the same as me. I did not feel excluded anymore."* (Male participant, 4 years of incarceration)

Gangs in prison use their power to apply coercion and aggression to other gangs in the prison, especially those gangs who store drugs in their cells. Analyzing interviews indicate the fact

that the emergence of gangs in the Iranian prisons does not just occur because of applying coercion and aggression over others, gaining economic support, and being protected from violence; rather, it reveals that men also have emotional and physiological needs. By being a gang member, safety comes in a package that contains family, identity, emotional support, and a sense of belonging that surrounds prisoners in a dangerous world. Therefore, gangs in prison function as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the members receive belonging, a sense of identity, and emotional support, while at the same time they are threatened by coercion and aggression from other gangs.

Although there are no gangs in women prisons, family-like relationships have various similarities in terms of their function in comparison with gangs in men's prisons. Different familial groups with different statuses co-exist in prison; however, one or two families have others under their control. Familial groups resemble the family system in society and consist of grandmothers, mothers, and sisters in the prison. The size of familial groups in women's prison varies; however, they usually had no fewer than 15 members. Essentially, familial groups in prison act as an emotional and financial shelter for women. The grandmother is always an older prisoner with a high-status position in prison who is called '*nane'* (grandma). The most common relationships in the familial groups are mother and daughter relationships, which do not necessarily follow demographic rules. In other words, a mother in the familial group is not necessarily older than a daughter.

> "*We protect each other from being bullied or assaulted by other groups in the prison. Also, we are emotionally attached to each other. We cook on the weekend with each other. Sometimes we borrow some things from our family members in the familial group." "I was a mother of some young girls in the prison, and I always encouraged them to read the Quran and be positive. I tried to protect them. We had emotional ties."* (Female participant, 7 years of incarceration)

Women practice femininity constantly in prison, from expressing motherhood feelings to building emotional bonds among themselves to creating a second family. Some of the prisoners

had children outside the prison and by acting as a mother in the prison they could fill a void and perform their motherly roles vicariously.

> *"I play a role as a mother for 10 and 11 -year-old-girls in the prison, and I help them in everything. They are scared, and I was the only one who protected them. They remind me of my own daughters that I lost years ago due to my actions. I feel really good to have them here."* (Female participant, 5 years of incarceration)

Mothers not only protected the safety of other members of groups but also commanded and guided them. Prisoners with their children in the prison creates family-like relationships, and these were the most peaceful familial groups in the prison. Although they were controlled and authorized by high-status prisoners, the violence impacting them was less than for other groups in the prison. Child companionship restrained mothers from any violent behaviour; in fact, taking care of children in mother sections became a turning point in their lives and helped them avoid dangerous situations which could jeopardize the children's safety inside the prison. Some of the participants declared that being a member of familial groups in prison not only protects them from aggression, but also is the best way to exploit and coerce others. Familial groups are the best way for violent criminals to meet their goals in the prison.

> "*I was a member of a family in the prison, and our mom ordered us to force someone to buy something for us. We were hungry, so we forced a prisoner who was alone and not a member of any groups to buy food for us" "We did not dare to bully a prisoner who was a member of a familial group in the prison, because they were not alone. They will come back with others." "I was in a family group to have some protection and safety in the prison."* (Female participant, 3 years of incarceration)

5.4.6.3. Reconceptualization of Trust

The culture of distrust in the prison force prisoners to have restricted and defined relationships with each other, even with their cellmates or gang members. Although trust is one of the psychological needs of individuals to maintain their mental health and plays a crucial role in mutual relationships and identity formation, all prisoners contended that there is no trust in prison.

Trust in prison has its own limits and obligations and in order to stay safe, prisoners avoid trusting anyone. They may trust someone whom they know before incarceration and had a long relationship with.

> *"I only trust my friend that I have known for years on the outside. Also, you can somehow trust someone who you have known for years here in the prison."* (Male participant, 4 years of incarceration)

> *"I had friends in the prison, but our relationships were just restricted to buying food and drugs. I do not trust them much more."* (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

The lack of trust in mutual relationships pushes prisoners toward multiple, sometimes conflicting, identities. Prisoners become more careful about their presentation and personality they show in front of others, which creates struggles and challenges. Living in an environment without trust or limited trust puts prisoners in the position of being "the others" all times. Although they have several relationships to guarantee their safety and drugs, prisoners demonstrate fake identities in front of each other.

> *"Friendships in the prison are just in films and don't exist in reality. The foundations of friendships in the prison are not based on trust. You cannot see the tangent tree in the middle of a swamp. It is impossible to trust anyone in the prison. You are not you in prison. You change your personality every second to attract their attention to meet your needs; no more."* (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

> "*You have to make a friend with the walls in the prison, and you have to mind your own business. There is no trust in the prison. We just play different roles to take our drugs or to protect us from aggression."* (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

This mistrust culture in prison is even creeped into the relationships between counselors and prisoners. Although counselors are there to help prisoners with their psychological issues, prisoners do not consider them as trustworthy sources. There is a center for counseling located inside the prison, and in Isfahan prison in 2012, there were four professional counselors. All of them were social workers who focused on the problems and challenges of prisoners with their children outside the prison. Those prisoners who were concerned about their children's

circumstances outside the prison talked with social workers, whom then talk to managers to take the necessary measures. The point was that there was a two-way untruthful road between the prisoners and counselors; according to interviewees, even in a rare situation in which a prisoner decides to consult with social workers and ask for their help, the social workers do not trust them.

> *"The employees and guards in the prison cannot trust any prisoners, and I as a prisoner cannot trust them because they become the same as prisoners gradually. They are no different human beings from the prisoners; they are the same. The only employees I could trust were counselors in the prison. Even those consultants were not someone who other prisoners trusted because they believed that they wanted to find out what is going on in our lives, and they want to spy on us. So, most of the prisoners did not trust them as well. Also, they believed that consultants do not understand our situation because they have not experienced our life. I was someone who prisoners consulted with sometimes because I studied sociology."* (Female participant, 5 years of incarceration)

Almost all drug addict participants in compulsory camps considered trust as a rare phenomenon, which is ridiculous to talk about in such circumstances. The process of arresting people who use drugs suddenly while they are walking in street and forcing them into the detoxification process, which is an unbearable experience for even those people who use drugs who are willing to quit drugs, does not leave any space for building friendships, let alone trusting relationships. As was mentioned earlier, these types of treatment camps are temporary, and the recovering addicts will be released as soon as they get clean. Although there are some representatives of NA, even in compulsory camps, who assist people who use drugs based on the 12-step program, most of them relapse at the time of leaving the camp. As one of the participants stated, people who use drugs consider the camps as not an alternative to prison but an alternative type of "hell". The relationships in camps are based on meeting daily needs from food to safety. Since finding drugs or even abusing drugs in camps is challenging, there is no hierarchy based on the possession of drugs in camps. Most of the addicts in camps are just people who use drugs and homeless with no history of

criminal violence. No relationships based on providing drugs, money, or trust can be formed in compulsory camps. However, some of the participants state that when people who use drugs are arrested in a specific region, almost all of them know each other, since most are homeless and share similar areas for abusing drugs and sleeping at night. Even in these circumstances, where most of them are familiar with each other, they do not trust or even form deep relationships.

5.4.7. Two Sides of the Same Coin

High-status prisoners who are considered leaders or managers in the inmate social world can take advantage of their social position to gain either aid or undermine the prison's social order (Sykes, 1958; Jacobs, 1977). As suggested earlier, high-status inmates (drug traffickers) are mostly in charge of disorder or disobedience in prison. Prisoners act as correctional officers to control, monitor, and manage the prison. Correctional officers put the responsibility of the prison in the hands of high-status prisoners. They act as police or correctional officers to mitigate violence, which might disrupt the routine of the social system of prison. Although trust is an unstable phenomenon between them, correctional officers trust prisoners to be managed by other prisoners who exert influence and power throughout the prison. Since drug dealers and traffickers have the most influence over others, given the fact that most of the prisoners are drug users, they are the best targets for correctional officers in managing the prison without their constant interventions. High-status inmates become an active part of the control and surveillance of other inmates.

"*I did not see guards in the prison, as actually, the prisoners manage the prison themselves."* (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

"I saw guards just once a week, and the inmates with longer sentences managed the prison. I did not see any managers of the prison. Even in a case of fighting, correctional officers do not tend to interfere." (Male participant, 3 years of incarceration)

"Prisoners fight and are injured so bad, but they solve their problems by themselves and even stitch their wounds and pretend that they were self-inflicted." (Male participant, 2 years of incarceration)

The reciprocal relationships between drug traffickers and correctional officers facilitate the flowing of drugs into the prison. The absolute cooperation between the prisoners and guards makes a win-win game in which both parties make their own profit.

"*I do not know how prisoners delivered drugs to the prison, as guards even search in the vaginas of women. This might directly relate to officers in the prison."* (Male participant, 1 year of incarceration)

"Our cell manager who was a violent criminal and inmates with longer sentences delivered drugs to the prison and told us the guards did not notice. That was bullshit." (Male participant, 2 years of incarceration)

"We forced guards to deliver whatever we wanted to the prison. We told them that we were here for years, and you have to understand us. At the end, we made them emotional. We found a way to deliver drugs to the prison; for example, we would drop something in the bathrooms to cause clogs and then when the plumber came to the prison, we made friends with him. That was one way to persuade someone from the outside to bring drugs for us because they did not usually physically inspect them. I remember we persuaded a guard to bring vodka for us in the prison, because again they did not physically search them." (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

Since wealthy prisoners financially took part in forming the prison structure through meeting the accommodation needs of the prisoners, they all are treated respectfully by officers and are considered as trustable negotiation partners for officers.

"You received respect from judges and guards if you were incarcerated for fraud of one million."

The relationships between guards and prisoners are not restricted to financial matters, as prisoners with exceptional situations received true assistance from the wardens and correctional officers. In general, prisoners on death row are treated kindly by correctional officers before execution. On the day of execution, correctional officers try, in a last-minute attempt, to cancel the

corporal punishment by asking forgiveness from the plaintiff. When possible, they even provide an opportunity for prisoners to go on leave and try to convince the plaintiff.[17]

> *"The prosecutor released me based on his own promise to give me the opportunity to ask for the forgiveness of the plaintiff."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

> *"Most of the guards in the prison are concerned about the situation of the prisoners. On execution days, they try to delay the punishment to talk with the complainants for forgiveness."* (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

> *"One of the rituals which is popular among guards before execution is searching to find the family of the victim and begging them not to let the prisoner get executed."* (Male participant, 9 years of incarceration)

> *"Some guards cry with all their hearts when innocent prisoners get executed, and sometimes guards devote a lot of time to delaying the execution of one prisoner with the hopes of getting the satisfaction of the plaintiff."* (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

On the one hand, correctional officers cooperate with prisoners in a win-win game and also support them to be released, even if they are on death row; on the other hand, snitches are recruited to decrease prisoners' solidarity and jeopardize the inmates' relationships in prison. Through snitches, the culture of distrust intensifies, which subsequently decreases the sense of solidarity. Whenever correctional officers learn about any possible solidarity or solid friendships between prisoners, they recruit snitches to not only pass information but also scare prisoners away from each other. Through this strategy, a panopticon (Foucault, 1977) is created in inmates' minds, thereby they feel they are constantly being monitored, even in their own beds, by snitches. Prison is controlled and organized through high-status prisoners and also through snitches, who are invisible agents of correctional officers. The invisible agents of correctional officers pass the

[17] A similar theme is shown the film "Beautiful city", directed by multi-award-winning filmmaker Asghar Farhadi in 2004. Akbar is the main character of this film. He committed murder at the age of sixteen and was sentenced to death penalty. When he reaches age 18, the conviction legally can be carried out, thus he is transferred to the prison and waits for his execution. Meanwhile, a correctional officer in the rehabilitation center along with Akbar's friend try to gain the consent of Akbar's plaintiff to stop the execution, providing an opportunity for Akbar to pay Qisas instead of being executed. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0424434/

information to the guards, and their needs are met in return. The function of snitches in prison is manipulating prisoners' relationships to prevent them from building trust and to undermine their solidarity.

> "*Snitches were set up by guards to decrease the solidarity between prisoners. If a prisoner gets powerful day by day in the prison, snitches received commands from wards to spread rumors to ruin their reputation to decrease their power*." (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

One of the explanations for the existence of snitches (*Khabarchin*) in Iranian prisons is that they are a consequence of power struggles among inmates. Leaders among prisoners always compete to take the leadership status, change the prison's informal rules and get the most advantages (e.g. by taking control of drug networks inside the prison). Informants are assigned through administrators, managers, and correctional officers as well. The most important functions of informants who are recruited through officers include maintaining surveillance over prisoners and creating a panopticon; in other words, spreading instability, mistrust, and uncertainty among inmates. Additionally, they are used to stop powerful leaders from gaining too much authority in prison, which might increase solidarity among inmates and results in a collective action. It is safer to say that one of the functions of informants is to start rumors which would result in moving a prisoner downward in the prison hierarchy. In fact, informants were assigned to disrupt the growing trust and solidarity among prisoners either by disclosing information for managers or by spreading rumors against someone's reputation.

> "*In the past, it was up to prisoners to choose their cellmates, but now the new prisoners are allocated to cells by guards, because guards want to put a snitch in each cell. So, whenever a new prisoner came to our cell, the manager of the cell announced the wake-up time sooner so that the regulars encouraged him to leave the room and let us act freely. If he did not go to the yard, we did something to force him to leave."* (Male participant, 7 years of incarceration)

> *"In the prison, there were some prisoners who became powerful during the time of incarceration. They committed violent crimes outside in the society and inside of the prison.*

Also, they transferred drugs from the prison to outside and from outside to the prison with the cooperation of guards and managers of the prison. There were so powerful that they had personal and family information on all of the involved managers and guards in case of disobedience. They were like a mafia; they managed drug trafficking from Shiraz to Zahedan. The warden of the prison realized that most of the guards and managers were involved in this situation, so they decided to spread the rumor that guns were being delivered into the prison. The rumors were spread by snitches, and then police enforcement came to search for the guns. First of all, they started searching their rooms, and the enforcement guards offended them much by searching every spot and separating them into different cells. That was like a spark, as big fighting happened between the police and those prisoners. Police enforcement shot all 6 prisoners right in their own cell. Since then, managers have been cautious regarding prisoners who have the potential to become powerful in the prison. They started to recruit snitches to prevent the same situation from happening." (Male participant, 10 years of incarceration)

5.5. NA Sub-culture

5.5.1. Stretching Normality

Narcotics Anonymous originated from the Alcoholics Anonymous program of the late 1940s in the US, and the first NA meeting was held in Los Angeles in 1950. "Today, the gratitude of NA members around the world ensures that doors are opened for almost 67,000 meetings each week, in 139 countries" (NAWS, 2017, p.1). NA is one of the most effective voluntarily recovery programs (Kaskutas, 2009; Kelly et al., 2008; Robinson, et al., 2009; White, 2010).

The first Iranian Narcotics Anonymous self-group was established by Mr. Foruhar Tashvighi in 1994. He was an addict for 20 years and got clean through the NA program when he was in the US. Upon his return to Iran, he initiated an NA called *Anjoman-e Motadan-e Gomnam* (the society of anonymous addicts). In Today's format, each member of NA is assigned a sponsor who is a 'recovering addict' as part of NA's 12-step program. Although the religious origins of NA are Christian, this fact did not even slightly impact the participants' viewpoints regarding NA in Iran. NA participants in this study even refused to answer the question about their religious affiliation, since they believe in a 'higher power'.

A growing number of drug treatment camps, especially illegal camps, despite lacking proper treatment supervision, are absorbing large numbers of drug users to help them quit drugs. However, the missions of treatment NGOs are not restricted to drug withdrawal, and whether NGOs are aware or not, the definition of a 'normal' and 'proper' citizen has been changed. In other words, through accepting people who use drugs as patients who are in need of medical intervention, the process of defining and re-defining 'normalcy' and citizenship is accelerated. Drug treatment NGOs indirectly break the cycle of humiliation and hatred of drug users by providing facilities and education and by representing an addict as essentially a 'human', who is dignified enough to have a choice in society. Thus, their principles and humanitarian goals have affected the government's political and economic interests. Additionally, these institutes expand the definition of a 'normal' citizen by treating addicts humanely and by taking care of their general as well as special needs (e.g. shelter, food, condoms, needles, etc.). Therefore, they try to eliminate, step by step, the concept of drug abuse as 'taboo', as this gives the state the power to misuse this concept in political and economic sectors.

Although NA members have to deal with the state on different occasions, from registering NA as a non-governmental organization (i.e. according to one NA founder in Isfahan, "since all drug users are welcomed to attend NA meetings regardless of their religion and ethnicity, it causes problems to officially register NA as an NGO because its openness to everyone") to searching for proper locations for their meetings, NA is not heavily inspected or monitored by government since it "uses abstinence-based methods" and "emphasizes readily endorsed cultural values" (Christensen, 2011, p. 189). NA recovering addicts receive training to be included in society by improving their social skills, reconstructing their family ties, finding jobs and making positive differences in all aspects of their life. Also, by organizing open meetings to give opportunities to

drug-free citizens (i.e. family and friends of recovering addicts), being more involved and familiarlized with the process of treatment, NA members try to change the perceptions of society regarding people who use drugs toward ‘normalizing’ rather than ‘marginalizing’. As a result, the boundaries between ‘normal’/‘dangerous’ and ‘normalcy’/’deviancy’ are getting blurred day by day by expanding the activities of NA and other treatment-oriented NGOs. Four categories are extracted from the data to explain the sub-culture of NA in Iran: 1) horizontal network; 2) restricted and exclusive trust; 3) constructing and reconstructing identity; and 4) gender-based reintegration (Figure 5.2).

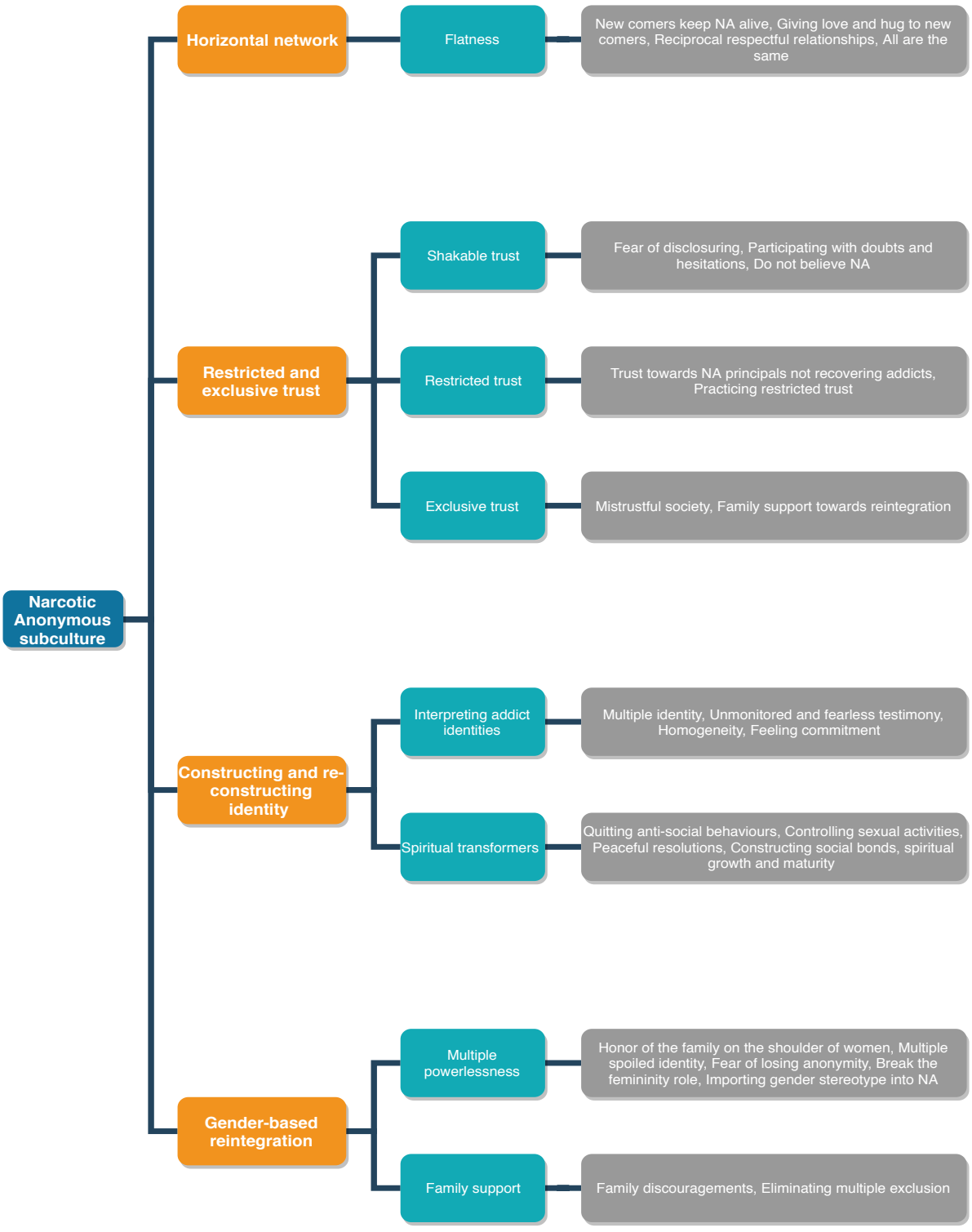


Figure 5. 2 NA Subculture

5.5.2. Horizontal Network

There are several hierarchies above each active group that hold regular meetings, from the steering committee including the treasury, area service committee, and regional service committee to the world service office. However, NA is called a "fellowship" by its members, in which the flow of authority is bottom-upward rather than top-downward. Those who are serving on each committee are called trusted servants. They are not dictatorial or order givers; rather, they listen to others and are open to help, direction, and advice. The representatives or trusted servants have a crucial role in problem sharing and problem solving but are not involved in making policy and enforcing decisions (Peyrot, 1985, p.1511). Despite the different levels of the hierarchy, all NA members have the right to serve on each committee and be a leader. One of the most important criteria for selecting trusted servants is humility in terms of considering their strengths and limitations. Newcomers to NA have a special position in meetings; they are considered as the heart of NA.

