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<p>This thesis analyses the interviewees of 12 Tibetan refugees in Nepal to suggest ideas about the mechanisms and quality of how they negotiate their identity, the significance they attribute to their spiritual values in this process, as well as the future prospects for the Tibetan community in Nepal. It is grounded in Identity Negotiation (IN) theory and further research, as well as the research on the Tibet cause, the historical and modern social circumstances of the refugee community in Nepal. In the difficult circumstances of institutional discrimination and political lobbying against them, the Tibetan respondents demonstrate very positive trends in finding a common language with both locals and westerners, carefully managing boundaries and avoiding stigmatization. Most answers indicate excellent intercultural competence on the level of attitudes, emotional balance, and behavior. The spiritual heritage is valued mostly as essential set of attitudes and values, which become beneficial in their daily intercultural encounters. The preservation of the culture in Nepal looks optimistic, provided cultural and religious closeness with the locals and western sympathizers, community, and specialized education persist as positive factors. The obstacles are seen in materialistic influences, globalization and lack of interest among the young generation.</p>	
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TIBETAN REFUGEES IN NEPAL: IDENTITY NEGOTIATION

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Introduction

The history of humanity is marked by merging, assimilation, and extinction of some ethnic groups, languages and cultures, and temporary proliferation of others. This has been an inevitable consequence of evolution. However, at this time of established international communication and cooperation, people can opt to act consciously in order to preserve the ethnic and cultural diversity of humanity, and to protect the endangered cultural phenomena that have a potential to bring benefit to all people. This study approaches the issue of preservation of the Tibetan culture in Nepal, the historical motherland of Lord Buddha, where the Tibetan refugees had sheltered. The importance of this controversial issue is very high due to the difficult political situation in Nepal, which has put the historically kindred and formerly flourishing Tibetan diaspora into the states of restraint, fear and institutional discrimination.

This research explores 1) how Tibetan refugees experience their being Tibetan in intercultural encounters with locals and westerners, 2) how well they cope with it, 3) what is the role of their spiritual belief in their intercultural communication competence, and 4) how their culture can be preserved in existing circumstances. The historical and cultural overview serves as a necessary background to understand the nature of the case. The Identity Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 1998; 2005) serves as the theoretical lens for analyzing the process of experiencing one's cultural or ethnic identity. The empirical data used for this research is a number of interviews conducted in Kathmandu and Pokhara, Nepal. The interviewees are Tibetan men and women of various professions and backgrounds, who either fled to Nepal or were born there in a refugee family. The questions required their analysis of their own identity in the environment, where they belong to a minority group among ethnically diverse Nepalese citizens and occasional western contacts. The answers provide the refugees' self-perceived images, contrasted to those of locals and westerners, as well as

their ideas and opinions about Tibetan cultural heritage and its preservation.

The key aim of the research is to provide an insight into the Tibetan cultural identity, its development in the current political, social and economic circumstances in Nepal, and to elicit possible prospects for its preservation, based on how they are viewed by the Tibetan people themselves. From an academic point of view, it illustrates how the identity dialectics and assumptions, outlined by Ting-Toomey (1998; 2005) manifest in the process of struggling to be Tibetan in Nepal. The concept of identity is introduced mainly in terms of Ting-Toomey's (1998; 2005) Identity Negotiation Theory, and also regarded from the perspective of Buddhism, which is inseparable from the Tibetan culture. These two perspectives are compared in order to trace whether and how the Tibetan spiritual doctrine affects their cultural self-determination and intercultural communication competence.

A study like this is important in many ways. First, it gives an insight into the way of thinking Tibetans have when they struggle for being Tibetan in Nepal. Analyzed in terms of identity negotiation it brings an interesting view not only to the situation of Tibetan refugees, but also to the theory itself. Second, it can show the connection between the ideology they share because of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama XIV, and the teaching of Buddhism that he propagates, with the communicative resourcefulness they demonstrate with their behavior, emotions and attitudes. Third, the research shows what identity transformation or change they undergo in the existing circumstances in Nepal particularly, and in exile in general. It also inquires what aspects of their culture should be preserved and how they should be preserved, and whether they feel their culture is likely to remain in the existing circumstances. This may be particularly interesting for researchers and common people taking interest in Tibetan culture, Tibetan Buddhism, as well as those who study refugees and who are concerned about the preservation of cultural diversity in the world.

Chapter 1: Context

Situation in Tibet

Historical Overview

Tibetan cultural identity can hardly be regarded deprived of its origin, therefore a brief description of Tibet and its history has to be presented in order to give an insight into the cultural background of Tibetan refugees.

