

**“But this I will always carry with me”: Perceptions of Forgiveness Among Iranian
Refugees**

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DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University, and to the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no materials previously published except where due reference is made.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

Signature

Mastura Alim

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ABSTRACT

There is a significant body of literature to suggest that interpersonal forgiveness has many positive mental and physical health benefits for an individual. However, there is little research about the role of forgiveness at system level injustices, or experiences of forgiveness within people with refugee backgrounds. This study aimed to explore and understand the concept of forgiveness in relation to people with refugee backgrounds and how forgiveness relates to justice and wellbeing for refugees. Seven interviews were conducted with Iranian refugees. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. The main themes identified include that 'forgiveness is complex and hard to define', 'forgiveness is different for different people', 'to forgive would be to forget', 'justice is an important precursor to forgiving system-level transgressions', 'forgiveness leads to positive wellbeing' and 'refugees are unique in relation to forgiveness'. The findings of this study indicate that forgiveness is an important concept for people with refugee backgrounds and that they assign unique meaning to forgiveness as a result of their experiences.