> "*NA survives through newcomers. If they do not come, NA meetings will die."* (Recovering male addict, 18 years in NA)

This is not just a belief, as the importance of newcomers penetrates all aspects of the NA program. Whenever newcomers come to NA, they are welcomed by smile and hugs. People who use drugs are excluded from society before coming to NA meetings, and the expression of NA members, especially the long-termers, impresses them. For the first time in their life, they become the center of attention among a small society. While being rejected and isolated in society and by their family members and friends, people who use drugs are considered 'normal' in NA. Living and struggling with the constant fear of being arrested and excluded forces addicts to distance themselves from social life. However, NA as a small society is the first social gathering for many addicts in which not only are they are accepted, but also respected, loved, and trusted.

"*I told everyone that I'm an addict in the first session while I was in physical pain due to drug withdrawal. In response, everyone clapped for me for five minutes. As they were clapping, it was like injecting a painkiller inside me. I could not believe that I was being loved by those people."* (Recovering male addict, 10 years in NA)

"Feeling discriminated against by our family members pushed us to take drugs. In this atmosphere, all of us are equal. We are all respected here. Long-term recovering addicts understand other members even more; besides, they are all equal to us, and there is no best and worst among us. We all have the same problem, and we are here for the same reasons." (Recovering male addict, 10 years in NA)

"Nobody cared about me in my time of addiction. That was the first time that people were interested in my existence. Before, I thought I was not alive, I was dead. But the first time I was at an NA meeting, I realized that I'm alive." (Recovering female addict, 12 years in NA)

"*One of the long-term members of NA gave me a hug and love, and they repeated the pamphlet for me, and I thought 'how much do they love me?'"* (Recovering female addict, 1 year in NA)

"Once I participated in NA sessions, I found people who I had lost for years. I found personality in myself, which I had lost for a million years." (Recovering female addict, 12 years in NA)

"Nobody takes care of us anywhere but here (NA). Nobody loved us. We were treated like animals. Nobody hugged us, and everybody showed resentful behaviours. I feel so good here (NA). *This is the only place where I have been understood. We understand addicts."* (Recovering male addict, 5 years in NA)

"*I screwed myself out of the ground. One member of the group then said that I should write questions to try to get answers from others' experiences. I wrote all about the pain. The sheet was given to the organizer of the meeting, and they said to others to share their experiences with me. Everyone applauded for me."* (Recovering male addict, 10 years in NA)

Physical and behavioral signs of drug abuse have changed addicts' appearance, which makes it even more challenging for them to communicate with non-addicts in society. Most participants prefer to appear in public at night so they would not be seen by others. The fear of being recognized as a drug addict by others and the inherent shamefulness due to their physical deterioration follow them, even when they walk through the door of an NA meeting for the first time.

"I did not go to the street in the day. I always went out at night. I did not want to be seen by others. People realized that I'm an addict, and it changed their perception and the way of speaking to me. The first time I went to the NA meeting, my physical appearance was awful. I did not have even clean clothes to wear. I remember a time when one of the NA members saw me at the entrance door. She loudly said 'welcome, welcome my dear'. She recognized me, and she realized that I'm an addict. I was scared and full of shame. I did not wear appropriate clothes, but that did not matter for them. They all hugged me and kissed me. They told me 'do not worry, everything is going to be fine'. It was the first time that people hugged me and kissed me and accepted me as I was." (Recovering female addict, 12 years in NA)

As an important unwritten rule, it is required that members dress casually in NA meetings to avoid making newcomers uncomfortable:

"We are not talking about how wealthy you are, and we are not wearing ties or any special clothes. We are wearing the most casual clothes in the meeting, even if we are a professor or businessman in society. The most important thing is to respect the feelings of the newcomers. If our appearance is different from the newcomers, they might feel uncomfortable or isolated here. Our physical appearance has to convey the message to them that we are the same. We are all addicts." (Recovering male addict, 8 years in NA)

There is a reciprocal respectful relationship among NA members, from the newcomers to the long-termers. Everyone in NA has their own position that requires specific responsibilities and commitments; no one is superior to others, not even trusted servants on regional committees.

"*There is no hierarchy in NA. The oldest members of NA receive respect, and in return, they respect new members most.*" (Recovering female addict, 5 years in NA)

"*Although now I am a ten-year member of NA, there is no room for being superior. We all are the same in NA."* (Recovering male addict, 10 years in NA)

"Feeling discriminated outside in the world and among our family members pushed us toward drug use. In this atmosphere (Recovery Camp) all of us are equal. We are all respected here. We are all equal, and there is no best or worst among us. We all have the same problem, and we are here for the same reasons." (Recovering male addict, 10 years in NA)

5.5.3. Restricted and Exclusive Trust

5.5.3.1. Shakable Trust

Distrust culture is common in prison, NA and in society. The atmosphere in which people who use drugs struggle constantly before coming to an NA meeting is a combination of stigma, shame, exclusion, and isolation; once they enter NA meetings, they are exposed to the sharp contrast between the way they were treated before and now. Most participants enter NA meetings with doubt and hesitation. They do not believe in the 12 steps[18], which lead to emotional and physical transformation. They think all NA members are playing a role to tempt them to disclose all the antisocial behaviours and crimes that have been done by them, and they will be arrested sooner or later.

> *"It was unbelievable that all those happy and beautiful women were addicted or even committed slight crimes before. I thought that all of them were social workers and wanted to arrest me. But even though I thought this way, I could not stop seeing them every day. I hated drugs, and I told myself that it does not matter, and I do not care. It is enough for me to get clean no matter what. The worst-case scenario is that I will be arrested, but at least I got clean."* (Recovering female addict, 8 years in NA)

> *"I did not trust them, I thought they did not know anything, and I am more knowledgeable than them for 18 months. I could not believe that they knew how to transform my addict characteristics. They were all normal people, so I could not trust them."* (Recovering male addict, 4 years in NA)

The perception of being considered a 'criminal' and an 'antisocial' citizen follows people who use drugs everywhere; some of them were arrested for consuming drugs or possessing even a

[18] 1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. 4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

small amount of drugs. Living in the shadows and darkness for years makes it challenging or even impossible for them to frankly speak their minds and open their hearts. Talking about their life history is the most difficult task for newcomers and even for those who are long-termers. Being stigmatized as a drug addict in society makes the process of openly sharing one's life history more challenging.

> "*Fear of disclosing in front of others always followed me. The first three years, I did not tell the whole story about my life, as I could not trust anyone."* (Recovering female addict, 12 years in NA)

The process of disclosing is even more difficult for women in NA. Although drug addiction is stigmatized for both women and men, women in a patriarchal society such as Iran are more subject to double standards. Not only are they drug addicts, but also have their principal role as a woman and as a mother jeopardized. Thus, the fear and shame from multiple forms of stigmatization act as a deterrent for those women seeking treatment in NA. Even when some of them got a chance to use the twelve-step model to recover from their addiction, they still struggled with discussing their experiences openly. Acting against what is considered womanhood and honorable norms in society led them to internalize their shame and fear.

> "*It was embarrassing for me to talk about my desire to have sexual relationships. I could not talk about these desires loudly. I did not feel safe to discuss them. What would other members think of me if I told them that I had several sexual relationships with different men. I could not tell them that I lost my children."* (Recovering female addict, 12 years in NA)

However, people who use drugs who get through the recovery process consider NA recovery meetings as their sanctuary. Some of them declare that NA meetings are their second home, as they are provided with a peaceful and safe environment there. While most of them, especially women, do not feel safe and peaceful in their own home due to their family's perception of them as untrustworthy, dishonest and selfish addicts, participants see NA as a safe shelter in

which they are exceedingly welcomed regardless of their background. In fact, women consider NA recovery meetings as a place that supports 'asylum seekers' whenever they need to share their feelings and thoughts.

> "*For me, NA is literally a second home. I have the same calmness that I have in my own house. Sometimes I feel bad at my house, for example, if my husband is saying something bad to me and I get upset or my daughter says something that deeply worries me, then I go to my second home, where I have peace and safety. I have a place that belongs to me. My name is not carved there, but my friends there are waiting for me there. It is a comfortable and safe place to talk, and other members listen very well and carefully. I often say that if I explain my feelings to my mom, maybe she will bite me and say you are a crazy girl. But I know there's a place where they listen to me and do not laugh at me. They understand and accept me with all my thoughts. I'm sick, and my illness is overabundant. NA is the only place that helped me and where I could find my true self and my true personality. NA made me be another person."* (Recovering female addict, 5 years in NA)

People who use drugs who are not accepted as 'normal citizens' in society and are also rejected by their friends and family members find NA recovery meetings to be a like an sanctuary. Most addicts think they can find safety and security only in emotional and physical isolation. Also, based on their experiences in communicating with people in society, they think that expressing openness and honesty about their feelings and background will end them up in being judged. Authenticity (being who you are) and transparency (being honest about what you were and are doing) are forgotten qualities of addicts' lives. However, in the recovery and treatment twelve-step program, recovering addicts are encouraged to feel comfortable and safe to define and redefine, to construct and reconstruct, and to form and reform their own identity. Protection against prejudice in NA meetings provides the opportunity for isolated addicts to speak frankly. However, female recovering addicts in NA believe that the judgmental sub-culture among recovering men towards women is undeniable. Although recovering women announce the length of time they have been clean in the mixed-gender meetings or even in open meetings, they do not speak about their recovery experiences. In open meetings, recovering men are transparent, honest, open, and frank

when talking about their recovery experiences and background. However, recovering women are able to talk frankly without fear of being judged only when they are among other women.

> *"How the child feels in her mother's arms, once I attended the meeting in NA and sat in the chair, I felt the same. I felt that I was above the clouds. This is a feeling that I have never experienced with my parents. I became free in NA.*" (Recovering female addict, 6 years in NA)

> *"The NA atmosphere is a recovery atmosphere, and I do not have anywhere to go to recover and stay clean but here. Whenever I tell my mother that I feel bad and feel upset, she immediately answers that I have always been upset. She does not understand me at all. Even my mother does not understand me. But, it is enough to say I feel bad today in the NA meeting and all of them will understand you and sympathize with you."* (Recovering female addict, 8 years in NA)

Although medical intervention and treatment of drug users began in the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1994, the fear of being arrested and locked up in the compulsory camps still follows people who use drugs as a shadow, up to the summer of 2017 in Tehran. The panopticon of fear constantly notifies people who use drugs that they are under the strict monitoring and control of non-addict citizens and anti-drug enforcement. Initially almost all newcomers in NA meetings feel anxiety and stress during the first months, but the internalized fear is eventually replaced with the confidence of living freely with no fear of being arrested.

> *"In the society, we always struggle with the fear of being monitored or arrested. But in NA, there is no monitoring. We are afraid of being judged or being arrested in the society, but in NA you're outside of this situation. It's exactly the boundaries between NA and the society, and it's very specific. Thus, people are forced to play a dual character. NA is a circle, and you should not expect nonjudgmental behaviours in society outside of the NA community."* (Recovering male addict, 18 years in NA)

However, the circumstances are not the same for people who use drugs or even recovering drug addicts who are homeless and living on street. Since people who use drugs are under the constant surveillance of the state and drug-free citizens, they do not trust anyone, even those homeless individuals whom they see every day on street. Some of the homeless drug addcits regularly came to the night drop-in center, which is a non-governmental harm reduction center

in the south of Tehran, and communicated with each other every night; however, their relations were based on their daily needs. Although most nights they gathered at the center, which has long brick walls and a covered floor where they can eat dinner and drink tea with each other, it seems that each of them has their own small and private brick home within themselves that protects them from others. Communicating with those participants who spend nights in the harm reduction center in Tehran was a highly challenging task. They did not have relationships with each other or even talk to each other. They consider the center as a 'brick center' that protects them each night from the violence on street and releases them the next morning. Those who come each night regularly know each other well but do not trust each other. According to the manager of the center, who was addicted to heroin for many years,

"None of them tell the truth. Nobody here tells the reality. All of them are lying. They trust me as a manager, and they know that I will not put them in danger under any circumstances. But the point is that I cannot trust them."

One night, the manager of the center wanted to leave the center for 30 minutes. She told me,

"Nahid, do not trust anyone. Just sit in my chair and do not listen to the bullshit they are going to tell you. Do not open the door and do not let anyone leave. If anyone goes out at this time of the night, you do not let them back. Be careful. Do not trust them at all."

5.5.3.2. Restricted Trust

Even recovering addicts with long experiences who share their recovery experiences in closed meetings and even open meetings do not trust members beyond the NA principles and their common goals (e.g. getting clean and staying clean). The radius of trust does not encompass other parts of their lives such as their families, job, education, friends, etc. The point is that mistrust in society is imported into the 12-step NA program. Although the reality is that the culture of mistrust and suspicion has penetrated NA, as well as in the penal world, trusting relationships toward restoring and recovery are practiced by NA members to overcome the mistrustful mainstream

culture of society, at least in NA meetings. The concept of trust is practical and understandable among NA members as long as the conversation is centered around recovery; otherwise, they have been notified not to trust beyond "shared goals". To put it another way, beyond the cycle of recovery goals, NA members look at each other just as other drug-free citizens in society who are not trustworthy. Even trust between the sponsor and the sponsee (*Rahjo*) in NA is defined and restricted to the NA principles.

> "*The relationship between the sponsor and sponsee is restricted to the NA principles. Their relationship has to circulate around their common target, no more. If goes beyond this, they face several problems."* (Recovering male addict, 18 years in NA)

One of the most well-known NA recovering addicts in Isfahan who had been in NA for almost 20 years, emphasized, from the very first minutes of the interview, the shaky and restricted structure of trust in NA. Trust among NA members is like a bridge, which ends up in a deep valley with several warning signs all over the road. One of the most important warnings for him concerned socializing families of NA recovering addicts with one another. In fact, according to his interview, recovering NA members are still addicts and criminals, and they have not lost their previous habits; those habits are just inactive, so how anybody can trust them?

> *"If I lend money to an NA member, and he did not return his debt, it is not his fault. In fact, his act is not unpredictable. It is my fault for trusting him beyond our common goals. We join NA to be clean and stay clean, and for this reason, we have trusted each other, shared our experiences and been transparent about our history. For this specific reason, we have to trust; otherwise, nothing will happen regarding the addiction issue in our lives. We do not get hurt by trusting each other regarding addiction issues, but we had a case of a person who started to have family relationships with other NA members, which caused several dilemmas and challenges in the family. In fact, the meaning that NA members get from trust is completely incorrect. Trust is based on principles and within the framework of the NA system. We are two people, and we have the same disease. We have a target, addiction, and we want to get rid of it, thus we can build trust around the common points. My best friends are all NA members, but we do not have family and financial relationships, because if we have these kinds of relationships we will be hurt. The experiences of other members reveal the fact that all NA members get hurt by starting relationships beyond NA goals, because these are the boundaries between society and NA. Relationships in society are based on*

mistrust, so expanding our relationships to society will be a big mistake. I have several friends in NA who I trust one hundred percent, but I will never ask them for anything beyond NA, because for sure that would be a mistake. I see that all my friendships in NA are as strong as before, because I did not step beyond the NA territory with them. I trust all NA members around the NA programs (e.g. rehabilitation process) but no more. I even mentioned in public meetings with NA members that I will never let my daughter get married to an NA member. My point is that I do not believe in NA members to that extent to be my daughter's husband. So many people consult with me about marrying NA members, and I changed their mind and told them that if you want to give up your daughter's life, let her marry an NA member. But, on the other hand, I trust them in the rehabilitating process and believe that nobody can help us in this matter but other NA members. The point is that they are all addicts, murderers, thieves, drug dealers or traffickers, and irresponsible people in the society. They are so unstable, and you cannot count on them. The possibility that they will engage in antisocial behaviours or crimes is really high. We have unstable personalities. We sound like good people, but the reality of our life shows something else. We have enormous challenges, and we struggle with our instabilities constantly. If you talk with some members of NA, you may think he is a prophet; he acts and talks in a way that you cannot find in any book. He learned all those principles and spiritualty from NA, but he sneakily uses drugs. How can anyone trust us? You cannot trust any NA member, let alone members in treatment camps or prisons. There is no trust beyond the NA principles and goals. We dedicate our time and energy to NA members just for our common goals. I trust them in the framework of NA, but if he asks me to be my guarantor in the court, I would definitely reject him."

5.5.3.3. Exclusive Trust

As a result of excluding and marginalizing people who use drugs in society, recovering addicts in NA have a lack of trust toward non-addict citizens, from their family members to friends and relatives. However, the crisis of trust in the Islamic Republic of Iran is a pervasive phenomenon, even among drug-free citizens; according to a WVS (2005-2009) survey about trust, 88.7% of Iranians declared they have to be careful in dealing with others. The mainstream culture of society circulates around a lack of trust and honesty, which makes the reintegrating process of recovering addicts challenging. In other words, socializing and communicating with non-addict citizens, including family, friends, and relatives, accelerates the process of getting back to 'normal' life. However, the majority of recovering women are not equipped with this advantage.