Located on the high Tibetan Plateau, protected by the Himalayas, Tibet was a secluded place, where foreigners had seldom been seen. This position together with the mentality of Tibetan people and the traditional 'theocratic' way of governance, allowed the people to preserve their religious traditions untouched by outer influences.

Often referred to as 'the roof of the world' due to its elevated geographical position, Tibet occupies territory equal in size to the whole Republic of India, one third of China and almost half of the area of the continental states of America (Kapstein, 2006). Its population, however, is not so high, since some of the high-desert areas are barely habitable (Kapstein, 2006). Within its borders Tibet is divided into three regions, with the capital in Lhasa. The outer state borders of Tibet have not always been very distinct, and the ethnic contour of the settlements on both sides of the borders is also rather imprecise. There is quite a number of Tibet-originating peoples, who follow the same spiritual tradition and speak Tibetan, who nowadays are seen as Nepalese citizens, like those residing in Upper Mustang or the Tamangs, who associate their name with a type of Tibetan cavalry, called *tamak* (Kapstein, 2006).

The first historical references date back to the seventh century A.D., which is seen as the rise of the Tibetan Empire and the period when the Tibetan language and the Tibetan Buddhist tradition were introduced and established on this land (Kapstein, 2006). Historically, Tibetan society was strongly differentiated, although lacking any unified class system. According to the limited knowledge researchers possess at this moment, about 40 per cent of

the land and resources catered for the ecclesiastical hierarchy, about half of this amount was allocated to lay aristocracy (Snellgrove, 1986). Lhasa was the centre of authority, while more remote areas had clan-based governance. A vast majority of poorer people were involved in cultivating the land and herding the cattle, particularly yaks, which in some provinces were the only source of food and a prerequisite of survival. Some social groups, like butchers or corpse disposers, were treated as outcasts (Snellgrove, 1986).

Monastic life was pivotal to the society. Thousands of monasteries and nunneries represented not only spiritual and religious, but also the main cultural, artistic and educational centres. Lay people also followed moral disciplines very strictly, but the life conditions were harsh and it was impossible to avoid disgraceful actions, such as animal slaughter, so committing one of the children to clergy was considered to be beneficial for a family in order to compensate for their imperfect lifestyle (Snellgrove, 1986). Apart from the monasteries, the spiritual tradition was actively maintained by lay practitioners and roaming yogis, but it was mainly inside the monasteries where the cultural heritage of Tibet flourished abundantly and the Buddhist philosophical doctrine was closely studied and put into practice. Even though the simple and scanty nomadic lifestyle that people lead in Tibet hardly reminds of what is associated with happiness in the West, the occasional foreign visitors in Tibet were fascinated by the harmonious and peaceful environment of this land, as well as the unconditioned contentment and kindness of its inhabitants (von Erffa, 1996).

Although there has also been a small number of Muslim families that are ethnically Tibetan, the Buddhist tradition has been prevalent (Dorje et al., 2005). The history of Buddhism in Tibet starts in the seventh century. Unlike the present time, when Tibet is surrounded by states that are non-Buddhist, at that time all its neighboring countries accepted Buddhism as their major confession, while Tibet itself was quite hostile to it (Snellgrove, 1986). At that moment, Tibetans were resorting to their original shamanic religion *Bön* and

folk superstitions. The Bön religion of that time was very different from the modern Bön school, which was shaped as a monastic religion based in its doctrine and practices on Buddhist texts in the tenth century (Kapstein, 2006). Tibetans enjoyed a reputation of powerful warriors (Bansh Jha, 1992), and could hardly claim to follow the philosophy of non-violence.

Established officially by King Songtsen Gampo, Buddhism rooted itself on the Tibetan Plateau. He was inspired by his two Buddhist wives, who came from China and from Nepal, and the first Buddhist Temples were in fact, erected by the king to please their wishes (Snellgrove, 1986). In the eighth century King Trison Detsen invited the great masters Shantarakshita and Padmasambhava, who established the unbroken lineage of teaching in monasteries and among lay practitioners (Dorjee et al., 2005). The outer and inner political life of Tibet generally provided excellent conditions for the spiritual tradition to flourish (Dorjee et al., 2005). The traditional way of living was focused on maintaining the activity of numerous monasteries, providing possibilities of retreat.