"All people in the society in your family talk to you, and it seems that you are their best friend, but once you go away, they start to go back to biting and assaulting you. This is my view about our society and our people. I do not trust them. They are not honest for even one second. They are just lying and bluffing. But in NA, we call each other during depressing moments, and we just listen with no judging and no monitoring and no threatening. We are working and supporting each other like a team. Trust means you feel safe to talk to me about whatever you are concerned about without even a slight sign of danger. I talk with my sponsor about anything, and he never judges me. I am talking to you now because my sponsor guaranteed you. You know what I mean. When I was addicted, either I trusted as much as I got hurt, and I could not make any friends. I thought that all people in society are liars, from employees of all governmental organizations to my children's teachers at school. The NA principles taught me how to trust people. I learned how to trust in NA. There is no reason to talk to anybody about my past and backgrounds, and I adjust my distance with people in society now. You cannot trust people in society. You can trust people in NA, as they are always there for me." (Recovering female addict, 4 years of staying clean)

One of the strategies in NA used to reintegrate recovering people who use drugs into society is based on the principles of NA. This process of internalizing social skills eliminates the gap between them and society. Attending NA meetings not only makes people who use drugs closer to the defined characteristics of normal citizens in Iran, but also stretches the threshold of normal citizens' criteria and limits. Building connections between recovering addicts and ordinary citizens of society is facilitated through two reintegration arrangements: open meetings and the process of compensation. Through open and general meetings, non-addict friends and family members of NA members are invited to gather together and celebrate members' birthdays. An honest talk about recovery experiences in public helps addicts to begin trusting non-addicts as well as addicts. It also motivates non-addict citizens to stop looking at addicts as 'abnormal' or 'dangerous' citizens. Additionally, through the process of compensation or restoring, most NA members rebuild their emotional connections with their relatives and friends, which results in building social bonds and social capital. Non-addict citizens rebuild trusting communications with recovering addicts by realizing and understanding the process of treatment and witnessing their personal transformations. It is worth noting that although the scope of trust has its own limitations

and restrictions among NA members and their communications with non-addicts, the process of building and developing trust happens gradually. In other words, progressive mutual trust among recovering addicts and non-addict citizens in society is happening gradually day by day through applying NA principles in daily life. Preparing recovering addicts to begin a new life in society and equipping them with social techniques result in the redefinition of 'normality' in society.

However, most recovering addicts' family members complained about the multiple lives and multiple identities of recovering addicts in NA. Most of the NA recovering addicts just practice the NA principles with other fellows; as a matter of fact, they described two scenarios for their life after being a member of the NA program. One of these scenarios is specifically designed for communication with non-addict citizens (*Adam-e adi*) in society, especially their own family members. This differentiation between their behaviours with NA fellows in comparison with their communication with the *Mardom-e adi* (non-addict citizens) in the society stems from the exclusive and restricted trust culture in NA programs and also the contradictory policies of society toward addicts.

However, another reason behind this fact is that some NA members considered themselves as "us" and normal citizens as "the others". In fact, all the members during interviews referred to me as an *adam-e adi (non-addicted one)*. It was important for most of them that I had not experienced addiction and was not familiar with the process of spiritual transformation. Some of the recovering addicts during the interviews sarcastically reminded me that I did not understand their life. One of the participants even questioned my research and told me

"How can you understand NA missions and principles when you have never touched heroin in your life? How can you understand how difficult it is to quit heroin and how NA fellows help each other in this road? You are not in the right place, Nahid. Change your route and go back. You have to be a member of NA to understand NA principles."

Recovering NA members, in one out of five interviews, considered themselves beyond others in the society. Some of the recovering NA members even declared that some of the well-known and popular sponsors with long experiences have an illusion that they have spiritual power over their family members, relatives, and friends; thus, nobody in a family can make a decision without their consultation. Also, recovering NA members state that NA principles encourage fellows toward the fake perception of being better and beyond others in the society. I had an interview with one of the most well-known NA fellows in Isfahan in a park when he came out for a picnic with his family. He told me,

> *"You see my wife, I cannot talk in front of her because she will start fighting with me. You know why? Because she believes that we are not recovering addicts in NA; we are just turning our addiction to other things such as sex, sleep, eating food, or smoking cigarettes. She says to me every single day that the worst part of being an NA member is that you think you are God and you know everything, and you act as God. She told me that 'you think you are superior because you are an NA member, but in reality, you do not know anything, and you are like tabl-e to khali (empty vessels make the most sound)'. Some of the recovering addicts in NA told me, Nahid, all of us, I mean NA fellows, are crying over an empty grave."*[19]

According to his wife:

> "*You cannot believe how my husband treats the other members in NA, as his behaviour is not comparable with the people he deals with every day. Sometimes, when he is talking with his NA friends, I think he has turned into another person so much that I don't recognize him. He becomes a completely different person and advises them in a way that is the complete reverse of his own behaviour with us and with other people in society. One day, we went out for a picnic with my husband and children. We started to talk about a topic which I do not remember now, but he shouted while talking and acted unfairly. Meanwhile, one of the NA members called and asked my husband a question because my husband was his sponsor. My husband advised him to be fair and kind toward others, solve problems in peace, etc. Actually, we as his family have witnessed this hypocritical behaviour several times. Most of the time, the way he acts with people in society is 100 percent in conflict with his behaviours toward NA members."* (Family member of a recovering addict in NA)

[19] An Iranian proverb, which means doing a futile job.

One of the NA sponsors in Isfahan invited me to his house and told me, “Please accept my invitation and come to my place. I want to show you my life”. He stopped accepting any new sponsees for more than 6 months, since his wife had abandoned him and went to Germany. There was an empty home with books all over. He has a master’s degree in philosophy from University of Isfahan, and had quitted drugs for almost 9 years with almost 250 sponsees from all over Iran. He states:

> “*I had a very happy life with my wife and child, but my wife left me because I had several young girl sponsees. First, NA returned my life to me, and then it took it back. I ignored the principles of NA by taking on that many sponsees. However, NA members intend to keep their anonymity, but it is bullshit. I was one of those who cannot stop getting more and more sponsees and becoming more popular and well known in NA. I thought because I read some books, have a sponsor who lives in the US and have 9 years of experience in NA that I have the right to advise and make decisions for others. I saw a difference between myself and even you, who are a PhD student in a foreign country. You know why? The NA principles give this power, or it is better to say, this illusion, to me. Most NA members with long experiences lose their anonymity and misuse this status by considering themselves beyond other people in the society. They do not accept anyone in the society. They tell themselves that ‘I was an addict, and then I got clean and started a spiritual transformation, so there is nothing that I have not experienced. I have experienced the worst things and then was rescued. Thus, I have a power over others.’ This is our justification. Even if nobody tells you this, it becomes your reality. Thus, I have to stop accepting any new sponsees, so I can find myself to find out who I am. My wife was a non-addict. She always told me that you are going to lose this game (my life) because of NA. She was right. I lost myself and my wife simultaneously.”*

At the end, it is worth noting that recovering addicts in NA at least practice building trusting relationships, even if those relationships are restricted to the NA principles, and drug-free citizens in society are excluded from taking part. Those addicts and recovering addicts in harm reduction centers (e.g. night-drop in center) do not trust anyone, even those they have seen every night for many years. The process of practicing trust in NA affects the lives of recovering addicts and the drug-free people around them. Although establishing trusting relationships between recovering NA addicts and drug-free citizens is a continuing project

which requires day-to-day practice, at least both sides practice and learn about the process. Addicts and recovering ones who do not have a chance to get in touch with NA do not start building any kind of trusting relationships with anyone

However, those participants who were in the voluntarily camps and drug treatment centers were mostly involved in the NA 12-step program and were practicing those principles in the camp. It was common that the managers of those camps were members of NA or at least had an NA representative in their camps to assist the addicts. Regarding the building of trusting relationships according to the NA principles, the manager of one of those camps stated that

"I leave the camp in the morning every day and come back at noon, and you would not believe that one of the recovering addicts who got clean here one year ago managed the camp during the time of my absence. I could trust those who are under the training of the NA program. They are practicing NA principles in the camp."

The other voluntarily camp, located 100 kilometers in north of Isfahan , was managed by one of the NA recovering addicts who was a sponsor of 15 other recovering addicts at the camps. According to one of the participants in that camp:

> *"I trust the manager of the camp. He knows that I was under arrest, and he knows that I stole a lot of money, and the police were going to arrest me sooner or later. But he did not say one thing about my circumstances. He helped me to quit drugs and start the 12-step program. He promised me that he would figure out and find a solution to help me with my criminal record but only on the condition that I stay clean. All my family members had left me, so he started to talk with them and convinced them to start communicating with me again. I trust him. He is like an angel for me."*

5.5.4. Constructing and Reconstructing Identity

5.5.4.1. Interpreting the Addict Identity

By attending 12-step program meetings, recovering addicts go through the process of gradual transformation, or "core change" (Mahoney, 1980), also referred to as "deep structure change" (Arnkoff, 1980). According to the participants' life experiences in NA, the process of

transformation does not happen overnight, because it is an endless process. The 'multiple identity' of recovering addicts reveals that they are in endless movements back and forth. Through contributing to different services in the NA program, from being the chair of the meetings, to being a sponsor, to providing tea for the meetings, the recovering addicts are in endless contact with their addict identity, which is not socially desirable. In fact, practicing, imitating, and repeating the collective goals of NA assist them to construct and reconstruct the recovering identity. They are no more fully fit in either the addict identity, recovery identity or normal identity in society. None of those identities are presented in their full manner. In other words, identity transformation among recovering addicts is not referred to as adapting to the recovering identity in NA; rather, it refers to the acceptance that the addict, recovery, and normal identities are interconnected with each other. The blurred boundaries among them invade each other with no warning. Recovering addicts in NA are not just surrounded by their counterparts but also by non-addicts, who can be their family members, a spouse, friends, or colleagues. Although they are identified through the membership in NA with its specific subculture and collective goals, their identity is still far from the 'normal' identity in society. Thus, whether they want it or not, their identities are affected by constant interference of the 'normal' identity. Therefore, there is no doubt that their 'liquid recovering identity' is affected by gradual and endless construction and reconstruction.

Drug addicts, whether recovering or still suffering, deal with multiple identities. They have been trapped into an endless struggle between the accepted and defined identity in society once they have begun to use drugs. The struggle does not end by simply joining NA recovery meetings, as a new beginning chapter in life; this is the struggle between the NA recovering addict's identity and the expected normal citizen's identity in society. The difference is that during this phase, the struggle is not just between two identities; rather, it is a triple contest among the addict identity,

the recovering addict identity, and the expected identity in larger society. Even if the addict's identity is incorporated into the NA recovering addict's identity, the progressive contrast between the identity of the normal citizen and the NA recovery identity becomes an inseparable part of their life. Although NA principles make the recovering addicts as close as possible to the normal citizen's identity, there is still a gap between them in society. The full reintegration of the NA recovering addict to society is still questionable, especially among NA female recovering addicts. The contrast is an endless road in front of the NA recovering addicts. Since people who use drugs are not considered as having a normal identity any more, they are categorized and classified under various socially-defined identities such as criminal identity, addiction identity, and prostitution identity (in case of addict women). Shedding those three identities, which define them as 'outsiders' or 'others', can be accomplished through practicing the twelve steps in NA.

Further, recovering female addicts go through different pathways than recovering male addicts. The constant struggle and challenge between the ex-convict identity, recovery identity, and prostitute identity (for some of them) does not simply set recovering women free. People in society have internalized the idea that addict women not only violate social and cultural norms but also social policies. It seems that the so-called 'war on drugs' in Iran can be dubbed the "war against women". struggles between different identities follow recovering addict women, even after spending several years in recovery programs. Even if they attempt to relieve their pain and alleviate the shame and stigma, the society's perceptions and stereotypes remind them directly or indirectly of their 'arbitrary identities'.

The process of constructing a new identity and have it replaced by the undesirable ones in the 12-step program starts by testimony, which plays a pivotal role in the construction and reconstruction of identity. Through telling and retelling over and over about former life

experiences, the process of interpreting the former identity is facilitated. Additionally, telling of and listening to different life stories that have inherent similarities assist former drug addcitsto construct their new identity in connection with the NA community to which they belong. In other words, the testimony makes a connection between the three different worlds: the former addicted self, the current non-addicted self, and the future non-addicted self. The shameless, fearless, unmonitored testimony provides an opportunity for the recovering addicts to interpret their former identity, whether the criminal one or just the addiction identity, with confidence; then, as time passes, they gain control over their former identities. The former undesirable and unacceptable identities which were a target of various stigmas and labels gradually are replaced with the recovery identity, which is connected to the addict through a specific universal discourse. Most participants declare that an honest sharing of their feelings and recovery experiences with family members was impossible due to the constant projecting of stigma on them as an addict. The family institution is the initial group that stigmatizes people who use drugs and excludes them. People who use drugs bring dishonor and shame to their family members; thus, they exclude them to prove their commitment to society's norms and bring back the lost honor to the rest of the family. Although drug addiction is now considered a medical disease, the general perceptions (stereotypes) of addiction still revolve around deviation.

Sharing more or less similar stories of suffering in the testimonial process in meetings creates a homogenized atmosphere in which all participants are considered equal, but are sharply distinguished from the normal society.

> *"When I said in the meeting that I could not control my sexual tendencies toward the opposite sex, all of them understood me, but it was impossible to talk about my sexual desires among normal people, even my family members. They would kill me for sure. They do not understand me, because they do not know what an addiction is. Just us in NA, we know addiction best, and we know all the hidden parts of our disease. Each addict who enters NA reveals and reminds us of a part of our disease."* (Recovering female addict, 1 year in NA)

"*All of them were talking about my pains. We all had the same pains. They understood me, and I understood them."* (Recovering male addict, 18 years in NA)

Recovering addicts practice reciprocal support of each other every day.

"*They told me that they will wait for me tomorrow morning, and they gave me a phone number saying that if you have any pain tonight and you want to use drugs, call us. They support me."* (Recovering female addict, 12 years in NA)

"The most important principle in NA is 'mutual support'. (Recovering female addict, 8 years in NA)
"My sponsor supports me even at midnight. She lets me sleep over at her home." (Recovering female addict, 1 year in NA)

"Recovering addicts took care of me and my children for more than 10 nights." (Recovering female addict, 5 years in NA)

"I give my phone number to the new members, I give them rides, I listen to their pains, I pay almost all of my attention to them, and I spend time with them." (Recovering female addict, 4 years in NA)

Also, since people who use drugs are an undesirable group in society, the only community willing to assist them is their peers. Transferring the message to still-suffering addicts in all available institutions such as prisons and hospitals is the most important commitment of each member in NA.

"I send the NA message to drug addcits in the prison and in the hospital. They must know that they are not alone. They have to know that we are all the same, and we are all equal. We all are not accepted in the society and always feel that we are alone in the world. But we go to the institutions and let them know they can get clean, and they can have real and true friends. It is one of the biggest responsibilities I have committed to doing." (Recovering male addict, 5 years in NA)

At NA meetings, there is a constant interplay among personal testimony, mutual understanding and commitment. A common phrase from my fieldnotes states that there is an emphasis on similarities rather than differences in NA. In fact, the principles of the NA program are more significant than any disagreements or differences, which might be derived from 'oppressed groups' such as women in society. The all-inclusive recovery program of NA

emphasizes similarities rather than differences; retelling and listening to the same stories from almost all recovering addicts over and over reveals the commonalities in the addict identity. Although most newcomers tried to find differences between themselves and others during the first meetings, practicing and imitating the NA language creates harmony between all members regardless of the length of time being clean or their gender. Homogeneity is important because the NA long-termers keep participating in meetings and listening to newcomers' stories and also keep sharing their recovery experiences to make constant connections between each other. The homogeneity and harmony among NA fellowships provide the opportunity for recovering addicts to not only review their addict identity but most importantly to create and then practice the new identity, which is more acceptable among non-addicts in society.

The unmonitored and free inner group testimony creates the "backstage" in which recovering addicts realize the similarities and commonalities between the paths that they as well as others in NA took. This creates a sense of belonging to the community, as the isolated-identity for the first time has an opportunity to be disclosed. Also, the homogeneity and harmony between all recovering addicts' identity increases the inner group's cohesion, solidarity and mutual commitment. Recovering addict participants repeatedly remind themselves of their addict identity through attending meetings, communicating with other recovering addicts, taking part in NA activities and events, and having direct contact with their sponsors[20]. Almost all participants,

[20] "NA sponsor is a member of Narcotics Anonymous, living our program of recovery, who is willing to build a special, supportive, one-on-one relationship with us. Most members think of a sponsor, first and foremost, as someone who can help us work the Twelve Steps of NA, and sometimes the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. Sponsors share their experience, strength, and hope with their sponsees. Some describe their sponsor as loving and compassionate, someone they can count on to listen and support them no matter what. Others value the objectivity and detachment a sponsor can offer, relying on their direct and honest input even when it may be difficult to accept. Still others turn to a sponsor mainly for guidance through the Twelve Steps. A sponsor's role is not that of a legal advisor, a banker, a parent, a marriage counselor, or a social worker. Nor is a sponsor a therapist offering some sort of professional advice. A sponsor is simply another addict in recovery who is willing to share his or her journey through the Twelve Steps." (Narcotics Anonymous World Services)

regardless of gender and the length of time being clean, distinguish clearly between 'themselves' as an addict and 'others' as non-addicts in society. The gradual process of moving back and forth several times among the addict identity, the new recovering identity and the normal identity in society creates constant inner conflict. Although NA meetings are considered a home for recovering addicts, their constant being in and out of different contexts and identities creates a type of "nomadic life". They have neither settled into their addict identity, nor normal identity.

It is worth noting that long-term NA members (i.e. 15 years of experience or more) are sponsors of recovering addicts, regardless of gender. However, those sponsors rarely accept women as sponsees due to the prevalence of misjudgments and stigma regarding the relationships between the sexes in NA. Prejudice is not the only reason that deters recovering men from being a sponsor of recovering women, avoiding any issues (e.g. emotional relationships) that might jeopardize NA principles and delay the recovery process.

> "*I have had three sponsors since I entered NA, and the last one has been a man. He is one of the most experienced NA members in Isfahan, and I tried hard to convince him to be my sponsor. He was in NA for about 20 years, and I need someone with that much experience. I did not find a recovering woman in Isfahan with that much experience in NA. Thus, I decided to talk with and convince him. I told him how much I needed his help and recovery experience. After several months, he accepted my request under several conditions. As one of the recovering women said: 'I had a really handsome sponsor for more than 4 years, and our relationship left the main road, I mean working on the twelve steps. I said goodbye to him after 4 years, but the point is that it delayed my recovery process.' It is important to be cautious about choosing the sponsor, and you must be careful if you choose a recovering male addict as a sponsor."* (Recovering female addict, 12 years in NA)

5.5.4.2. Spiritual Transformation

Spiritual transformation has been studied in different forms and contexts such as in drug abuse recovery (Blakeney et al. 2006; Dufault-Hunter 2012; McCoy et al. 2004; Neff and MacMaster 2005; Shorkey and Windsor 2010). One of the key themes of interviews with NA fellows revolves around spirituality, most often based on a belief in 'God' (*khoda*). Almost all recovering addicts,

from the newcomers to the long-termers, believe in the help of a higher power in the process of recovery. Most of the participants reported having experienced a gradual spiritual awakening in NA. Also, most of them declared that they were and are not a religious person at all. However, most of my interviews contain references to a spiritual transformation in overcoming addiction. Long-termers and sponsors emphasize the spiritual aspects[21] of NA principles and encourage the spiritual involvements of members, especially newcomers. In fact, there is a strong relationship between recovery and spiritual transformation in NA, and one of the integral parts of constructing and reconstructing non-addict identity based on the NA principles is spiritual transformation. In other words, all 12 steps of the NA program contain spiritual aspects. According to the interviews, quitting drugs within the context of the 12-step program causes enormous behavioral and emotional changes, which can be referred to as a spiritual awakening. Most often, the reference to spiritual awakening is not based on religious practices; rather, the tendency to embrace acceptance and humility is considered a sign of spiritual maturity. Admitting the fact that the addicts are powerless in the face of addiction and the necessity of believing in a power greater than themselves are the triggers of their spiritual awakening. On different occasions, people who use drugs feel powerless in the hands of addiction, society's policies, cultural expectations, and prison subculture, and they have to admit their powerlessness over their disease in the NA recovery program. In any of those circumstances, people who use drugs internally accept their powerlessness, but they usually do not make any changes. However, one of the most important steps in the NA recovery program is admitting this state of powerlessness, which is completely recognizable through its

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[21] "NA is self-designated as spiritual, rather than religious. It is not theistic as such, espousing God only as we understood him, thereby allowing for a flexible view of acceptance of a "Higher Power," with no rules as to how or who they believe their Higher Power is" (Galanter et al., 2013, p.1).

unmanageability and destructiveness. A key component of the twelve-step recovery program is the spiritual dimension, which does not rely on a specific religious context and also can be accessible to every NA member regardless of their beliefs. The most important tool for spiritual growth or spiritual awakening is attending meetings and sharing experiences constantly. The pivotal role of believing in a higher power (connection with a power greater than oneself), interpreting the destructive identity through constant testimony (connection with oneself), and caring for one another (connection with others) in the recovery pathway is undeniable.

The spiritual awakening is a gradual process of loving, caring, accepting, and trusting oneself, others, and a higher power, which is a replacement for the addictive lifestyle. According to the interviews, the recovering addicts in NA experience a dramatic change in how they think about everything, from themselves and others to God. Through the strong commitment towards the twelve-step program, recovering addicts are no longer self-centred; rather, they are committed to help others and surrender to a higher power. As the meaning of addiction is interpreted and reinterpreted through the testimonial meetings and as the steps are worked through and practiced, the spiritual transformation and new identity construction processes begin to flourish. Almost all the participants declared that they experienced spiritual, personal, and social changes that are recognizable by all their friends and family members.

> *"I can say that in 2 years, NA meetings have changed 80% of my behavioral defects."* (Recovering female addict, 2 years in NA)
>
> *"I was always angry and yelled at my family. Nobody dared to talk to me. But now I control my temper."* (Recovering male addict, 5 years in NA)
>
> *"A miracle is happening in NA every second, as individuals who nobody cared about, trusted or even loved can now start a new life."* (Recovering male addict, 10 years in NA)

"*I apply the NA principles in our life. I'm trying to keep my principles without talking openly about them. If my child is making a mistake right now, he has to explain his mistake. If I'm listening well, then I find out that he has learned from me. I practice this every day by accepting my mistakes and being honest with myself and others. I let my child learn from his mistakes and accept them. I practice the principles to try to incorporate them in my life without reminding people about them. If I do not practice them, I am forced to pretend to follow them without actually practicing them. I entered the society while those principles are part of me."* (Recovering male addict, 18 years in NA)

According to interviews, the lifestyle of people who use drugs is a combination of poverty, unemployment, and homelessness that forces them to commit crimes to fund their drug habit. As one of the participants explained, "I sold everything of value and asked my family and friends to give me money". The money, however, runs out quickly, and most of them get involved in criminal activities. Once they enter NA meetings and start to work on the 12 steps, in order to make a commitment toward NA principles and practicing the steps, they stop engaging in criminal activities.

"My husband and I spend all of our money, and he also lost his job. All our deposit went to drugs. We asked for money from our parents, friends, and relatives. Nobody trusts us anymore to give us money. We started to sell everything from our home, whatever you can think of. We were left with one heater in our home. I wanted to go to the street and sell my child or start prostituting to obtain drugs. My husband started to steal mobile phones from his friend's store." (Recovering female addict, 9 years in NA)

"There were several opportunities when I could steal something. I did, but my feeling after that was so bad. My viewpoint in NA has been changed completely. Because NA increased my awareness, now I know that stealing money does not solve my problems." Recovering female addict, 9 years in NA)

"*I did not respect anything, even the law. But now my lifestyle has been changed, and I respect the laws and teach my children to do so."* (Recovering male addict, 18 years of staying clean)

According to interviewees, having several sexual partners is common among people who use drugs. Addicted women often become involved in sexual relations to obtain drugs; finding a partner who can financially support addicted women, however, is challenging. Most of them get

trapped into undesirable sexual relationships with drug dealers to fund their drug habit. Most participants grew up in a dysfunctional family in which they have to struggle with poverty from birth. Single addicted women were mostly unemployed and escaped from home, and their only financial resources were either their partners or selling sex to drug dealers. In other cases, married women struggled to obtain drugs through their addicted husbands; in rare cases, they abandoned their husband and found a partner who could support their lifestyle. Although addicted men have poly-sexual relations as well, money issues were usually not the trigger. As recovering addicts in NA explained, it is common for newcomers during the early recovery to get involved in sexual relationships after getting clean as a replacement for "the highness" that one can get from drugs. The fellows of NA are advised not to get involved in sexual relationships with new partners and also to stop having promiscuous sexual relationships with previous partners so they can focus on the recovery process. Most of them are advised that it is not a "good time" to have a sexual relationship until they have had a year clean. NA fellows often consult with their sponsors and long-term recovering addicts who know them well. The moral and spiritual transformation among NA members allows them to avoid any dependency replacements, as dependencies remind them of drugs. In other words, sexual relationships are a fixed part of drug abuse culture, and maintaining sobriety is closely connected with managing sexual relationships. In fact, focusing on the principles and collective goals is the most important task of NA fellowships.

> *"I had a partner before I came to NA meetings. I started working on the steps in NA, and I chose someone as my sponsor. My sponsor told me that you have to avoid your boyfriend because he is an addict, and also you have a sexually dependency on him. She was right, as I did not quit drugs, but I still had my relationship with him. I had a sexual dependency, as sex was a good replacement for drugs for me. But, the thing that really mattered at that period of time was working on the steps and practicing the steps with my sponsor. I had to attend the meetings every day and even two times a day. The reason was that the priority is to keep my connections with the recovering addicts to stay clean. One day, my boyfriend told me 'Why do you want to go to the meeting? Just forget it and come to my home.' I told him that I cannot, and he said, 'please introduce some of your friends to me to and come to my*

home because I'm so alone.' At that time, I realized I'm considered trash by him, and the only thing we had was sex dependency, no more. He made me depressed a lot. I broke up with him and concentrated on working on the steps. It worked. After 15 of years being a member of NA, I realized that all recovering addicts, specifically the single ones, have to stop seeing their partners or not start any new relations. They have to understand that all their relations in the very first months in NA just end up as sexual dependency relationships. It is just a distraction. They have to focus on their mission and take it seriously." (Recovering female addict, 12 years of staying clean)

"I really want to have an emotional relationship with someone, as I'm just 22 years old. My sponsor insists on preventing me from getting involved in any emotional relations with men. She tells me that I am not ready to have relationships with men. She tells me that I have to work on the steps for at least one year, and then I might be ready. I know that I have to focus on my treatment first, so I cut all my unmanageable sexual relations from the past. I live according to the specific principles and traditions of NA. I have specific criteria I use for choosing the people around me. My sponsor tells me that if you experience a failed emotional relationship before fully working on the steps and before being ready, the possibility of relapse is high. It does not work at all." (Recovering female addict, 8 months of staying clean)

There are several external distractions (e.g. getting involved in sexual and emotional relationships before working on the steps) that might divert NA fellowships from their primary purpose, but most importantly, the distractions are not restricted to the external community for the newcomers. In fact, the environment in NA meetings has to be protected from any inappropriate behaviour which might make newcomers, especially still-suffering ones, feel uncomfortable, unwelcomed, excluded, ashamed, harassed, and scared. Novice NA members are the most vulnerable members in meetings. They need love and acceptance. Thus, any violent behaviour such as screaming and shouting, aggressive and threatening gestures, and fighting will negatively affect them, and they may consider this as a form of discouragement. Thus, NA fellows respectfully state that inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated. Aggressive behaviours are most commonly seen among still-suffering members, while experienced members are trained and practiced to educate them respectfully, encouraging them to participate in meetings without any inappropriate behaviour.

"In a situation of fighting or any kind of physical or verbal violence, there are 2 or 3 experienced recovering addicts with long lengths of clean time who will try to solve the problem. They know that once someone comes to NA for the first time, in the very first days, they act like a child, they cry and are very sensitive. They start to deal with realities. They remember divorcing their wife and losing their children, friends, and family members. Thus, they may act violently and aggressively; however, the recovering addicts invite them to calmness, talk to them, and encourage them to use dialogue instead of fighting." (Recovering female addict, 9 years in NA)

Telling and retelling testimony for compensation among family members is like a performance in which former drug addicts present their new identity to create an opportunity for reconstructing new social and emotional bonds with their family. The process of testimony among drug-free citizens is not the same as the testimony of recovering addicts; in fact, according to interviews, testimony among drug-free citizens is most often limited to brief conversations for giving communication a go. Most often, the process of stigmatization, exclusion, and marginalization stops recovering addicts from testifying among ordinary people in society, especially their own family members, who were often the first group that caused isolation. Addicts suffer from the stigma, blame, and labeling that their own family members project onto them, especially addict women. Drug addiction is a traumatic issue in a family. On the one hand, family members have to deal with someone who is perceived as a person always looking to get "high"; on the other hand, they have to repair the dishonor that affected their life due to the violation of social and cultural norms by addict members. Honor is a concept rooted in the 'social environment'; in other words, it relates to other people's opinions about the individuals (Oleinik, 2016). The importance of honor culture in some societies is so high that it is considered an expression or correlate of human dignity. Addicts often abandon their home and through their absence, the family has a chance to reform and rebuild the family structure and restore the lost honor. In some cases, people who use drugs do not leave their family and stick with it, which often causes more dysfunctional behaviours among the members. Whenever addicts enter the 12-step

recovery program, they have a chance to restore their relationships with family members. The process of treatment and recovery in NA asks recovering addicts to re-store and re-heal relationships with their spouse, parents, and children.

> "*I have changed the way I used to treat my family, and our relationships have been completely changed."* Another woman said: "*My family and I had several fights so much that my son ran away from home. But now, even if we have a fight, at least we talk instead of escaping."* (Recovering female addict, 8 years in NA)

> *"I compensate indirectly by calling my family, buying something for them, and dropping by to say hello. I start communication and dialogue with neighbours in our community to announce that I'm not addicted anymore to compensate."* (Recovering male addict, 5 years of staying clean)

Working on the steps is like laying fertile soil for spiritual growth and maturity; honesty, acceptance, open-mindedness, and believing in a higher power are mentioned by participants repeatedly.

> *"By admitting that I am an addict, I have accepted reality for the first time in my life. I did not believe that I was an addict, as I always lived with this reality that I have control over my life and also drugs. The first time I heard myself say it, something inside me was broken. That was the fake me that collapsed as soon as I called myself an addict. I cried so hard, I could not believe that I had finally called myself an addict. I accepted this reality. I accepted all the consequences of being an addict for the first time. I have always avoided this truth, but at that moment, I accepted myself. That was a relief. I finally accepted the reality. That was the first step that took 2 months for me to admit. During the very first meeting, I just cried and cried. The long-termers always advised me 'Mahin, please introduce yourself. Please talk to us.' But I could not. The day that I was brave enough to say those words, all the fellows clapped their hands for me, and I cried. So, I am honest with myself and with others. Also, I accept reality now."* (Recovering female addict, 12 years in NA)

Believing in a higher power restored the addicts to sanity and gave them hope for recovery. While working on the second step, recovering addicts begin to believe that maybe there is a power greater than themselves that can heal pain and torment. This step requires working on open-mindedness to accept the greater power capable of healing, trust toward the greater power as a companion during the recovery time, and a willingness to restore sanity. Open-mindedness is not just practiced toward admitting a higher power in healing the pain but more importantly toward

accepting different opinions and ideas.

> *"I did not believe in God at all. When I entered the program, I denied the existence of the greater power or God or whatever. But, I remember that all the long-termers just smiled at me and gave me hope. They told me that whatever you believe in, just stay here and keep coming back. After a while and working on the steps, I began to believe in miracles. I believed that something greater than me saved me and protected me. God helped me through this painful passage*." (Recovering female addict, 8 years in NA)

> *"After 4 years of being a member of NA, I was a witness to different facts, and I now cannot deny God."* (Recovering female addict, 4 years in NA)

5.5.5. Gender-based Reintegration

5.5.5.1. Multiple Powerlessness

There is a perception (stereotype) that female drug users violate social norms and social 'taboos' more drastically than men do. Society considers addict women a 'threat' to the 'honor' of family, community, and society and additionally to the primary role of women, which is motherhood. Also, there is an assumption that drug abuse opens forbidden doorways such as poly-sexual relationships, which bring shame to families, communities, and the addict women. Additionally, some addict women are survivors of familiar rape, which makes them victims of an even heavier stigma. In other words, they are considered "infected and polluted" in addition to be criminal (Malloch, 2000). To put it another way, addiction creates multiple 'spoiled' identities. The dominos of exclusion and powerlessness of addict women can be described metaphorically as part of the "Shaking Minaret phenomenon." The Shaking Minaret is a famous historical monument located in the city of Isfahan in central Iran which contains two circular masonry brick towers. When one of the towers starts to shake due to human force, the other one starts to shake simultaneously.

> *"One day, I went to an institution to ask for an available place to hold NA meetings for women. A man who was in charge of that department asked me if there are any addict*

women. I was totally embarrassed in front of the others, and then he said that if there are any addict women, there is a stable outside of the city, and you can hold the meeting there. That was so embarrassing. Once he found out that the women's NA meeting will be held there, he started to directly underestimate them and even pretended that there are no addict women." (Recovering female addict, 12 years of staying clean)

The powerlessness of addict women is intensified by being dependent on men's world to fund their habit. Kohn (1992) states that the nature of drug addiction is 'unfeminine' because it is followed by sexual freedom and illicit drug use, which bring independence for women. In the current study, however, all the female participants declared that their dependency on drugs pushed them toward being more dependent on men. Since drug suppliers are all men and drug networking is governed by men, female drug users are often dependent on men to fund their habit. Drugs and poverty often push women to sell their body, and those who possess drugs use their needs as a lever to misuse women's bodies. The majority of recovering addict women claimed that their financial needs led them to have multiple sexual partners, especially drug dealers, while most recovering addict men declared that they engaged in poly-sexual relationships just for sexual satisfaction and pleasure. Nevertheless, addict women are condemned for having poly-sexual relations and are suspected of maintaining their sexual habits, even when they get clean and stay clean in NA, while addict men are exempt from this sexual stigmatization. In fact, as Morrissey (1986: 159) states, "All examination of how we define and discuss a problem or fail to address it is essentially an examination of relations of power." However, when addict women's husbands are the principal provider of drugs, it leads them away from poly-sexual relations with drug dealers. Despite this fact, according to the "Shaking Minaret phenomenon", the label of sex worker is applied to them as well. However, there is a considerable difference between them and those who are pushed to have poly-sexual relationships. They did not experience emotional and sexual

harassment in times of addiction, which causes shameful and painful memories for them, especially when they consider themselves as a 'bad mother'.

> "*The only thing that I am thankful about is my husband, who provided drugs for me for ten years and did not let me have any contact with the drug dealers. At least I was just a drug abuser, not an addict woman who sold my body for drugs. The harms that single addict women experience take years and years to heal due to having unwanted relations with drug dealers."* (Recovering female addict, 10 years of staying clean)

However, some of the addict women abandoned their husbands or partners and became exposed to direct contact with drug networks in society, which made them the most vulnerable consumers of drugs.

> *"I did not have money, so I called the drug dealer, and he told me 'if you want drugs, you have to have sex with me'. That was shameful because the drug dealer was the same age as my boy. He was just 19 years old, but at that time, it did not matter to me. I had sex with him, and he did not give me drugs. I did not know how to describe this story in front of others in NA meetings. I had sexual relations with another drug dealer while I lived with my husband. I asked the drug dealer to come to my home, and I gave him a room. My husband witnessed everything in the home, but he did not say anything to anybody. We threatened him, and we forced him to use drugs to shut his mouth. My husband was always begging me for drugs, and I provided his drugs to keep him needy. I did not tell anybody about my secret partner at my home. My boy was there, at home. He saw everything. I did not even cook for him. One day, I locked him in the room for the whole day, and at the end of the day, I remembered that he was still locked in without anything to eat or drink."* (Recovering female addict, 13 years of staying clean)

Similar stories were told by addict men, as they too had poly-sexual relations with women drug addicts. They abandoned their family, stopped financially supporting their family, and in some cases tortured family members physically and psychologically. These men, however, were not considered as violating traditional gender roles, their actions were not considered morally wrong, they were not blamed as 'bad' fathers. Addict women, however, are blamed for not being a good mother or *zan* (women) and are referred to with such derogatory terms as 'whore'. An addict woman is considered as someone who does not know how to raise her child, how serve her

husband or look after her own wellbeing and personal appearance. In a word, someone who is capable of breaking all moral, social, and cultural codes to get to her drugs.

In a family with two addict parents even children call their mother a 'whore' and 'useless' woman. They exclude their mother from their home and their lives, while fathers who are addicted still live with them. This means that acceptance of addicted women is highly complicated and difficult and maybe even impossible. However, men who are drug users, drug providers, drug dealers, and have poly-sexual relationships, are still accepted in society.

According to Williams (1998), drug addict women are considered as having 'double deviance', since they engage in illegal activity and also break the femininity role (i.e. raising children, pregnancy, breast feeding). "Choice and control of drug use by women is one of the sensitive areas where traditional norms and pressures for social change come into conflict. Female dependence is a reality - female drug dependence is an inappropriate and undesirable side-effect to be redirected to more convenient and controllable forms of dependence" (Perry, 1991, p. 1). Although women's dependency on doctors or husbands is considered an appropriate notion (Perry, 1991; Ettorre, 1992), the dependence of women on drugs leads women to be considered more deviant than male drug users, especially when the drug abuser is the mother of a child and her ability to be a "good mother" is negated (Taylor, 1993). As women participants declared repeatedly, they thought that because they neglected their children, their children are the silent victims of their dependency. In the language of women prisoners, they are not just confined by bars, walls, and depravation inside the prison, but also by the fear, loneliness, hopelessness, and doubt, which are most often caused by the outside world's news about their children and their lost honor.

While male drug users suffer from double powerlessness (e.g. 'addict' and 'criminal'), women experience multiple forms of powerlessness (e.g. 'addict', 'criminal', 'bad mother', 'prostitute'), which makes the process of rehabilitation more complicated than for men. The same story is repeated in NA, which is a representative of equality and purports that "all of us are the same". Drug users suffer from different forms of powerlessness once attending the first session of the meetings; however, powerlessness is transferred to empowerment and then rehabilitation for men.

> *"Men in NA have a much stronger belief in themselves than women. They are given much more power and hope from society. When addict men came to the NA program, they did not lose their dignity and confidence, because despite all the exclusion and isolation they experienced, they never lived like addict women. Addict women were excluded from everywhere and also were trapped in undesirable sexual relations with different drug dealers.*" (Recovering female addict, 3 years of staying clean)

Even in NA, these multiple forms of powerlessness follow women for a long time, then the process of empowering takes a longer time in comparison with men, since recovering men in NA do not accept addict women as 'normal' citizens and try to ignore and exclude them from the social activities of NA. They believe that addict women are not just addicts, they are sex workers, and the possibility that they will start a new emotional relationship with one of the recovering men is high, which causes distractions for all NA members. Even men in NA do not collaborate with NA women in their rehabilitation process; this reveals that the mainstream culture of society regarding addict women is imported into the NA community. However, recovering addicts in the NA program practice the principles and the 12 steps, which gradually interpret and reinterpret imported stereotypes regarding female addicts.

Although recovering addict women attempted to gain acceptance and alleviate the shame and fear they felt through practicing the NA steps, there are still the unspoken and latent multiple standards which follow them, even in the NA program. In other words, both addict and recovering

addict women suffer the same pains, but in different social contexts. The goal of NA as a recovery program is to help recovering drug addicts, and it is considered a place in which addicts can seek treatment regardless of gender; however, the NA subculture is not exempt from the multiple standards that make addict women suffer in society. In the outside world, female addicts have to deal with incarceration, stigmatization, and being labeled by society as women who have violated social and cultural expectations. The process of degradation and dehumanization of addict women followed them somehow up to the treatment programs, keeping many women away from participating in public activities of the NA program. Even if they demonstrate a willingness to join public programs, activities and services, their male counterparts prefer to have contact with men rather than recovering addict women. If the recovering addict women take on responsibilities in the public services, which are mostly occupied by recovering men, they are under the severe control and attention of recovering men. Any slight misbehaviour against the men's expectations will be considered a proper and rational justification to ask the recovering women to resign.