It is necessary to note that before being introduced in Tibet, Buddhism had been evolving in the world for many centuries already, studied and practiced in India, Nepal, China and South-East Asia (Snellgrove, 1986). On the one hand, the practice and rituals were largely influenced by the masters from beyond Tibet, who practiced and spread them, and on the other hand, by the followers of Bön. However, despite all the changes in the outer representation, the essence of the teaching, a lot of emphasis was put on the authenticity of the teaching, i.e. its correspondence to the scriptures, the transmitted words of the Buddha, and also on the genuine experience that has been believed to be transmitted from masters to disciples. It developed in harmony with Tibetans' pagan and spiritualistic mindset, converting even the wrathful protector spirits that people believed to rule the powers of nature, under the Buddhist principles for the ultimate spiritual aims (Snellgrove, 1986). It has also been

perfectly in tune with different forms of divination, including astrology, dice and nature omens, and it employs the powers of spirit mediums, shamans, oracles and the like (Snellgrove, 1986). All this created the Tibetan religious practice, marked by an impeccable logic of philosophy, and the mystical flavour of its rituals.

The Buddhism that reached Tibet belonged to the so-called Great Vehicle, or Mahayana, which is, according to the sutras, the Path of Bodhisattvas, i.e. the Path of Great Compassion (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995). It is considered that the Buddha presented his teaching in three 'turnings'. The first one tackled the issue of the Four Noble Truths, the suffering of the cyclic existence, called sansara, or samsara, and the path of liberation from it. The philosophic branch that originated from it, is named Hinayana, and the only still existing school in this tradition is called Theravada, or 'the Teaching of the Elders'. It is widely spread in South-Asian countries, like Thailand, Shri-Lanka, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia etc. The name 'Hinayana', which the followers of the other branch of Buddhism, spread in Tibet, Mongolia, Bhutan, China, Korea, Japan etc. give to it, is a little bit disparaging, as it is translated as the 'Small Vehicle', because it is seen as an instrument of liberation only for the individual himself (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995). Although historically there has been little contact between Tibetan Buddhists and Theravada followers, there is no actual degrading of Theravada's validity. It is acknowledged to be an authentic Buddhist tradition by Tibetan scholars, therefore it should never be abased, or looked down at (Powers, 2007).

The other branch of Buddhism is referred to as Mahayana and it follows all the scriptures left after the Buddha, separated into three 'turnings'. The name is translated as 'the Great Vehicle', because its followers are considered to strive for a broader perspective, than individual liberation. The Mahayana practitioners pledge to attain the state of Nirvana, without abandoning sansara, until they liberate all the sentient beings from the suffering and conditionality of cyclic existence (Powers, 2007). This may sound like an ambitious

commitment, but the difference in the goals of these two Vehicles lies not in the amount of generosity, but rather in the completeness of the view on emptiness (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995). Whereas all Buddhist philosophy schools accept a person's emptiness of inherent and solid 'self', the Mahayana schools also question the inherent existence of outer phenomena, and especially focus on the relation between oneself and other living beings, equating them by way of logical discourse. It is necessary to clarify that 'emptiness' in the Buddhist context in no way means non-existence. Relative existence and functioning of phenomena and individuals is acknowledged, but what is negated is the distorted and exaggerated view of reality that is caused by unawareness, and results in misinterpretation of self and phenomena, arising of attachment and anger, and eventually suffering (Powers, 2007). The understanding that is aroused by the Mahayana teaching and practices should motivate to desire to liberate oneself from the conditionality of sansara, but also to bring every sentient being to Nirvana. Ultimately, this practice leads to a complete realization of emptiness of oneself, others and all phenomena, i.e. elimination of all misinterpretation, and consequently, suffering (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995). This desire to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all living beings, is called Bodhichitta, and the one who has developed it, is considered to become a Bodhisattva. It is powered by Great Compassion, where 'great' means not only very strong, but surpassing the conditionality of dualistic view, and expanding over countless sentient beings.

The image of a Bodhisattva is pivotal to the practice of Tibetan Buddhism, and a lot of techniques are aimed at developing the state of mind, driven by extremely strong compassion to sentient beings. All the beings, regardless of who they are and what they do are equalized with oneself by way of logic, and seen as very dear (Powers, 2007). Although very different from the mundane habitual attitude to others from one's personal egotistic point of view, the view of a Bodhisattva is explained to be impeccably logical. The obstacle to internalizing this mindset is viewed to be the habit of grasping to a 'self', as inherently existent. Having

accepted or realized the emptiness of self, a Bodhisattva engages in the practice of the so called 'six perfections' in order to attain the full and complete enlightenment. The six perfections, or *paramitas* are: generosity, ethics, patience, joyful effort, concentration, and wisdom. Although these activities can be called perfections only when they are exercised by a Bodhisattva, who is driven by great compassion and a desire to bring all beings to enlightenment and who has cognized the empty nature of self (Powers, 2007), these activities are expected to be engaged in by anybody to steps on the path of Mahayana. Therefore, ideals of generosity, ethics, patience, etc. are very explicitly conveyed to all the followers of Tibetan Buddhism. Considering the fact that Tibetans are reported to have a strong connection with their religious practice (Mountcastle, 1997), it would be just to expect these perfections to be a paragon for them, forming a high standard of value system. This research roughly approaches the question of how this value system is preserved in reality and how these values manifest in their identity negotiation in intercultural encounters.

Another important aspect of Tibetan Buddhism, that despite its secrecy permeates Tibetan culture, is the so called Vajrayana, or the Diamond Way. The symbolism and art, connected with this aspect of practice is reflected in visual representations of Tibetan Buddhism. It follows the Third Turning of the Wheel of Dharma and is supplementary to the previous two Vehicles. The feature of the Third Turning is not the philosophical doctrine, but the special meditative techniques (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995), or 'skillful actions', allowing an individual, already inspired with the motivation of the previous two Vehicles, to accomplish the Path of a Bodhisattva much faster, with the help of skillful methods (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995). It employs extended visualizations, rituals and symbols for the same purpose of fulfilling the great aim of a Bodhisattva. The Diamond Way is associated with tantric practice and a type of texts referred to as 'tantras', which, in its turn, used to be wrongly associated with sexual exercises, when it was only unfolded in the West. When these texts were brought

to Tibet from India, they also caused a similar reaction of some scholars because of described sexual methods, as well as images of demonic or erotic character. However, this was seen as a crucial misinterpretation by other contemporary and modern Buddhist scholars (Powers, 2007). In fact, the methods of Vajrayana do not necessarily require any actual sexual intercourse, i.e. it can be and very often is practiced by celibate monks (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995). What is really required, is the realization of the three basic aspects of the Path, great inner discipline, and total openness to the master, who introduces the practice (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995). These methods are thought to allow a practitioner to develop powers and abilities, which surpass ordinary people's ideas of the physical reality, human physiology, and psychology. These powers and accomplishments are not seen as any miracles, and are not supposed to be achieved easily, and not for the sake of special powers as such. For this reason the tantric path is only recommended by teachers to those, whose compassion and intelligence have been developed to considerable extent (Powers, 2007). To individuals with more common abilities, and insufficient preliminary training, these methods are described as dangerous (Powers, 2007).

In earlier years, there have been incredible stories of great tantric practitioners reaching far beyond natural human abilities and attaining the highest goal of their practice, but nowadays in the conditions of systematic cultural annihilation and religious suppression this region is rapidly losing the possibilities to implement these teachings and techniques (Snellgrove, 1986). In this situation large exiles become alternative grounds where the practices can be followed, as monasteries are moved to India and Nepal (Mountcastle, 1997). Although there is enough interest in those in the West as well, for the sake of accuracy and preservation of lineage, which is considered to be vital in Vajrayana (Powers, 2007), the interest of exiled Tibetans in the practices still remains vital.

What concerns more mundane aspects of Tibetan history, such as political life, its

most relevant aspect for this research would of course be Tibet's relations with China. The bond between the Chinese rulers and Tibetan spiritual leaders was established in the 17th century during the Chinese Manchurian Qing Dynasty, when the Mongolian tradition of turning for spiritual guidance and cooperation to the Tibetan lamas, which was back then already four centuries old, spread to the government of China, and the Dalai Lama V was granted a residence palace in China and a title of 'The Great Master' in 1653 (von Erffa, 1996). The connection between religious and political leaders at that time was much more than a formality, since a country's leadership was considered a sacred responsibility for the common good, and therefore, in the traditionally religious society, required utmost commitment to the guidance and blessing of spiritual masters (von Erffa, 1996). The spiritual protection of the Tibetan masters was exchanged for the military protection and cooperation from the Chinese side. The end of the Manchu dynasty signified the end of this connection, as after the funeral of Emperor Kuang Su, where the Dalai Lama XIII was still present, the Chinese troops seized the territories of East Tibet and managed to enter its capital, Lhasa. The Dalai Lama XIII had to escape to Darjeeling, India, and as the Tibetan troops were able to resist the Chinese soldiers, he proclaimed himself as both spiritual and a sole secular leader. The historians supporting Tibet claim that before that moment, China did have some power over Tibet, but not sovereignty, and Tibet had been indeed an independent country, ruled by the Dalai Lamas (von Erffa, 1996). However, the Chinese historians assert the opposite, also providing references from Chinese historical sources (Sperling, 2004).