> *"Most recovering women do not have the tendency to join any public activities and services. Their fear of being stigmatized by the men in the NA program pushes them back. I decided to become a public servant, but my behaviours were under the severe control of recovering men. I know if I do something against their wishes, I will be asked to resign immediately. For example, if I have any secret relationships with one of the men in the program and they learn about that, they would ask me to resign. However, they would not ask the man to resign. It is so tricky to accompany recovering men in an NA program. You expect them to accept you as a recovering addict woman exactly the same as themselves, but the fact is that they do not consider us the same as themselves. We all were addicts, but their perception is the same as all people in the society, and they consider us as someone who had different sexual relationships."* (Recovering female addict, 8 years of staying clean)

Addict women are overwhelmed by the different layers of stigmatization, labeling, shame, and embarrassment due to drug abusing, drug selling, and sexual relations, which make them reluctant to join the treatment program. In treatment programs, they have to openly talk about those violated social and cultural expectations, which results in more embarrassment and shame. Addict

women are aware of the inherent patriarchal beliefs among men in the recovery program who did not eradicate the larger society's perceptions. Although the NA program is available for all addicts regardless of their background, upon entering NA, female addicts become to some extent subject of stigmatization during their recovery. They cannot break free from the stigma of their addiction, and it follows them during their entire life.

> "*You cannot believe that after being in NA for 15 years, my mother still called me whore. Whenever the style of my dress was against her will, she referred to me as a whore and bitch. I remember the first 8 years of being in NA, my boy, who was 15 years old, yelled at me at home and called me a whore. This was not restricted to my family members, as even in NA, for the first years, I could not explain the whole story of my life. I was too scared of being labelled or blamed again. Even some of the recovering addict men cannot accept us because some of them believe that we were whores. Being a whore and being sexually active is considered worse for men than being an addict."* (Recovering female addict, 15 years of staying clean)

Women drug users constantly need to decide whether or not they should disclose their story in the hope of attracting attention, understanding, and support, which leads them into a state of anxiety. As a result, the chance of becoming familiar with the NA programs and other NGOs is decreased. Even if they have the opportunity to be a member of NA, it is difficult for them to speak loud about their history, suffering, pain, and needs. Women drug users have several difficulties and social and cultural barriers to participate in NA classes. Their families discourage, and in some cases, prevent them from attending the classes. Women have limitations even during the treatment process in NA. In contrast, men attend the class without the permission of their family, and they are not afraid of being rejected. There are women who cannot say to their parents that they are attending NA classes, as they want to avoid any possible disagreement.

> *"Most recovering NA women abandon the NA meetings and their friends in NA once they get clean. In fact, they are afraid of being known in public or losing their anonymity. They are afraid of their family members."* (Recovering female addict, 10 years of staying clean)

5.5.5.2. Family Support

The importance of the family's role in the treatment process of addicts is significant, as most interviewees claimed that family has a crucial role in the recovery process. Emotional and financial support from family are often deeply involved in the treatment process of addict men.

> *"My mother just sent me some money in prison irregularly, but she did not trust me. She sent money after I called her ten thousand times. She knew that I needed money to buy drugs in prison. She knew I did not spend this money on clothes or food. I threatened, shouted, cursed her and pretended that I needed money for food. After I came to the recovery camp and stayed clean for more than 6 months, she spoke to me and she sent me money and clothes. She is beginning to trust me."* (Recovering male addict, 10 years of staying clean)

However, women are deprived of this support. Although addict women are stigmatized for not being a 'good mother', they are not supported by their family once they get through the treatment process to accelerate their treatment and the restoration of their family. Recovering women, in contrast to recovering men, cannot restore their bonds and ties with their family as soon as they get clean. Thus, the process of re-integration into society takes longer. One of the most important indicators of being included and considered as part of 'us' in society for recovering addicts is restoring and re-constructing family attachments. While addict women are blamed for not being a 'good mother' or 'good wife', they do not receive any assistance from their family to get back to their previous life and rebuild their family ties with their children and husband. These contradictory strategies are impacted by the contradictory policies and laws of the state and how those social orders are imposed on the entire population.

One of the most important accelerators in the recovery process is reduction in multiple exclusions of addicts in family. In a few cases, the process of eliminating and eradicating the stigma in family happened along with the attempts of the recovering addicts to repair their dysfunctional behaviours and work toward healing.

"*My mother used to assault me and consider me as an embarrassment of the family, but now she can't stand even when I go on a short journey. She loves me now."* (Recovering female addict, 10 years of staying clean)

However, some female recovering addicts declared that after 5 or even 15 years of staying clean and trying to heal their relationships with family members, they are still called 'whore'. Although family members believe they are not addicts anymore and will not ever use drugs again, they still think of them as someone who has had multiple sexual partners at a time. Despite all their efforts to accept this part of their life and make peace with it, female addicts are perceived by their family as 'deviants' or 'abnormals'. We can say that addicts, especially women, who give up their drug use live in the past and present simultaneously, and it is unlikely that they will become free from this complex situation. They attempt to obtain a normal life and improve their skills, but socio-cultural barriers push them back to their previous life. The surrounding thoughts and ideology remain with them constantly from the previous lifestyle, and they are defined based on them. They are not only living in the present but also the past; in other words, their struggle between the past and present is endless.

"My family members, especially my son and my husband, are so sensitive about NA. My husband is an addict, and when I come home from NA meetings, he starts questioning about why I am hanging out with recovering addict women. He tells me that I am jeopardizing the dignity and honor of the family. In fact, my husband is not worried about me starting to use drugs; rather, he is worried about his honor. They are scared about people in the society who might figure out about my past. They might find out that I was addict in the past, and my family might lose its honor. They tell me that my sponsees are all physically embarrassing because they use drugs. Thus, whenever people see me around them, they will judge me or think I am an addict, too. Nobody is worried about me and my health; they all worry that they might lose their honor." (Recovering female addict, 4 years of staying clean)

5.6. Discussion and Conclusion

5.6.1. Challenge of Living with a 'Contested Identity'

Despite the socio-structural differences between NA and prison, contested identity is common in

both contexts. Whether 'sovereign' state legitimizes displays of violence to protect 'national security' or 'biopolitical' power acts to medicalize people who use drugs, either way, the state employs control and monitoring over the so-called 'dangerous and deviant class' and the entire population in Iran by dividing them into specific categories. Recently, people who use drugs, who were supposed to be considered as 'patients' have been portrayed by the state as a 'national threat'. People who use drugs are not the only targets of the state; several 'unwanted people' (i.e. civil society activists, politicians, political protesters) in society have been accused of drug use or drug trafficking to damage their political and social positions.

The actions of the state against drug users and activists not only aim to marginalize particular categories of people in society, but also to impose social order over the whole society (Lidz and Walker 1980; Douglas 1992). Contradictory policies (i.e. securitization and treatment-oriented policies) in society regarding people who use drugs multiply contested identities. As a result, they are called either 'dangerous', 'patients' and the 'vulnerable' class. To put it another way, as long as the state applies contested strategies toward addicts, whether this involves applying coercive methods to protect the so-called 'national security' or treatment-based methods, addicts' identities are manipulated by the state. Even with NA, which acts as a mediator between the contradictory policies of the state and drug users and makes efforts to 'normalize' drug users, contested perceptions of the state and society penetrate addicts' lives and never allow them to be free, especially addicted women in recovery. For instance, police enforcement regularly showed up in one of the harm-reduction centers in Tehran. The manager claimed that they attempted to arrest people who use drugs who had come to receive their methadone dosage. Anti-drug protesters also set fire on women's harm-reduction centers or night drop-in centers based on the common stereotype that not only were these female addicts a 'dangerous' class, but they were also

‘prostitutes’. The extreme reactions of both the anti-drug campaigners and the state against drug users are rooted in the contradictory policies of the state.

As a result, tension, contests, and conflicts have arisen among identities in an ‘endless’ process of adopting these new identities. Overall agreement between these identities may not be possible since the contradictory policies of the state allow little opportunity for either addict users or recovering addicts to decrease the conflict among their multiple selves, contested identities, and multiple forms of marginalization. Addicts are constantly categorized by different identities, which result in being in constant conflict among the ‘positive’, ‘normal’, and ‘accepted’ social identities and the ‘spoiled’, ‘abnormal’, and ‘unwanted’ ones. This process of being stuck in contested identities starts once the participants are identified, recognized, defined, stigmatized, and categorized as an addict. Different and diverse identities are created one after another from the addiction identity; addiction identity hosts contested identities. To put it another way, addiction identity is like “Matryoshka dolls”, which are a set of typically seven wooden dolls of decreasing sizes that all fit inside of each other, one by one. Matryoshka doll is a good metaphor to describe an addict’s life in Iran: addiction identity is like the biggest doll, with the other dolls inside representing different identities. The Matryoshka identity is composed of several identities nested inside one another. The fertility aspect of addiction identity also generates multiple identities one inside another; however, those identities are not similar to each other, as they are perpetually in contest and conflict.

Contested identity is the same phenomenon that addicts experience in prison, where they are forcefully striped off their previous identities, norms, values, behaviors and are given new ones. Again, the new identity in the prison categorizes them with a new definition. To be accepted inside the prison society, the prisoner has to be prisonized. New rules for their life are applied in

prison, which have some similarities with the previous ones but are still in contest. Although recovering addicts practice the 12 steps' principles, which include practicing trust, honesty, commitment, sympathy, empathy, testimony, compensation, and mutual support, the lack of those principles in society on the one hand, and being stigmatized as a former addict on the other hand, reduces the chance of constructing a unified identity. The recovery identity is in contrast with not only the addict, criminal, and prostitution identities, but also with the 'normal' identity in society. The contested identity reveals that addicts are endlessly shifting between different identities. People who use drugs are not considered 'normal citizens'; they are categorized and classified under various socially-defined identities such as criminal identity, addiction identity, and prostitution identity. In prison, the clash between addiction identity and criminal identity together with the prisonization process leads them to a 'blurred zone' in which boundaries and lines between identities are diminished. Thus, identity contests are not just a phenomenon that prisoners struggle with only when they are first incarcerated; rather, they are a continuing process.

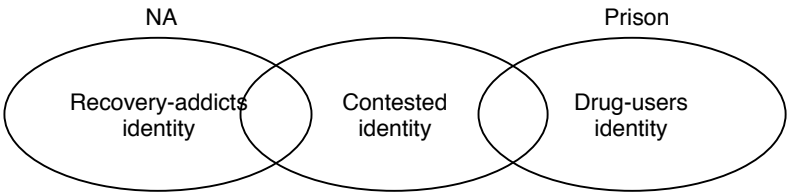


Figure 5. 3 Challenge of living in contested identity

Those being categorized in the addiction category possess a specific identity with personal and social characteristics that prevent them from being defined as 'normal' citizens in society.

They constantly struggle between the values and norms of the family and their new sets of norms, which have been created based on their status in society as an addict. Recovering addicts and addicts do not fit exactly into any category completely, and as a result, they are always circling around the contested identity, which results in inner conflict. The new identity separates them from their own former identity; however, part of their identity is still alive in a different time and space.

Using terminology of the contemporary Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, one can say that the life of people who use drugs in Iran is a "bare life", namely, "the life of *homo sacer* (sacred man), who may be killed and yet not sacrificed*"* (Agamben, 1998, p. 12). "Bare life is in the hand of power through two ways: firstly, in the form of the exclusion and, secondly, in the form of the unlimited exposure to violation, which does not count as a crime" (Ziarek, 2008, p. 90). People who use drugs, whose lives are devoid of value, are faced with endless violence directly or indirectly by the state. Through 'anti-drug laws', 'human life' (bios) or the 'good life' of 'normal' citizens is separated from the 'bare life' (zoe) of people who use drugs in Iran. To put it in the language of Zygmunt Bauman, "in modern life not only is the material waste produced, but also human waste," as these individuals are not eligible to live any more in society (cited in Beacroft, 2004, p. 3). "*Human waste* must be excluded because they are the shameful part of society and they must be exempt from the mainstream of society, they are not worthy anymore" (Beacroft, 2004 , p. 5). People who use drugs are included in exceptional laws such as Article 15 and 16 and only in the form of exclusion from the right of being a 'normal' citizen. This implies that the rules which are applied to all people in society will not be applied anymore to the excluded individuals. It is important to know that, "the exception is, '*inclusive exclusion',* which means to include an individual who was excluded" (Agamben, 1998, p. 20).

5.6.2. Contested Identity and Prison

Prisoners in the context of prison are struggling with dynamic and fluid identities. Even during their time in prison, the requirements of being characterized as a powerful inmate are changing, which leads to a new adaptation process. Additionally, all prisoners come to prison with some 'spark of society's' values and norms beside the criminal ones. The point is that once they are incarcerated, they are not just a blank sheet which is ready to absorb the prison subculture. Prisoners and NA members are both living in the middle, where they are affected by contest and congestion. The contest between the culture of the society and the subcultures of prison and NA push the members to the middle. There is no doubt that prisons are hierarchical communities (Cloward, 1960; Goffman, 1961; Sykes, 1958). Although there are several studies about status-determining factors in prison such as criminal history (Vaughan & Sapp, 1989; West, 1983), masculinity (Doyle & Paludi, 1995; MacCoby, 1987; Rymhs, 2012; Britton, 2003; Newton, 1994; Bandyopadheyay, 2006; Evans & Wallace, 2008; Gear, 2007; Jewkes, 2005; Toch, 1998; Connell, 1995), and situational/true homosexuality (Clemmer, 1940; Eigenberg, 1992; Kirkham, 1971; Sagarin, 1976; Sykes, 1958; Irwin & Cressey, 1962), there are a lack of studies regarding factors such as the possession of illegal drugs, wealth, social capital, and spiritual identity. These factors in Iranian prisons determine who occupies the powerful positions and governs others and when it happens. It is important to note that despite the fact that hierarchy is a legitimized and reinforced phenomenon in prisons all over the world, few studies have focused on its instability and contradictory characteristics. The inherent instability characteristics of the prison society, along with the inevitable adaptation pressure, act as an unstoppable train that moves forward regardless of whether the passengers are onboard or not. To be counted as a member of the prison community,

inmates have to adapt to a new set of social orders instantly. Depending on which groups rule the prison, the regulations are changed constantly.

Also, the requirements for being in the highest-status positions in Iranian prisons are contradictory, negotiable, and unstable. The implicit outside war between contradictory values and norms creates an in-betweenness experience for inmates. Although being a violent criminal, possessing drugs, being sentenced to life imprisonment, being a fighter, or being on death row are requirements for being considered a high-status inmate in prison, being *Loti* (honorable, respectful, high-minded), '*Rish Sefid'* (a mediator), or '*Fardin'* (self-giver, devoted, loyal) are also considered good qualities in Iranian prisons. In other words, the criminal identity along with spiritual identity coexist and have shared time and space in prison simultaneously. Those disrespected souls in prisons (i.e. recidivists, first-time inmates, inmates with less than one year of incarceration, non-violent criminals, homosexuals, and inmates with no social capital) are exposed to multiple temporary identities and are acceptable targets for victimization. Since the first-timers and short-timers in Iranian prisons are not allowed by other inmates to be involved in groups or gangs because of the importance of information regarding drugs, they experience multiple, fluid, diverse, and fluctuating identities that regulate their life in prison. The disrespected souls, especially drug-related offenders, who have already struggled with multiple stigmatized identities (i.e. addicts, sex-workers, and criminals) in society, are re-stigmatized by other inmates as 'non-humans' and even 'trash'.

As previous studies indicated, incarcerated women have lesbian relationships in prison (Bowker 1981; Clark 1995; Forsyth et al., 2002; Hampton, 1993; Leger, 1987; Propper, 1982). Although some studies report that having a prison girlfriend is not a shame (Trammell, 2012), homosexuality in women's prisons causes isolation and exclusion in the Iranian case. Some of the

incarcerated women, however, experienced situational homosexuality and reported it as a 'temporary' identity. Situational homosexual men experienced severe stigmatization in Iranian prisons; however, high-status criminals are protected from such social exclusion because of their powerful status. To sum up, how an inmate is affected by contested identities and various social masks depends on their social status among others in prison; in other words, those who are in kingship territory (i.e. the highest-status positions who govern others), respected souls (i.e. violent criminals, drug possessors, wealthy prisoners, respected spiritual inmates), and gang members are less affected by the constant alteration of social orders due to the shifting of governors and rulers in prison.

The lack of privacy in prison has been recognized as a "functional prerequisite" of incarceration (Schwartz, 1972, p.229) and it is also considered part of the "pain of imprisonment" (Sykes, 1958). Furthermore, since one of the most important strategies for guaranteeing security in prison is applying different mechanisms and forms of surveillance over inmates, it seems there is no reasonable expectation of privacy in prison. Living in a transparent and glassy world results in there being no space for inmates to enjoy privacy. According to Oleinik (2003, p.55), "the transparency of the public/private border makes surveillance easy and omnipresent: both the penal authorities and all of the inmates are committed to it." In other words, total surveillance of the penal society cannot be possible unless the public/private border is eliminated. However, in Iranian prisons, the legitimized hierarchy determines the scope of private territory for each of the inmates. The high-status positions have private space in 'public', which is relatively similar to their life outside the prison. Although privacy is a rare subject to discuss in the captive society, most of the prisoners are advised not to invade each other's privacy. By privacy, they mean the space closed off to others who might wish to share the space. In fact, the space is even untouchable by prison

guards and correctional officers, since almost all inmates with high-status positions have close relationships based on mutual advantages with the guards. Also, those inmates recruit prisoners and assign them as informants to disclose the most confidential information, especially information from 'inside the circle' (or the official sections of the prison). Whether the high-status prisoners are informed by the correctional officers and guards regarding the possible inception or by an informant, either way, the private space remains closed and locked to undesired people. Sometimes, the private space is determined by a cell door, but most often, a single curtain defines the kinship territory. Arbitrary violation of those boundaries either by guards or other prisoners acts as proof that the kinship group has lost their control over the regulation of the prisoners and their mutual relationships with correctional officers. Doors or curtains provide boundaries between those of high status and others. This privacy provides an opportunity for a limited number of prisoners to present their 'true identity' or 'arbitrary identity' with less instability and contradiction by applying some control over the space; in other words, protecting selfhood is possible in Iranian prisons. However, subordinate prisoners are exposed to instantaneous changes in the 'public', which results in wearing a 'trembling frontstage mask' and constantly falling in line with new sets of rules. Although all addict prisoners are to some extent affected by contested identities in prison, inmates in the inner shell are the most affected, while inmates in the intermediate and outer shells are protected by power, which decreases the identity challenges.

Also, violence in prison often occurs implicitly, but in cases of visible violence, prisoners are responsible for managing it. There are several studies that have explored the association between levels of violence in prison and individual/institutional factors. Individual factors such as age, incarceration history, history of incarceration violence, being a member of gangs, and history of mental health issues (Toch & Adams, 1994; Toch, Adams, & Grant, 1989; Toch & Kupers,

2007; Camp, Gaes, Langan, & Saylor, 2003; DeLisi et al., 2004; Gaes, Wallace, Gilman, Klein-Saffran, & Suppa, 2002; Gillespie, 2002; Huebner, 2003; Jiang, Fisher-Giorlando, & Mo, 2002; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008) and institutional factors such as the physical structure of prison, the mixture of correctional officers and prisoners, prison management culture, and overcrowding (Wortley, 2002; Colvin, 1992; Useem, 1985; Huebner, 2003; Reisig, 2002; Sparks et al.1996; Snacken, 2006; wooldrege et al.2001; Ruback and Carr, 1993; Gaes and McGuire, 1985; Gillespie; 2005; Lawrence and Andrews, 2004; Pelissier, 1991) can affect levels of violence in prison. Although different studies explore the correlation between the frequency of violence and gang membership, in the current study, gangs are shown to create a structure in prison. The current study's results reveal that the prisons designed for drug-related criminals are the most violent in Iran. The availability, pervasiveness, and affordability of drugs in these types of prisons increase the chance of being involved in fighting once prisoners get high. On the contrary, according to interviews, the safest section in prison is where the murderers are locked up. The fact is that all murderers are on death row, and most of them detest violent behaviour, since they consider themselves at the end of the road with no place to go anymore. However, sheltering in the safest and most secure zone in the prison cannot be possible, unless you are willing to accept some degree of violence and aggressiveness. To be protected from constant violation, residing in 'in-betweenness' results in a combination of violence and safety. This blurred line has enforced the necessity of playing contrasting roles and wearing contrasting masks. Prisoners' acts are considered as a performance in front of other inmates and also correctional officers. They have to adopt 'multiple' identities and roles to act accordingly in various situations. To stay out of trouble in prison, they have to maintain an appearance of toughness and hypermasculinity so that they do not appear weak and subservient among other inmates. However, they internalize another

contrasting persona, which is a subordinate and obedient façade in front of correctional officers. The ordinary life of inmates with longer sentences, according to interviews, is full of different personas and characteristics. It is an important fact to know that despite the attempts of prisoners to manage all kinds of 'contrasting' identities, they tend to mix them.

Two groups of inmates are more protected from struggling with multiple identities and unstable identities: the first group is the high-status inmates and the second group is gang members. High-status inmates are in the position of governing others and protecting their privacy, which provides an opportunity for dealing less frequently with the multiplicity of identities. Through being a gang member, they become involved in a 'defined identity' and also rely on gang leaders, who are mostly high-status inmates. Thus, being recognized as an inmate inside the territory of power is like being under an impervious shield. However, in this study, most of the prisoners did not tend to join gangs, since it might cause more violence in their life in prison. Also, some addict prisoners were incarcerated for less than 1 year, so even if they wanted to join a gang, they were not welcomed, as long-termers do not engage in any discussion with new convicts. Addict inmates with less than 1 year of incarceration were the most naked ones, having no shield; therefore, dealing with multiple and unstable codes of conduct is more challenging for them.

One of the most important links from inside the prison to the outside world is via the gangs which take care of narcotics trafficking into prison and manage, control and govern drug trafficking from inside the prison. Some gang members, particularly those who carry out criminal activities such as drug trafficking, maintain their gang identity after being released. According to interviews, since most of the incarcerated addicts are deprived of any social support, joining a gang can be a great substitute. Most research studies have focused on the social support of gangs in prison, while joining a gang in Iranian prisons is also considered as a means of financial support.

Drug trafficking in prison is one of the most profitable businesses, which can cover all expenses of the prisoner's life while being incarcerated and also the needs of their families on the other side of the wall. Several studies have been done on the correlation between gangs and violence (Ralph and Marquart, 1991; Fong et al., 1992; Huff and Meyer, 1997; Shelden, 1991; Gaes et al., 2002; Griffin and Hepburn, 2006; Worrall and Morris, 2012), gangs and offending (Drury & DeLisi, 2011; Wood, 2006; Wood & Adler, 2001; Wood, Moir & James, 2009; Wood, Williams & James, 2010), and the formation and function of gangs in prison (Fong & Buentello, 1991; Camp& Camp, 1985; Fong, 1990; Stevens, 1997). However, the most important function of gangs in Iranian prisons was the smuggling and trafficking of drugs in prison and in society. Being separated from family members, friends, and loved ones pushes inmates to form and constitute arrangements with inmates to meet basic needs such as drugs and safety. Most of the arrangements and relations in prison were reported as temporary and situational. Inmates join gangs to gain safety by achieving specific status, power, a sense of belonging, and identity. Being close to the source of power and authority protects them from unexpected changes to social orders and provides them with safety and drugs. Nevertheless, resocialization according to the new set of orders adds extra identities to the previous identities, which causes new inner conflict.

Almost all incarcerated women create prison families (Giallombardo, 1974; Owen, 1998; MacKenzie et al., 1989; Propper 1982; Chesney-Lind, 2002; Pollock, 1998). In Iranian prisons, incarcerated women create a family-like group to form emotional bonds as a social support system, to control prison society, to cope with the pain of incarceration, and to represent their previous identities as daughters, mothers, and grandmothers. Although incarcerated women do not struggle with gangs, pervasive violent behaviour, and fluctuations in power as incarcerated men do, they struggle with multiple defeated identities as a mother, wife, daughter, and grandmother.

Incarcerated women with their child in prison are not only internalized in the prison roles and form their own prison identity but also have to maintain their motherhood identity to serve their child in prison. Women who are excluded feel guilt and shame permanently because they think their children are affected by their actions as well. According to Agamben in "*Remnants of Auschwitz*", the survivors of the camp are innocent, but they are obliged to feel guilty; they are "guilty-innocent" people (Agamben, 1999, p. 94). "In shame, the subject has no content other than its own desubjectification; it becomes witness to its own disorder" (Agamben, 1999, p. 106). They are inhuman or "*Musellmann".* Addict women are like "staggering corpses" or the "living dead"; they are excluded from family and society. Nobody feels compassion for women who are *Musellmann*, even their family.

5.6.3. Contested Identity and NA

Although prison society intensifies identity multiplicities through adaptation to the process of prisonization, moving back and forth several times between the addict's identity, the NA recovering identity, and the 'normal' identity in NA society leads to constant inner conflict, especially for female recovering addicts. Addicts struggle with 'multiple', 'fluid', 'contested', and 'hybrid' identities, whether in prison or in NA. The 'contested identity' of addicts in prison and NA belongs to the 'multiple' or 'plural' world. It is important to consider that, despite the growing number of treatment centers in Iran, from methadone clinics to needle exchange programs (harm reduction centers), addicts are highly stigmatized to the extent that they come up against a lot of resistance when attempting to attend medication-assisted treatment programs in Iran. Female NA members with long-term records, experienced failures in daily practices and role performances

(i.e. as a mother or daughter at home). The constant feelings of being a failure and unaccepted by society and family members reinforced the contested identity.

Even if drug addict women desire to get clean, the fear of being stigmatized over and over again acts as a deterrent, which inhibits women from seeking treatment from organizations such as NA. The triple stigmatization and exclusion due to addiction, having sexual relations, and not meeting the expectations of motherhood make it more difficult and challenging for women to be involved in treatment services. In fact, the link between drug abuse and specific concepts such as stigmatization, shame, dishonor, taboo, and exclusion decrease the chance of addict women seeking help. Female participants report these triple standards, which are like hidden veins in the body of voluntary organizations such as NA. Because they are suffering from a sense of guilt and shame for not being accepted in society or being stigmatized among all social communities, the possibility that they will seek help or participate in treatment programs is low, which results in their being completely overlooked, forgotten or invisible to the public eye. Whether they seek recovery or not, triple stigmatization persists and makes the pathway more challenging for female addicts than male addicts. Either way, female addicts are blamed for violating social norms; however, women who get a chance to practice the 12-step program attempt to alleviate the pain of being stigmatized constantly, even by male recovering addicts in NA. Although people who use drugs, both women and men, do not fit under the category of 'normal citizens', the reintegration of male recovering addicts into society and considering them as 'normal citizens' is challenge-free. The fact is that the entire drug network is considered male territory in which men addicts are not considered an anomaly. However, female addicts break social norms and gender roles; thus they are simply understood as an anomaly and this makes the reintegration process much more

challenging. Even some of the male recovering addicts in NA stigmatized their female counterparts and called them a toy in the hands of drug dealers.

In fact, the latent patriarchal elements in the NA's subculture affect the process of recovery among women in NA. However, it is unsurprising that the 12-step subculture has been invaded by the male-dominated culture of Iranian society as well. In a society in which the control of resources and decision-making are in the hands of men, social policy and criminal laws are designed to make, implicitly of course, female addicts "forever deviant". Although through the criminalization of drugs and the so-called "war on drugs" all people who use drugs suffer from stigma to some extent, in the male-dominated society, male power acts as a veil in the continuing process of double consciousness. The gradual process of internalizing the negative perceptions of mainstream society toward female recovering addicts provides fertile soil for the "double consciousness" phenomenon. According to W.E.B. Du Bois (1903), "double consciousness is looking at one's self through the eyes of another who views you with amused contempt and disdain." This is how female recovering addicts see themselves through the eyes of normal citizens, who view them with this "amused contempt and disdain", which results in double consciousness. Addicts are imprisoned by the perception and viewpoints of normal citizens about addicts, which makes the process of constructing a new identity challenging.

According to a report from the Ministry of Health, there is one drug-dependent woman to every eight men in Iran, and the administrators of prisons have stated that over 50 percent of women in prison are incarcerated for drug offences (Safari, 2004). As participants stated repeatedly, most of the incarcerated women in Iranian prisons are sentenced to custody for drug offences. In Iranian prisons, almost all incarcerated women declared that if they were caught for petty crimes other than drug offences, it was because they were trying to fund their drug habits. It

is important to consider that women's experiences of prison are completely different from those of men (Carle, 1983; 1998; Devlin, 1998). According to Howe (1994), women have always been under extreme control, surveillance, and regulation. Additionally, as Hutter and Williams (1981) state, the social control in society over all women persuades them to act according to 'normal' constructions. Thus, any acts which are outside of 'normal' behaviour are seen as 'deviant'. In fact, men in Iran have the power to take and give every necessity of life for women. Further, they will be supported by the law in doing so, which makes them more powerful. Thus, for the exploration of the lived experiences of women in prison, "only by starting from outside, with the social construction of gender, or with women's experiences of their total lives, or with the structure of the domestic space, can we begin to make sense of what is going on" (Cain 1990, p.10). The fact is, in patriarchal societies, power subjects the lives of women to discipline, regulation and normalization, or as Foucault (1976) calls it "bio-power", in order to administer and suppress them productively. The aim of this is not to optimize the flourishing and multiplying of life; rather, it is to regulate women's bodies, behaviors, values and norms. Kelly and Radford (1987, p.238) define patriarchy as "a systematic set of social relationships through which men maintain power over women and children." To gain effective domination, women are not only watched directly by their fathers and brothers, but also the internalized gaze and surveillance control them constantly. The problem for female offenders is not cultural in nature; the criminal justice system and legal processes in Iran are not neutral or equal either. As a matter of fact, some Articles of Iran's state law intensify violence against women. According to Brophy and Smart (1985, p.3), "Experience tells us . . . that while statutes might not differentiate or discriminate between women and men, legal practice certainly does. Experience also tells us that the idea of a complete legal equality and even equal treatment is not a sufficient goal for feminists where, structurally women are in a

disadvantaged place vis-a-vis men."[22] The subculture in NA is under the direct effect of the culture of society. For example, in a patriarchal society such as Iran in which men are considered as first-class citizens who have control over women's behavior and are supported by the Islamic Law, the reintegration process for men occurs sooner or later. Men are punished by drug laws, while offenders or drug users who are women are punished not only through the patriarchal Islamic law but also the patriarchal norms and values in the larger society. The informal punishment in society decreases women's self-confidence and belief in themselves, and as a result, it takes more time for women to believe they are capable of improving their lives. Since power is in the hands of men in a patriarchal society, male recovering addicts in either NA or prison experience multiplicity and conflicting identities less frequently than recovering women, who are subordinate in Iran.

Nevertheless, the NA community provides an opportunity for both women and men who are recovering addicts to be in constant contact with drug-free citizens through public meetings and compensation to restore their relationships and reintegrate into the society that excluded them during their addiction. One of the most important effects of NA as a non-governmental organization is the migration of identities across different social contexts. The mass identity

[22] For example, in Article 220, "a father or paternal grandfather who kills his child will not be retaliated and will be sentenced to mulct of murder which should be paid to the inheritors of the murdered" (Iran's Islamic Criminal Law, 1991, p.26). In Article 105, "In the relationship between a man and a woman, the man is responsible as head of the family." In Article 630," When a man sees his wife committing Zina with another man, provided that he is certain that his wife is willing [to have sex], he can kill both of them in the same position; however if he knows that his wife acts under coercion, he may only kill the man [i.e. Her rapist]. The same rule applies to assault and battery". These articles clearly explain the right of death and life of sovereign in ancient. According to Foucault's theory (1978), "the sovereign exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, he evidenced his power over life only through the death he was capable of requiring" (Foucault, 1978, p. 136). Additionally, according to Article 1108 of Iran's Civil Code, "If the woman refuses to fulfil the duties of a wife without legitimate excuse, she will not be entitled to the cost of maintenance". "It means a woman is obliged to fulfill the sexual needs of her husband at all times. This is known as the requirement of [submission], a woman's refusal to engage in sexual activity with her husband constitutes [disobedience] and can disqualify her for maintenance rights" (The Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran, p. 109). Foucault (1978) described how power in historical society was exercised as a means of deducting or subtracting life, goods, services, taxes and wealth. Furthermore, according to Article 1117, "a husband can prevent his wife from occupations or technical work which are incompatible with the family interests or the dignity of himself or his wife" (The Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran, p. 110).

migration and transformation simultaneously among three different social contexts (i.e. the addict context, NA context, and society context) made the boundaries disappear. The interaction between different social orders of different contexts in the limited time and space can be possible in NA meetings, especially in public meetings. Considering the identity of recovering addicts in NA as a reflexive project reveals that addiction identity lost its dominant power, and in return, NA gives the opportunity for addicts to continually examine, shape, monitor, and reform their identity in the light of NA principles, addicts' periodic life experiences, and the socially desirable and acceptable identity in society. Although the contradiction between the addicted and normal identities was an integral part of an addict's life, the contradiction is intensified through the clash of different identities and social orders in NA for recovering addicts. Most recovering addicts explained that even if they are members of a community, which is a home for fellowship, their identities jump in and out of different social contexts across different time periods. The addiction, according to the NA principles, continually hunts addicts, even if they are living drug-free lives and are long-term NA members. NA members keep up their connections and communication with the meetings regardless of the length of time they have been clean. The process of dis-embedding the practices and experiences from the addict's social context and re-embedding in the NA meetings in a different social context assists them to share their experiences in different contexts for recovery purposes. Addiction identity that is undesirable and unacceptable for society is recycled in NA meetings to facilitate the treatment process. Recovering addicts struggle with multiple, complex, fluid, and hybrid identities in NA. Through the increasing communication between recovering addicts and non-addicts, who are so-called "normal" people in society, the boundaries between the addict, recovery, and normal identities are blurred. In fact, all three are constantly affected by the invasions of the other identities. The recovering addict identity is representative of three different

identities at the same time, which can be called the process of the construction and deconstruction of identity in NA. Multiple identities in NA belong to different worlds at the same time. Although there is a constant clash between different identities in NA, a new identity, according to NA principles, emerges and re-emerges every day. However, it cannot be possible to isolate the recovery identity from other identities. NA facilitates the linkages between the three different worlds, but this simultaneously causes stretching of the definition of the normal identity. On the one hand, the fluidity of an identity among different social contexts facilitates the treatment process through breaking the boundaries between the addicts and the normal people in society. On the other hand, non-addicted people in society become familiar with the addict lifestyle and how they are trained through the NA principles to become active and productive members of society. In fact, social perceptions regarding addiction differ over time and are reformed by various forces, which revealing that there is no static or fixed line or boundary between the "in crowd" and "out crowd" in society (Sanders, 2014). Rather, the process of stigmatization and exclusion of addicts is socially constructed and reconstructed, which might be further manipulated or changed as time passes.

The reality of identity transformation is that the recovered addicts in NA adapt to a new set of social orders, which are added to their previous identities. The previous identities become colorless, while the new one is highlighted. The recovering addict identity consists of more identities than is assumed, such as the '*Chehel Sotoun Palace'* (i.e. it means "Forty Columns" in Persian, which is inspired by the twenty slender wooden columns supporting the entrance to a pavilion. When reflected in the waters of the fountain, they appear to be forty). The continuing project of constructing and reconstructing identity vividly presents the negotiation between the previous, current, and possible identities. Testimony or narrative is the principal component of the identity formation and reformation process. Testimony is not the process of awakening or restoring

the old identity or 'normal' identity (i.e. before addiction); rather, it is the process of reinterpreting, reconstructing, and redefining all the multiple involved identities to decrease the tensions and conflict. The process of interpreting multiple identities from the addiction, criminal, prostitution, to the gender-expected roles assists them to re-interpret various elements of their identities to construct a clarified image of them. The process of telling stories and narratives to those who are considered as 'us' and not 'them' mitigates the intensity of the inner conflict. However, a contested identity is a continuing project in the life of addicts, especially recovering female addicts.

Although contested identity is a fixed part of an addict's life, whether in prison or NA, the agency of NA recovering addicts in changing the scenario cannot be overlooked. Some recovering addicts, regardless of their gender, mitigate inner identity struggles through participating in NA meetings, being active and volunteering in NA events, restoring their relationships with their family, initiating and insisting on continuing their education, trying to find a job other than engaging in activities with NA fellows, overcoming their fears and shame, and accepting their previous identities. Those activities have a significant role in decreasing the inner struggles among identities. For those who ended up in the NA community despite endless struggles with contested identities, at least they are lucky enough to be trained and have learned the social skills needed to accelerate the chance to reintegrate into society. Almost all interviewees stated that although it is quite impossible for NA recovering addicts to return to 'normal' life, and they have to accept the contested identity phenomenon forever, the chance of being considered a productive part of the society can be increased by practicing NA principles. Even if the NA sub-culture encouraged their fellows toward an "us" and "them" mentality, it at least gave them a sense of belonging to a group, which could give them the confidence needed to build their own life by taking a less challenging pathway. Even for those who have been NA members for a period of time and then have become

disconnected with NA members, they declared that being in NA, regardless of all the disadvantages, makes the reintegration pathway more available. Those participants who abandoned NA meetings after they got clean seem to have even more inner conflicts among their identities than those who stay in NA for years. Thus, it can be said that NA meetings and the testimony process act like a projector in an addict warehouse, which make the previous, current, and potential identities visible enough to analyze. While those who become disconnected with the NA program, as they mentioned, *"are being lost in their complex identities"*.

5.6.4. Ubiquity of Contested Identity

One of the most important components of drug addicts' lives either in prison or in NA is contested or multiple identities, a distinctive feature and inescapable issue in the modern era in which even a 'normal' identity is plural and contested. In the modern era, one is "caught up in so many different, sometimes conflicting, roles that one no longer knows who one is" (Kellner, 1992, p. 143). The point is that even though individuals in the modern world struggle with contested and fractured identities, this is still 'normal'; however, this is in contrast to addict identities, which are characterized by multiple exclusive identities.

According to Giddens (1990), identity in the modern world is a reflexive project which is no longer affected by traditions and locality and is not limited to the territory of a specific context or community. Rather, the formation and reformation of identity is entirely the responsibility of the individual. Or, as Wieviorka (2004, p.290) states, identities are chosen and adopted by the subjective decisions that are made by individuals. In fact, identities are not "the automatic outcome of reproduction, or a legacy from the past". Rather, "modernity means the permanent creation of

the world by human beings who are endowed with the power and ability to create data and language" (Touraine, 1995, p.230).

Although normal citizens to some extent are moving across different identities and are also struggling with contested, conflicted, and multiple identities, 'unwanted' individuals have a rare chance to set themselves free and move away from territories and boundaries of identities. Freedom of movement among different territories of identities belongs only to specific citizens, not all of them. The territoriality of the so-called 'dangerous' class is more subdued and controlled. Put another way, in the modern era, the identities of individuals freely travel across each other, even with clashes or conflicts, but the process is not the same for 'excluded' people in society. The identity mobility of people who use drugs is restricted to predefined identities (e.g. prostitute, addict and criminal). The transition from tradition to modernity pushes citizens toward being more reliant on their own actions instead of on institutions, and people who use drugs experience the transition toward complexity in the most extreme and brutal form. Individuals have a greater chance to construct and reconstruct, form and reform, interpret and reinterpret their identities based on various types of information and social changes, while predefined and oppressive identities are forced upon the 'marginalized', 'abnormal', and 'unwanted' people in society.