The issue of Tibet's status in relation to China had not appeared before it was incorporated into the PRC in 1951, causing revolts and further massive exodus, therefore earlier historical documents convey controversial facts (Sperling, 2004). Chinese historians provide a wide range of documents, pointing at Tibet's belonging to China, while Tibetan references of Tibet's independence are scarce. However, the Chinese statements cannot

explain the presence of own Tibetan passports and currency in Tibet before the Chinese invasion and its neutrality in World War II (Sperling, 2004), which are used by the CTA as evidence of Tibet's historical independence. A closer analysis of the documents presented by the Chinese side reveal some other historical discrepancies (Sperling, 2004).

The most dramatic events started when in 1949 the Chinese Communist Party proclaimed the People's Republic of China and in the following year the Chinese troops entered Tibet, starting their so-called, 'liberation campaign'. The troops faced resistance in some regions, but the 'democratic reforms', in which soldiers later engaged on the territory of Tibet, were met with cooperation from Tibetan side in some regions (Vahali, 2009). The 15-year-old 14th Dalai Lama was granted full powers to rule and upon his negotiation with the Chinese leaders, China pledged to abstain from any compulsion in altering the existing political system (von Erffa, 1996). However, Mao Zedong continued the campaign, promising to leave the country as soon as it was completed. The actions of Chinese soldiers and the pressure on the adolescent Dalai Lama XIV resulted into a National Uprising in Lhasa in 1959, resulting in massive human casualties both on Tibetan and Chinese sides (Vahali, 2009). The Dalai Lama realized that his life was under threat and had to flee from Tibet to India, overcoming the hardships and dangers of the mountain passage (Vahali, 2009). In the same year the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was established in Dharamsala, India. Only during this time over 85,000 Tibetans followed their leader, seeking refuge in India (Vahali, 2009).

Under the guise of people's liberation and establishing the ideals of communism in the proclaimed Tibetan Autonomous Region, the Chinese communist forces had been imposing the regime, incompatible with the traditional way of life and environment (Bansh Jha, 1992), infringing the religious, cultural and language rights and freedoms of Tibetan people. Economic life in the decade following the Dalai Lama's exile was marked by Chinese

agricultural reforms on the territory of Tibet, as a result of which 43,000 million people in China and Tibet starved to death (Vahali, 2009). Social life was governed strongly by 'ideological purity' as a goal for the new leaders in Tibet, resulting in violence, imprisonments and torture. 'Symbols of the feudal past', such as religion, native language, and traditions were destroyed and people were forced to adopt the new socialist identity. As a result, prisons were filled with 'reactionaries', who were exposed to torture and redemptory education in communist ideology (Vahali, 2009). After the so called 'cultural revolution' the vast majority of Buddhist artifacts, temples and monasteries have been destroyed. Some sources state the number of religious sites destroyed in the course of 'cultural revolution' to be 6,000 (Bansh Jha, 1992; TCHRD, 2011). The turmoil of the Cultural Revolution finished in 1976 leaving Tibet with eight functioning monasteries out of 2,700 before 1959, and 970 monks and nuns out of 114,000 (von Erffa, 1996). The death of Mao Zedong and the following liberalization towards minorities leads to rebuilding and restoration of some monasteries, and some freedoms for the people, for example, restricted religious practice (after 25 years of prohibition), and wearing traditional clothes.

In the late 1970's the Dalai Lama proposed genuine autonomy for Tibet within China, with observance of people's rights and freedoms outlined in the document. It brought a Nobel Prize to the Dalai Lama in 1989, drawing a lot of attention of international media to the issue. Within Tibet it leads to intensification of surveillance, imprisonment and torture from the side of the government, and a split among Tibetans in Tibet and in exiles. While some people confine to the Dalai Lama's policy of non-violent protest for a genuine autonomy within the PRC, others support the movement fighting for complete independence from China (Vahali, 2009). Already at that time cultural and social environment in Tibet was described as extremely sinicized. Since a massive Chinese settlement started in 1984 (Bansh Jha, 1992) the Tibetan language has become endangered, as schools operated mostly in Chinese, and

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most people living in the TAR (Tibet Autonomous Region) nowadays are of Han Chinese origin. Already in 1992 the Chinese population was prevalent, representing 7.5 million versus 6 million Tibetans (von Erffa, 1996). The messages from exiles hardly ever reach Tibet, because information flow from the outside is restricted by the authorities. The figure of the Dalai Lama is demonized and keeping his pictures or teachings at home is banned. In 1990 the flow of refugees from Tibet increases, and in the last years of the decade the regime becomes tighter, withdrawing some freedoms, bestowed during the time of liberalization. The case draws attention of Human Rights groups, and Tibetan nation is described as the most brutally devastated and politically suppressed people in the world in a Human Rights annual report of 2005-2006 (Vahali, 2009). And finally, another recent benchmark is 2008, marked by mass protests anticipating the upcoming Beijing Olympics, leading to violent clashes with the Chinese police and arrests. The events trigger demonstrations and solidarity protests in Tibetan exiles and all over the world (Vahali, 2009). At present, Tibet representatives claim there is a hope for reaching solutions with the new Chinese leader, who came to power in March 2013, however, until now there has not been any material positive change.