Even recovering drug addicts in NA or any other treatment centers in Iran are stuck in a conflict cycle that pushes them back and forth toward the most fragmentized self from the recovery identity and future potential identities to the addiction identity. As Du Bois (1897) states, those "whom society has marginalized and dehumanized do not experience the unitary self as an essence". The identity of people who use drugs is flowing from the recovering addict in NA to the criminal in prison; it shifts rapidly but is restricted exclusively to the pre-defined ones, which are

also context-dependent. However, unitary identity is unattainable and an illusion for the 'normal' citizens in the modern world. The only occasion during which people who use drugs break the cycle of dominant identities and step toward to exercise agency over their own identity happens in NA; however, this does not happen for all individuals, especially for recovering female drug addicts. Even by breaking the vicious cycle, the previously defined identities continue the process of conflicting and struggling. Thus, I am not suggesting that the identity of people who use drugs is pre-determined, and they no longer have agency, neither am I speaking of individuals in NA who become a subject in terms of freedom and act against the logic of power to construct social experiences as Touraine (1995) states. Rather, during the process of recovery in NA, the combination of determination and agency constructs the identity of recovering drug addicts. According to Giddens (1990), human agency and structures are interconnected and interrelated with each other; even though social structures affect individual acts, social structures can be negotiated, restructured, and reproduced by social actions. In other words, "society only has form, and that form only has effects on people, in so far as structure is produced and reproduced in what people do" (Giddens and Pierson, 1998, p.77).

Although in the modern world, identity is defined by shifting, fluidity, plurality, and contesting, people who use drugs as a 'paradigmatic case'[23] of this broader phenomenon experience the most brutal transition process from a 'simple' and 'uncontested' identity to 'plural' and 'contested' ones through excluding them from the rest of the society and forcing them to remain trapped within unnecessary struggles and thus restricting their free will. I am not suggesting

[23] According to Flyvbjerg (2006, p.16), 'paradigmatic case' is one of the strategies in selecting cases, which "operates as a reference point and may function as a focus for the founding of schools of thought" .

that labelling people who use drugs as ‘criminals’ or ‘sick’ just preclude certain parts of society from ‘normal’ living as others’; rather, the problem goes much deeper. I intend to show that by creating people who use drugs as an ‘abnormal’, ‘criminal’, and ‘unwanted’ group through contradictory anti-narcotic laws and policies, the ‘others’ are perceived and constructed, which makes the reintegration process much more difficult for people who use drugs. Reintegrating into the society in which the ‘others’ are created and constructed is considered as threatening the definition of ‘normal’ citizens. Thus, it requires recognition that considering people who use drugs as a ‘dangerous class’ pervades and structures the perceptions of the individuals in the society, and this is not present solely in specific policies. Rather, the reciprocal relations between the social structure and social actions reinforce the notion of the ‘unwanted others’.

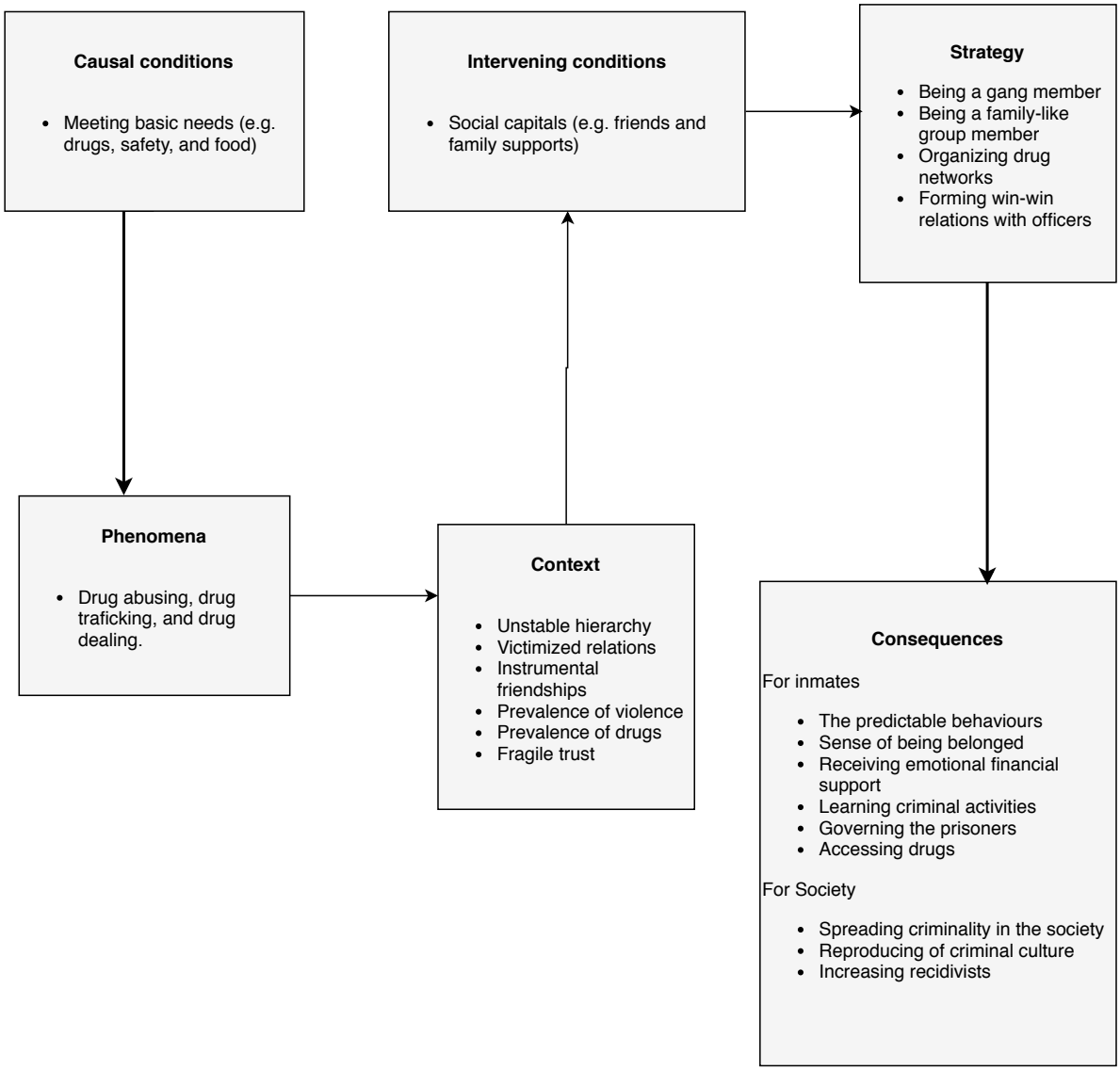
5.6.5. Theoretical Models

To enhance understanding and offer insight regarding this topic, I explored the relationships among the reasons, roles, and outcomes in prison and NA. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), these relationships should be explained using a “logic diagram”. As shown in Figure 5.4, the central logic of this model suggests that when causal conditions exist (meeting basic needs such as drugs, safety, food, and the institutional/individual context) and these conditions contribute to a phenomenon (drug abusing, drug trafficking, drug dealing), strategies are employed (establishing different gangs, creating family groups, organizing win-win relations with guards) with desired outcomes for inmates and unexpected outcomes for society. In the prison, prisoners have to set up rules and norms to organize their relationships and survive behind bars. There are some general codes which are the same among different prisons around the world; however, some specific norms and roles are contextual. In either situation, the behaviours of prisoners and the code of conduct in

prison are based on meeting basic needs. The reason why respect is given to violent criminals is because of a fear of being physically assaulted, and the reason behind respecting a rich man is that drug dealers provide basic needs such as food and drugs. The fundamental reason behind almost all daily tasks in prison is a fear of not meeting basic needs such as food, drugs, and safety. Prisoners' actions and behaviours are based on the certainty of meeting their basic needs and protecting themselves from any attack or fighting. Although selling or buying illicit drugs in prison is not as complicated as in the outside world, prisoners often unconsciously monitor their own actions to not put their drug accessibility at risk. Therefore, ignoring the fear of losing drugs and food accessibility and being attacked in prison and how those fears cause more offending and more violent actions in prison intensifies crime in prison as well as outside of it. Finally, prisoners create and recreate informal behavioural guidelines to meet their basic needs. It is important to consider the pervasiveness and dominance of illicit and licit drugs in Iranian prison and how providing drugs not only is more important than all other basic needs but also shapes all aspects of the incarceration experience; it explains the value of respect, hierarchy, the value of the prison's code of conduct, the reasons for avoiding or initiating fighting, etc. Almost all the participants stated that drugs are considered before their other basic needs such as food and safety. All the activities of prisoners follow rules and codes, which facilitate the meeting of basic needs in prison. Thus, prisoners are constantly and directly exposed to changing their strategies based on the context of prison. They have to play the desired roles and pretend to be committed to the specific values and norms to meet their needs; otherwise, they are permanent victims of prison. Even the pervasive fights and violence in prison act to guarantee safety and ensure that drugs can be accessed in prison. Strategies in this context emerged as inmates found themselves in a situation with an unstable and unequal hierarchy, victimized relations, a lack of trust, pervasive drug use, and the pervasiveness

of violence as a source of strength. In addition to this context, there were intervening conditions such as social capital (having friends in the prison and having regular contact with family members) that influences how prisoners cope in prison. These contextual and intervening conditions influence how the inmates experienced prison, which led to their strategies such as being gang members, being members of family-like groups, organizing drug networks, and organizing win-win relations with guards to survive. The consequences of struggling with contested identities decreases the chance of rehabilitation, desistance, reintegration into society, spreading criminality in society, increasing recidivism, and reproducing criminal culture (Figure 5. 4).

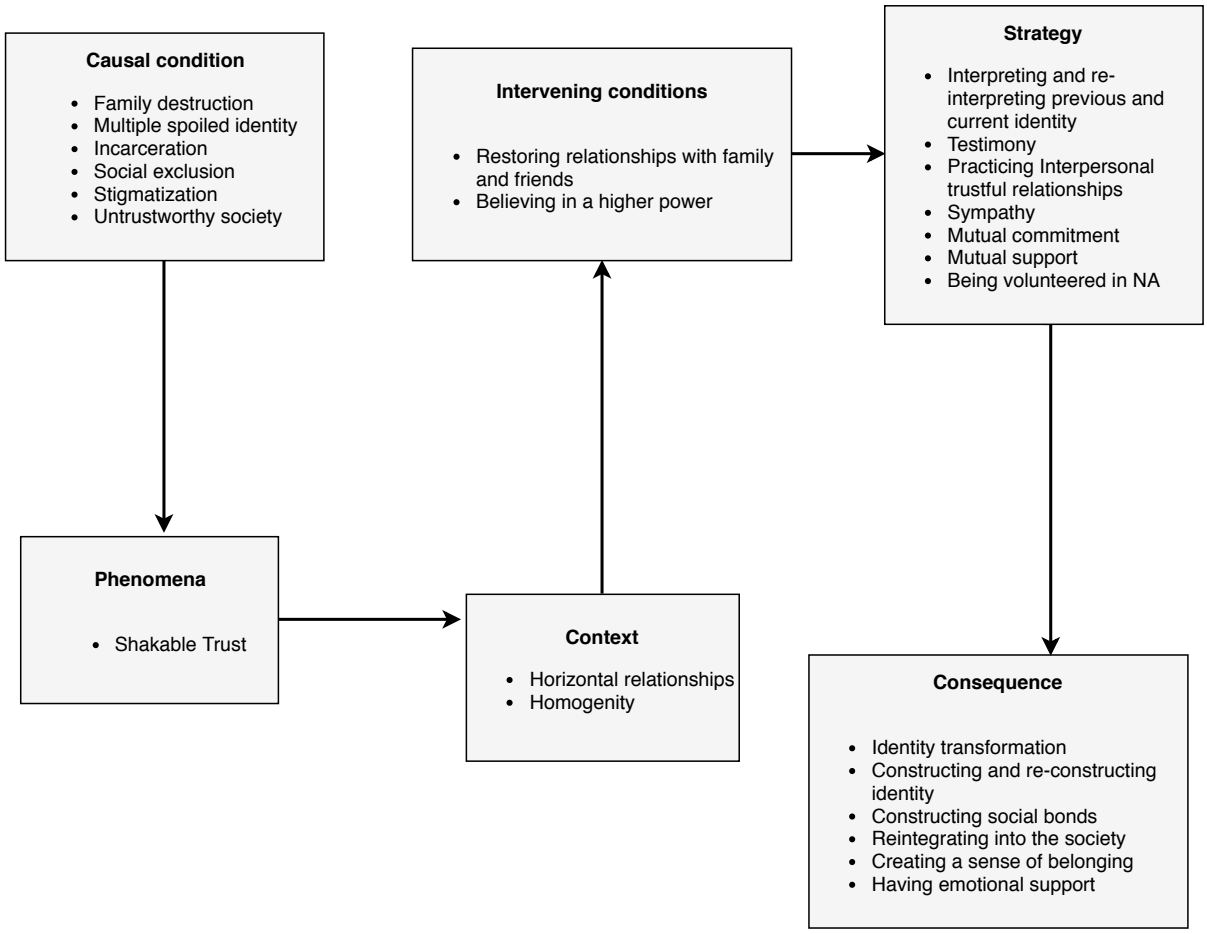
Figure 5. 5: Theoretical Model of Contested Identity in Prison



The theoretical model (Figure 5.5) that emerged for NA provides a pathway for creating a situation in which recovering addicts, despite engaging in multiple contrasting identities, experience the process of the clarification and identification of their identity package from an addicted one to a recovering one, which leads them toward spiritual transformation. Causal conditions (family destruction, multiple spoiled identities, incarceration, social exclusion, stigmatization, an untrustworthy society) along with institutional context conditions (horizontal relationships and homogeneity) led to the desired consequences in NA. Causal conditions resulted in one subjective phenomenon as reported by the recovering addicts interviewed, which was shakable trust. The strategies employed according to the central logic of this model were interpreting and re-interpreting previous and current identities, testimony, interpersonal trusting relationships, sympathy, mutual commitment, mutual support, and volunteering in NA. The intervening conditions that led recovering addicts to select specific strategies to assist them in spiritual transformation and identity construction include progressive reciprocal trusting relationships between family members, reintegrating in society, and believing in a higher power. The consequences of getting through the NA gateway to get/stay clean are identity transformation, constructing/re-constructing identity, constructing social bonds, re-integrating into society, and creating a sense of belonging. The end of the line for addicts is incarceration, institutions, death, or recovery. The results show that almost all participants hit the bottom before admitting they have to make a change in their life and choosing a healthy pathway. Turning points at which addicts change their pathway toward recovery on the personal level are the first process many addicts go through in the very first stage of facing addiction. According to the interviewees, family and employment were considered the most crucial emotional and social attachments by addicts, as they provide them with emotional/social ties and bonds. Thus, a lack of them along with being

considered ‘abnormal citizens’ in society creates a mutually negative perception between addicts and the rest of society. Those barriers are enough to provide fertile soil for being stigmatized and then excluded from the mainstream society. However, the institutional characteristics of NA lead addicts toward socializing/re-socializing with the new set of rules of the recovering addict community. The recovering addicts facilitate recovery from addiction through practicing various strategies including testimony, building trusting and supportive interpersonal relationships between sponsors and sponsees, sympathy, and being committed towards shared goals and missions. Three of the most important outcomes of NA are: stretching the definition of what is a ‘normal citizen’, re-conceptualizing the concept of an addict, and facilitating the process of integration into society. Also, recovering addicts feel personally attached to their family members and believe they are well equipped to restore their emotional ties. The overall consequence of addicts’ involvements with NA is stepping onto the spiritual transformation pathway, which assists recovering addicts to continually reconstruct their identity (Figure 5. 6).

Figure 5. 7 Theoretical Model of Contested Identity in NA



5.6.6. Limitations

This study was an investigation into a population of drug addicts who have received little academic attention. These individuals were not all necessarily criminals but had spent most of their lives in compulsory camps, prisons, or, if they were lucky, in non-governmental treatment organizations. The participants were limited to those who were seeking treatment centers or being arrested by the police and locked up in prison or compulsory camps. The perspectives and life experiences of those who were not seeking treatment centers, especially female addicts because of the cultural pressure, and those prisoners who were not released on parole, might be different from the current findings. However, since there were those incarcerated for more than three decades as well as those who were sentenced to life imprisonment and spent more than 15 years in prison, this limitation might not affect the results.

Also, the life experiences of those who were considered as part of an ethnic group in Iran such as Arab, Kurd, Lore, Azari, or Balochi are not included in this study; however, two of the participants were Balochi and shared their experiences. Exploring the experiences of addicts from diverse ethnicities in Iran was outside the scope of the current research. Ethnic groups in Iran are mostly recognized by their language and religion. Although more than 50 percent of the population in Iran are Persian speakers and 99 percent of the population in Iran are Muslim, there are 27 ethnic groups in Iran who speak a different language and have a different religions tradition (e.g. Kurds, Arabs, Baluches) (Amanolahi, 2005). Although some ethnic groups in Iran, such as Kurds, are not allowed to practice any of their religious and cultural activities in public, they are still able to promote and practice their beliefs in private spaces. However, what about inside the prison, where privacy is non-existent? A useful direction for future research could be to compare the prison experiences of ethnic addict prisoners in Iranian prisons.

In the end, since the data are based on self-reporting, the results might have an accuracy issue. This is because the participants expressed their thoughts and experiences based on their own willingness or may have even tried to provide desirable answers, especially recovering addicts in NA. Also, they may have felt embarrassment or even fear, especially on-leave prisoners, when explaining the realities. For example, discussing sexual relationships in prison, especially for incarcerated women, might be difficult. Additionally, since NA is considered a 'utopia' and a 'sacred' place for most of its members, discussing the negative aspects, especially with an outsider, would be challenging. However, the length of each interview (i.e. almost all the interviews were between 45 and the 120 minutes) along with the nature of collecting data in the current research (i.e. open-ended interviews) provide participants with enough time and freedom to talk about all aspects of their experiences. Furthermore, some of the interviews were repeated two or three times and some of the interviewees with long-term experiences in prison and NA had constant communication with me during the process of data collection and analysis for almost six months. Thus, the results of this study are not only broad but also detailed, which provides valuable information regarding the life experiences of people who use drugs at different stages of their lives in the different organizations in Iran. Although each study might have specific limitations, those of the current study were restricted as much as possible to increase the credibility of the results.

5.6.7. Conclusion

Finally, the findings reveal that people who use drugs have a 'nomadic' life in the Islamic Republic of Iran as a result of contradictory policies that are applied to them. If the main objective of those policies and laws are rehabilitation or decreasing the number of addicts in Iran, then why is the dealing and consuming of drugs in prison the greatest concern of prisoners? Why do prisoners

consider abusing drugs as a form of entertainment in prison? Why is drug consumption necessary to withstand prison's deprivations? Why are the rehabilitation classes not enough to cure the prisoners? In fact, one of the consequences of medicalization of drug addiction is "seeing the causes of the problem in individuals (who are usually of low status) rather than as endemic to the society. We seek to change the "victim" rather than the society" (Conard& Schneider, 1980, 250). Also, the state misuses anti-narcotic laws and related policies for their own political and economic objectives. Meanwhile, to justify their actions to the international audience, they prefer to treat drug abuse as a 'disease' that needs special therapeutic organizational interventions. The point is that not all addicts in prison, compulsory camps, voluntarily camps, or NA are necessarily evil. Most often, they are victims of the poisoned circumstances in their family or community. Also, not all of them are the same, as each addict has his/her own story to tell; however, their pathways are almost always similar.

This study does not aim to portray prison as a scary place or NA as a 'utopian sanctuary'. The most important point of this study is that people who use drugs are human beings first and foremost, not criminals, prostitutes, or bad mothers. Those stigmas just make their return pathway more complicated and unreachable. In Iran, with all the political and economic instability they have had for almost 40 years, not all citizens have had the opportunity to live based on achieving accepted and defined goals. Some people can survive the disadvantages of their family and community, even drug-poisoned environments, while others cannot. Also, it is important to consider that people who use drugs are from different social stratifications and not necessarily the specific parts of society which might be the most vulnerable groups, but they are not the only victims of drug abuse. There are people with high economic statuses, a proper education and no history of addiction or incarceration in their family who have been addicted for many years. The

undeniable fact is that drug addiction in Iran is a growing issue. As one of the managers of the NGOs stated: *"No matter where you live and in which circumstances, the addiction issue in Iran might strike you and pull you down".*

In this circumstance, the state's strategy amounts to nothing more than incarceration and compulsory camps, or setting restrictions (e.g. constant unannounced inspections and monitoring) for non-governmental drug treatment organizations. However, I am not trying to declare that prisons or compulsory camps should be closed as a result of such devastating outcomes; this statement is beyond the scope of my study. In fact, the objective of this study was to analyze the life experiences of the most 'forgotten' but at the same time the most important target of the Islamic Republic over the last 40 years. The thought-provoking and painful interviews with members of this part of society, who are considered as 'dangerous' and not 'citizens', draws attention to the inhumanities experienced in their lives and the key roles of the state in reinforcing these circumstances by applying multiple policies. The only reality that remains for addicts in Iranian society is living in misery; however, those who are lucky enough to join non-governmental organizations before being executed or overdosing have a chance to rebuild their lives.

I am also not arguing that by joining and being a member of non-governmental drug treatment organizations, recovering drug addicts are able to break the shell of their contested identities and suddenly become 'normal' citizens. Rather, I am simply trying to say that addicts are manipulated by the state policies; the state is responsible for injecting poisoned thoughts, perceptions, and stereotypes into society.

Based on the interviews with the managers of non-governmental organizations and recovering addicts, I would say that civil society plays a pivotal role in solving the complex issue of drug addiction in Iran. Drug addiction is one of the most crucial intersections between civil

society[24] and the state and studying the life experiences of people who use drugs in Iran and comparing the sub-culture of prison with NA could provide valuable information in understanding the role of the state in impressing the notion of 'exclusion' and 'inclusion' and the role of NGOs in expanding perceptions regarding 'citizenship' and 'normalcy'. Although civil society in Iran has found its own pathway to deal with social issues locally and reinterpret the idea of normalcy, it has not been set free from the surveillance of the state. At least, however, NGOs in this specific matter decrease the gap between 'deviancy' and 'normalcy'.

In the end, it is worth mentioning that the closeness I experienced with people who use drugs in NGOs and governmental organizations and the pain of seeing people I knew being stigmatized, excluded, and insulted constantly in their daily life contributed greatly to my understanding of the intersection of civil society and the state in Iran. However, trying not to become (too) emotionally involved in the field of study, not taking a specific side, and not judging the other side, as Gupa and Ferguson (1977:38) state, was "political practice" during the process of collecting data for the current study and played a pivotal role in analyzing the data. "Sometimes this political practice is reflected in deeply disturbing, personal experiences, but this is exactly why they are a vital analytical starting point" (Christensen, 2011, p.29).

24 "NGOs are epitomized – for better or worse – as an intrinsic part of a pluralized civil society, somehow 'naturally' bringing about democracy. By being 'non-governmental' they are institutionally placed on the edge of or outside the state (at least in theory)." (Christensen, 2011, p.4)

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Interview Guide

Hierarchy

- What kind of people in prison are more respected? Who is less respected?
- What is the meaning of human dignity and respect in prison? Please elaborate through an example?
- What should we do in prison to protect human dignity and respect? What should we not do?
- What increases the respect of individuals in prison?
- Who are you afraid of in prison?
- What kind of people are the humble and despicable people in prison and do not have any value?
- What is the meaning of masculinity in prison? Who has more of it? What are the criteria for masculinity in jail?
- Is there any dignity and respect for prisoners who have committed the crime of homosexuality? Do they continue their crime in jail?
- Were they homosexual before becoming prisoners? Do they have special labels in jail? What is the attitude of the guards toward them? How do prisoners communicate with homosexuals? How much conflict occurs over this issue?
- Did you have more respect in prison if you were a businessman such as a baker or a tailor?
- Did you have a patriarch (elder person) in prison who is respected more? Please describe his/her characteristics?

Trust, solidarity, and Friendships

- Did you trust anyone specific in society, for example, your friends and family members or authorities?
- How is your relationship with the guards? Do you trust them? How can you gain the trust of the guards? Has an insurgency ever been carried out against the guards?
- Do you have a friendship with someone in prison? Do you trust him/her?
- What does trust mean to you? How much do you trust your friends in jail?
- Have you been shared the expenses with anyone? On what basis did you choose him/her? What did you talk about when eating? Do you trust him/her? To what extent?
- Did you join a group or band? Why did you do so? Why did you not do so? What advantage is there to being in a band? What are the disadvantages?
- Have you ever been in a prison where an insurgency happened? Do people trust each other in the group or band?

Violence, security, and privacy

- For example, have members of a group you joined been fined for (e.g. solitary confinement)? Have you supported them and have you fought for them? How do they fight for you?

- What is the reason for most of the fights in prison? Please describe a situation in which official guards could not solve the problem, but the prisoners could?
- What is the meaning of a sense of security in prison? Does it exist?
- Is there any privacy in the prison atmosphere? Are your bed or room private?

Unwritten Rules and codes

- What is your advice if someone is going to go to prison?
- What unwritten rules are there in prison, which, if you follow them, will make life easier for you, and if you do not follow them, things will be more difficult or you will even be jeopardized?
- What is the meaning of inappropriate behavior in prison? Which behaviors are advantageous in prison?

Drugs, Gambling, and Homosexuality

- Are you on drugs in prison? Why do you use drugs? How do you get money for this? Do guards use drugs, too?
- If one day the prison staff decide to prohibit the use of drugs and gather all the drugs, what do you think would happen in prison?
- Are drugs easily accessible? How do you think drugs enter the prison?
- Do they gamble in jail? What are the bets on?
- What is the entertainment of individuals in prison? What else do people talk about?

Informal Supports

- Have your family and friends ever come to meet you? Did they send money to you?

Copping, Changing, and Learning

- What changes have you made during your time in prison (e.g. behaviors, attitudes, …)?
- Did you learn morally wrong behaviors or criminal acts in prison?
- Did you use new drugs in prison?
- Did someone suggest you to be a member of a gang for stealing and smuggling?
- Have you learned any professional skills such as working with textiles, bakery or sewing?

Rituals, Mourning, Slang

- Please describe any special slang used in prison?
- For example, does every group have a special name? Is encryption used in your language? For example, if something special was happening, like the guards were looking for checkpoints, did you have a certain code that would be used to inform the other prisoners about the presence of the guards?
- Have you taken part in any special ceremonies in your prison for celebrating or mourning? For example, when a prisoner was released, would you celebrate it? If so, who took part and why and how would you do it?
- Is there any special thing to mourn; for example, if someone gets executed, or someone dies in prison, did you hold any mourning ceremony? For what type of guys were the ceremonies held?

Appendix 2 Informed Consent, NGOs

Informed Consent Form (NGOs)

Title: Prison subculture and drug-related crimes in Iran

Researcher: Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki, PhD Student, Sociology Department of Memorial University of Newfoundland, Phone: 09364903426, Email: nra021@mun.ca

Supervisor: Anton Oleynik, Associate Professor, Sociology Department of Memorial University of Newfoundland, Phone: 709-864-7445, Email: aoleynik@mun.ca

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled "Prison subculture and drug-related crimes in Iran". This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki, if you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent. It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future. **In other words, participation in this project is not a requirement of the NGO and all services available to you will not change based on whether or not you choose to participate in my research.**

Introduction:
My name is Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki, and I am a PhD student of sociology in Sociology Department at Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am conducting a research project called 'Prison Subculture and Drug-Related Crimes in Iran' for my PhD degree under the supervision of Prof. Anton Oleynik.

Purpose of Study:
The main objective of the proposed research project is to compare the subcultures of prisons in Iran, by paying particular attention to the most populated provinces such as: Tehran, Isfahan, Kerman, etc., as governmental institutions which have both custodial and treatment orientations simultaneously, with non-governmental institutions which are treatment-oriented and provide drug-users with medical and educational facilities. This study will be focused on drug-related offenders. Therefore, the main questions of this study are: How do drug-users and drug-related criminals experience the context of prison and NGOs? How do drug-related offenders approach their lives under the condition of contemporary confinement? How do offenders adapt to the difficulties and issues they experience in prison? How do drug-related offenders adapt to the

difficulties and issues they experience in NGOs? What are the elements of drug-related offenders' subcultures in NGOs and prison in comparison with the culture of ordinary citizens in Iran?

What You Will Do in this Study:
I'm contacting you to invite you to participant in an interview in which generally you will be asked to explain your lived-experience in NGO and specifically you will be asked questions regarding: background information, social interrelationships, social life in general (e.g. loyalty of people, level of interpersonal trust, level of social and institutional trust, trust in the state, socially close friends, the duration of friendships, sources of social support, help, and protection, visiting friends and family, the scope of the sense of responsibility, problem solving strategies, etc.); the informal behavioral guidelines or unwritten rules of behavior, the normative basis of everyday life (trust, family, work, property, etc.); priority in relationships with other people, etc.

Length of Time:
Participation will require 45 minute of your time and will be held at administration office.

Withdrawal from the Study:
Participants of this project can simply end their participation during the data collection and even during conducting interview. Based on the participant's request, all data collected up to that point will be removed in the moment.

Possible Benefits:

a) Improving the rehabilitation programs and services in the prisons and NGOs (e.g. 'Narcotic Anonymous', 'Sun House', and the others).
b) Increasing the chance of considering and establishing other institutions (e.g. 'Narcotic Anonymous', 'Sun House', and the others) as an alternative to incarceration. The principal aims of these kinds of NGOs are based on treatment and rehabilitation factors (e.g. encouraging volunteer work in the institution, establishing close relationships with clients, developing good social habits, emotional maturity, and the capacity to deal with everyday problems).

Possible Risks:
The only potential risk to participating in this study is emotional risk. If participant becomes upset and depressed there will be social workers and consults, and trained volunteers in NGOs (e.g. 'Narcotic Anonymous', 'Sun House', and the others) who are willing to help you.

Confidentiality:
In order to safeguard confidentiality and privacy of participants in this project, the researcher collects and uses of anonymous information (i.e. "the information never had identifiers associated with it (e.g., anonymous surveys) and risk of identification of individuals is low or very low".)

Anonymity:
No identifying information will be collected in this project. If the participants prefer not to be anonymous, this option will be given to him/her as long as it does not negatively effect and / or identify other participants who do wish to remain anonymous. **Please kindly be informed that**

although the data will be anonymous and no names or identification will be recorded, participation in interviews with me is unlikely to be anonymous by considering the involvement of the NGO officials or lawyers and the location of interviews.

Recording of Data:
During the interview, researcher will use audio recording. Please indicate your agreement, or not, to the use of audio recording.

Use, Access, Ownership, and Storage of Data:
The data of consent forms which are paper form will be kept in a locked cabinet not access to anyone. And all recorded information will be stored on password-protected. My supervisor will have access to data as well. It worth noting that no identifying information will be given to the authorities (e.g. government departments, communities, agencies, etc.). Data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as required by Memorial University's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research.

Reporting of Results:
The result of this project will be published in a form of thesis, journal article, and conference presentation. All participants of the study will be provided with the results without having to contact me (i.e. the final report will be posted to social workers and consulters of NGO to provide the participants with the final report). Additionally, upon completion, my thesis will be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II library, and can be accessed online at: http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/theses. Furthermore, all data will be reported in an aggregated or summarized form or with using direct quotation anonymously.

Sharing of Results with Participants:
All participants of this project will be provided with the hardcopy of final report.

Questions:
You are welcome to ask questions before, during, or after your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact: Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki, phone: +989364903426. Anton Oleynik, Phone: 709-864-7445.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:
Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.

- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end participation **during** data collection, any data collected from you up to that **point will be destroyed**.
- You understand that your data is being collected anonymously and therefore cannot be removed once data collection has ended.

I agree to be audio-recorded
☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to the use of direct quotations
☐ Yes ☐ No

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature Confirms:

☐ I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.

☐ A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

_____ _____
Signature of Principal Investigator Date

Appendix 3 Informed Consent, Governmental Organizations

Informed Consent Form (Governmental Organizations)

Title: Prison subculture and drug-related crimes in Iran

Researcher: Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki, PhD Student, Sociology Department of Memorial University of Newfoundland, Phone: 09364903426, Email: nra021@mun.ca

Supervisor: Anton Oleynik, Associate Professor, Sociology Department of Memorial University of Newfoundland, Phone: 709-864-7445, Email: aoleynik@mun.ca

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled "Prison subculture and drug-related crimes in Iran". This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki, if you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent. It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future. **In other words, participation in this project is not a requirement of the NGO and all services available to you will not change based on whether or not you choose to participate in my research.**

Introduction:
My name is Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki, and I am a PhD student of sociology in Sociology Department at Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am conducting a research project called 'Prison Subculture and Drug-Related Crimes in Iran' for my PhD degree under the supervision of Prof. Anton Oleynik.

Purpose of Study:
The main objective of the proposed research project is to compare the subcultures of prisons in Iran, by paying particular attention to the most populated provinces such as: Tehran, Isfahan, Kerman, etc., as governmental institutions which have both custodial and treatment orientations simultaneously, with non-governmental institutions which are treatment-oriented and provide drug-users with medical and educational facilities. This study will be focused on drug-related offenders. Therefore, the main questions of this study are: How do drug-users and drug-related criminals experience the context of prison and NGOs? How do drug-related offenders approach their lives under the condition of contemporary confinement? How do offenders adapt to the difficulties and issues they experience in prison? How do drug-related offenders adapt to the difficulties and issues they experience in NGOs? What are the elements of drug-related offenders'

subcultures in NGOs and prison in comparison with the culture of citizens with no incarceration experiences?

What You Will Do in this Study:
I'm contacting you to invite you to participant in an interview in which generally you will be asked to explain your lived-experience in prison and specifically you will be asked questions regarding: background information, social interrelationships, social life in general (e.g. loyalty of people, level of interpersonal trust, level of social and institutional trust, trust in the state, socially close friends, the duration of friendships, sources of social support, help, and protection, visiting friends and family, the scope of the sense of responsibility, problem solving strategies, etc.); the informal behavioral guidelines or unwritten rules of behavior, the normative basis of everyday life (trust, family, work, property, etc.); priority in relationships with other people, etc.

Length of Time:
Participation will require 45 minute of your time and will be held at NGOs (e.g. 'Narcotic Anonymous', 'Sun House').

Withdrawal from the Study:
Participants of this project can simply end their participation during the data collection and even during conducting interview. Based on the participant's request, all data collected up to that point will be removed in the moment.

Possible Benefits:

c) Changing strict policies and laws regarding drug-related crimes.
d) Improving the rehabilitation programs and services in the prisons.
e) Increasing the chance of considering and establishing other institutions (e.g. 'Narcotic Anonymous', 'Sun House', and the others) as an alternative to incarceration. The principal aims of these kinds of NGOs are based on treatment and rehabilitation factors (e.g. encouraging volunteer work in the institution, establishing close relationships with clients, developing good social habits, emotional maturity, and the capacity to deal with everyday problems).

Possible Risks:
The only potential risk to participating in this study is emotional risk. If participant becomes upset and depressed there will be social workers, **consults, and trained volunteers in NGOs (e.g. 'Narcotic Anonymous', 'Sun House', and the others) who are willing to help you.**

Confidentiality:
In order to safeguard confidentiality and privacy of participants in this project, the researcher collects and uses of anonymous information (i.e. "the information never had identifiers associated with it (e.g., anonymous surveys) and risk of identification of individuals is low or very low".)

Anonymity:
No identifying information will be collected in this project. If the participants prefer not to be anonymous, this option will be given to him/her as long as it does not negatively effect and / or identify other participants who do wish to remain anonymous. **Please kindly be informed that**

although the data will be anonymous and no names or identification will be recorded, participation in interviews with me is unlikely to be anonymous by considering the involvement of the NGO officials or lawyers and the location of interviews.

Recording of Data:
During the interview, researcher will use audio recording. Please indicate your agreement, or not, to the use of audio recording.

Use, Access, Ownership, and Storage of Data:
The data of consent forms which are paper form will be kept in a locked cabinet not access to anyone. And all recorded information will be stored on password-protected. My supervisor will have access to data as well. It worth noting that no identifying information will be given to the authorities (e.g. government departments, communities, agencies, etc.). Data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as required by Memorial University's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research.

Reporting of Results:
The result of this project will be published in a form of thesis, journal article, and conference presentation. All participants of the study will be provided with the results without having to contact me (i.e. the final report will be posted to social workers, consulters, trained volunteers, and lawyers of NGOs to provide the participants with the final report). Additionally, upon completion, my thesis will be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II library, and can be accessed online at: http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/theses. Furthermore, all data will be reported in an aggregated or summarized form or with using direct quotation anonymously.

Sharing of Results with Participants:
All participants of this project will be provided with the hardcopy of final report.

Questions:
You are welcome to ask questions before, during, or after your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact: Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki, phone: +989364903426. Anton Oleynik, Phone: 709-864-7445.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:
Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.

- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end participation **during** data collection, any data collected from you up to that **point will be destroyed**.
- You understand that your data is being collected anonymously and therefore cannot be removed once data collection has ended.

I agree to be audio-recorded
☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to the use of direct quotations
☐ Yes ☐ No

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature Confirms:

☐ I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.

☐ A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

_____ _____
Signature of Principal Investigator Date

Appendix 4 Recruitment Letter, NGOs

Recruitment Letter (NGOs)

My name is Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki, and I am a PhD student of sociology in Sociology Department at Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am conducting a research project called 'Prison Subculture and Drug-Related Crimes in Iran' for my PhD degree under the supervision of Prof. Anton Oleynik. The purpose of the study is to investigate the subculture of drug-related offenders in Prison and NGOS (e.g. 'Narcotic Anonymous' and 'Sun Houses').
I'm contacting you to invite you to participant in an interview in which generally you will be asked to explain your lived-experience in NGO, specifically you will be asked questions regarding: background information, social interrelationships, social life in general (e.g. loyalty of people, level of interpersonal trust, level of social and institutional trust, trust in the state, socially close friends, the duration of friendships, sources of social support, help, and protection, visiting friends and family, the scope of the sense of responsibility, problem solving strategies, etc.); the informal behavioral guidelines or unwritten rules of behavior, the normative basis of everyday life (trust, family, work, property, etc.); priority in relationships with other people, etc.

Participation will require 45 minute of your time and will be held at administration office. **Participation in this project is not a requirement of the NGO and all services available to you will not change based on whether or not you choose to participate in my research.**
If you have any question about me or my project, please contact me by phone at +9809364903426. If you know anyone who may be interested in participating in this project, please give them a copy of this information.

Thank you in advance for considering my request.
Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr.chair@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Appendix 5 Recruitment Letter, Governmental Organizations

Recruitment Letter (Governmental Organizations)

My name is Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki, and I am a PhD student of sociology in Sociology Department at Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am conducting a research project called 'Prison Subculture and Drug-Related Crimes in Iran' for my PhD degree under the supervision of Prof. Anton Oleynik. The purpose of the study is to investigate the subculture of drug-related offenders in prison and NGOs (e.g. 'Narcotic Anonymous' and 'Sun House').
I'm contacting you to invite you to participant in an interview in which generally you will be asked

to explain your lived-experience in prison and specifically you will be asked questions regarding: background information, social interrelationships, social life in general (e.g. loyalty of people, level of interpersonal trust, level of social and institutional trust, trust in the state, socially close friends, the duration of friendships, sources of social support, help, and protection, visiting friends and family, the scope of the sense of responsibility, problem solving strategies, etc.); the informal behavioral guidelines or unwritten rules of behavior, the normative basis of everyday life (trust, family, work, property, etc.); priority in relationships with other people, etc.

Participation will require 45 minute of your time and will be held at NGOs (e.g. 'Narcotic Anonymous', 'Sun House'). Please be informed that only drug-related offenders are required for current project. Additionally, **participation in this project is not a requirement of the NGO and all services available to you will not change based on whether or not you choose to participate in my research.**
If you have any question about me or my project, please contact me by phone at +9809364903426. If you know anyone who may be interested in participating in this project, please give them a copy of this information.

Thank you in advance for considering my request.
Nahid Rahimipour Anaraki

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr.chair@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.