The demands made by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile are not independence from China. Although they still emphasize Tibet's historical independence (Sperling, 2004), they are ready to concede to a genuine autonomy. In 2011 The Dalai Lama XIV delegated his secular powers to an elected successor in the position of a prime-minister, Lobsang Sangye, a Harvard professor, originally coming from a Tibetan refugee family in India. Still following the same course, the Tibetan Exile government is not trying to reinforce Tibet's separation from China, but summons to implement the conditions which are described in the constitution, and which would allow to maintain cultural and religious freedoms of Tibetans in their home country (Memorandum on genuine autonomy, 2011). These freedoms concern the language and educational policy, cultural and religious freedoms, environment and resources,

commercial rights, health and security, population policy and foreign affairs (DIIR, 2010).

None of the requirements laid out in the Memorandum (2011) go beyond the basic human rights and freedoms that are taken for granted in developed countries, and none of them are of any direct harm to the integrity of China as a country. While on the one hand, there seems to be a lot of global support for the Tibetan case, on the other hand, there has not been any considerable progress in resolving it, as world's governments have to acknowledge their economic dependence on relations with China.

Significance

The current situation in Tibet attracts a lot of attention from the UN, governments of the world, as well as people of art (Mountcastle, 1997). The global importance is claimed from several other perspectives.

The first is the ecological significance of the Tibetan Plateau. Due to its geographical position in the middle of Eurasia and high altitude, the Tibetan Plateau reacts to climate change and environment deterioration with a significantly faster pace (Miller, 2003). The rivers, flowing from this region, provide 47% of the world's population and most populous countries, like China, India, Pakistan, Cambodia, and many others with water (Miller, 2003). In these circumstances the threat represented by the ongoing industrialization, pollution, mining (including radioactive elements) and nuclear testing, performed by the PRC enterprises in Tibet, affects not only Tibetans, living there, but the whole global community. On the other hand, the Tibetan traditional grazing, herding and farming lifestyle together with the "inherent eco-friendliness of Tibetan Buddhism" (Mountcastle, 1997, p. 300), become a much safer option for this area.

Secondly, the Tibetan culture represents an example of cultural heritage, as it has been preserved untouched until the middle twentieth century. It bears the traces of the vanishing

Mongolian culture, Indian spiritual practices, Chinese culinary traditions, amalgamated with the nomad background of traditional Tibet, and merged with the integral tradition of Buddhist philosophy. What concerns Tibetan traditional medicine and astrology, it would be hard to estimate how well they are maintained within the occupied Tibet, but they are evidently maintained in exiles by people, who take interest in these spheres. The medical tradition has enjoyed some attention from European specialists (Loizzo et al., 2009; Schrempf, 2007) as a holistic system. Tibetan astrology, in its turn, enjoys popularity among its believers, but primarily plays a serious role in choosing the next incarnation of Tibetan lamas (Berzin, 1996), including those holding important governmental or clerical positions, like The Dalai Lama, The Karmapa, and the Panchen Lama. The Tibetan culture, as a part of the global cultural variety, may be hard to preserve other than as a comprehensive system, connected with its roots.

The Tibetan language is probably, the most important and the most endangered. It is rather unique linguistically, as refers to the Sino-Tibetan family, Tibeto-Burmese group, but the writing is based on Sanskrit, and neither has the hieroglyphic structure, typical of Mandarin or other Chinese dialects, nor resembles Burmese. Tibetan is also the sacral language of vast number of Mahayana Buddhist texts. Before Buddhism was brought to Tibet in the 8th century, there had been no distinct written philosophic tradition, so a lot of terms were translated directly, excluding the possibility of confusion. The current state of Tibetan in Tibet puts a threat to language preservation. Education and employment in the TAR encourage Mandarin to be learned and spoken (TCHRD, 2011). Tibetan is allowed in families, and the street signs are dubbed in smaller letters in Tibetan. With Mandarin being a very different and difficult language to study for Tibetans, it leaves their mother tongue under the threat of extinction. Classic Tibetan, the sacral language of Tibetan Buddhism, is at even greater risk than colloquial Tibetan, which it differs from significantly. Since monasteries

have state restrictions on the number of monks, the studies of classic Tibetan, are held at a much slower pace (TCHRD, 2011). It may seem that Tibetan language is flourishing in exiles in India and Nepal, particularly because of many westerners studying it and investing in educational institutions, teaching Tibetan, like monasteries and Tibetan schools. However, in reality, the language challenge that the refugees have to face is the necessity to study inevitably the local language (Nepali or Hindi), English, necessary for obtaining help and work from tourists or sponsors, and Tibetan, spoken at home and with other Tibetans. Due to an insufficient number of Tibetan higher secondary education institutions (Mountcastle, 1997) in Nepal, many travel to India in order to finish high-school or obtain a degree, and therefore, add one more language to the obligatory programme. It has to be mentioned that of all these languages only Nepali and Hindi have similarities, all the rest are completely different, using different alphabet, vocabulary and grammatical system. Although some exiled Tibetans say that the Tibetan spoken inside Tibet is becoming very sinicized (Mountcastle, 1997), they admit, on the other hand, that their own writing and reading competence and purity of the language is much weaker (Mountcastle, 1997). Classic Tibetan is not generally known by lay Tibetans, and some even say that English feels like an easier language for them to understand religious teachings. Classic Tibetan is, of course, taught in numerous monasteries and nunneries in Nepal, but the monks and nuns are most often Nepali, and they use Nepali, not Tibetan in their every-day life. This represents a threat not only to the global linguistic diversity, but also to the spiritual heritage, as the majority of Buddhist texts were preserved in Tibetan. At the moment they are robustly translated into English, but due to multiple connotations of English terms used to substitute for those in Tibetan, the meaning can often become ambiguous and unclear. It takes the presence of people who are almost native or native in Tibetan and advanced in English for the true meaning of the Sanskrit texts, once precisely translated into Tibetan, to be transmitted to modern-day practitioners without

accidentally misleading them.

This leads to another perspective, such as religious heritage. Nowadays, the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism is practiced in many other countries all over the world, including the Western world (Powers, 2007). People are attracted to the ideas of compassion and wisdom, the logical consistency of philosophy, as well as its closeness to the modern scientific discoveries. It inspires Western people to take pilgrimages to Tibet, India, Nepal etc., to have Dharma centers, temples and monasteries established in their home countries, and to reflect their interest and admiration in art, for example in films. Ironically, the devastation of Buddhism in Tibet has benefitted the outer world by bringing the tradition to the West (Power, 2007). However, there is a risk that deprived of its roots, the Tibetan Buddhism can be in serious danger, and this would mean a loss for the spiritual and humanistic treasury of the world.

Internationally, the Tibetan issue has received some publicity, but still remains a stumbling block in international politics. A lot of organizations do recognize and promote the Tibetan issue, especially in the USA and the EU (Compilation of EU statements on Tibet 2001-2011), but China's power and significance in the world is unshakeable. The organizations campaigning for the rights and freedoms of Tibetan people are based all over the world: the USA, India, Europe, South Africa, Russia, Australia and New Zealand. Their activities include preserving the Tibetan culture, drawing publicity to the issue, collecting donations etc. (von Erffa, 1996). The image of Tibetan culture and identity becomes attuned to the liberal values that are currently prevalent in the western minds. This attracts interest, donations, both institutional and personal, and sympathy towards Tibet and Tibetans (Mountcastle, 1997). Owing to the help of the people who are engaged in this activity, most often on a volunteer basis, and primarily, to the globally recognized image of the Dalai Lama XIV, the Tibetan culture, language and nation are still maintained.

Tibetan refugees in Nepal

Historical overview

Generally, Tibetan refugees are said to enjoy obvious benefits, compared to other refugee groups, particularly, as they have a functioning Parliament-in-Exile based in India (Ruwanpura et al., 2006). Tibetan diaspora in Nepal is relatively large, about 15,000 people (Memorandum of refugee welfare office, 2011), and well-established. Tibetan refugees were welcomed by the Nepali King Mahendra after they started to massively flee from Tibet in 1959. They received help from the Kingdom and from international organizations and were allowed to establish their businesses and fully maintain their culture. They added up to the cultural diversity of Nepal, attracting and catering for large numbers of tourists, and the industry, ran by the refugees, like Tibetan woolen carpets, medicine, pieces of art and other spiritual attributes significantly increased exports from Nepal. Despite the economic burden the refugee flow was supported by the contemporary government and local people, who were, despite poverty, eager to share whatever they had (Bansh Jha, 1992). This charity paid off, when the carpet industry was established in the regions of the refugee settlements, boosting economy, and engaging Nepali workers, as well as the refugees (Bansh Jha, 1992). Nowadays, the demand for Tibetan carpets has decreased, but the refugee communities have also long since become economically independent from Nepal, owing to lavish international help.

Many Tibetan monasteries and temples were erected, and a lot of Nepali people joined them, as about 9% of indigenous population of Nepal is Buddhist (Singh, 2006). In fact, being the motherland of the Buddha, Nepal has also been historically famous for the peaceful co-existence of Buddhism, practiced by several ethnic communities, and Hinduism, practiced by the majority of Nepali people. Holidays of both religions are celebrated and the traditions are equally renowned. Many Tibetan masters, who have disciples not only within

traditionally Buddhist groups, but also among western people, have made Nepal their home, establishing monasteries, educational institutions and charity foundation, strengthening the existing Buddhist tradition of Nepal. Such establishments, as Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery at Bouddha, Kathmandu, and its branch Ranjung Yeshe Institute for Buddhist Studies, established Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche and his son, Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche (Singh, 2006), not only bring material income to Nepal, but also fortify the local moral foundations, encouraging spiritual interest in the local Nepali Buddhists as well in western visitors. All these signs of Tibetan presence have had a positive influence on the region.

Generally, the accommodation of Tibetans in Nepal after 1959 could be regarded as the most successful refugee resettlement in history (Frechette, 2002). There are two types of reasons for this phenomenon: on the one hand, it is the Tibetan willingness to work hard, both men and women, and their flair for business and reliability in this matter, on the hand, it is the receptivity of the host environment, despite its poverty, and lavish foreign assistance (Frechette, 2002). However, the same beneficial factors that contributed to the smooth accommodation of Tibetans in the cities and settlements of Nepal, have also had quite controversial effects on their current situation.

The benevolent policy of Nepali authorities continued up to the 1980's, but the intake of refugees had to be restricted gradually, until it was officially ceased in 1989. In the next millennium Nepal first adopted a constitutional monarchy, and eventually became a republic in 2008 (Hattlebakk, 2010). The royal dynasty ended tragically and the reins of power were distributed between political parties. The Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) received a lot of seats in the parliament and a lot of support from neighboring China that had very serious concerns about Nepal providing refuge for China's alleged nationals. The leading Maoist Communist party enjoys support primarily among simple people in rural areas, whose loyalty is ensured with material encouragements and promises, which are very

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welcome due to the people's extreme poverty (Hattlebakk, 2010). The Maoist movement started as an urge to change the outdated practices of the society, like caste differentiation, to promote people empowerment and industry development. Despite the violent and disturbing methods Maoist resorted to, it ensured the support of not only the most impoverished strata, but also of educated young people (Thapa et al., 2009). Growth of support for Maoist party leads to strengthening of relations with China, which results in subsidies, investments, development works lead by the Chinese partners on the territory of Nepal, such as building the new railroad. Material development that would be so desirable in one of the poorest countries in the world (Hattlebakk, 2010) is a good prospect, but the effects of a communist rule in Nepal are described as very controversial (Thapa et al., 2009). Previous research on the history of political development shows there are good perspectives for pluralistic decision-making in the government and a shift towards a more equal state, but the Maoist insurgencies are still holding it under control of force, blocking democracy development (Thapa et al., 2009), and creating obstacles for international aid from the west, which Nepal is highly dependent on (Hattlebakk, 2010). Nepal's political connection with China, and the country's sinicization instead of democratization, is bound to have very strong effect on the Tibetan ethnic minority. One reason is the tension between China and Tibetan exiles, and the other is promotion of democracy in Tibetan exiles, which are significantly assisted by democratic states.

Despite having officially ceased to accept any Tibetan people seeking refuge in 1989 the state still provides transition for the refugees to exiles in India (Tibet Justice Center, 2002), owing to the Gentleman's Agreement with the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for refugees. According to the agreement, the asylum-seekers may be stopped at the border, but if caught within Nepal, they have to be guided to the Tibetan Refugee Reception Center. They are entitled to all the necessities, like food, accommodation and medical assistance.

They also receive an “exit-permit”, which gives them the right to stay in Nepal for two weeks until they travel to the Indian border, where they are accepted on the basis of this document and a small “fee” (Tibet Justice Center, 2002). However, the agreement is not always followed and there have been acts of *refoulement*, meaning that due to lack of awareness of their duties subject to the agreement, Nepali police may send the asylum seekers back to their country, where they are treated as political descendants and are exposed to a serious risk of imprisonment and maltreatment.

Current situation

The situation is controversial in many relations. Politically, Tibetans are a very insecure stratum, as they officially have no defined legal status. They cannot be legally granted Nepali citizenship, even if they had resided in the country for decades. They receive the right to residence, protection by the police, and limited travelling in Nepal on the basis of annually renewable refugee cards, but practically, the process of issuing the cards has not been fulfilled duly (Memorandum of refugee welfare office, 2011). Refugees left without an RC, suffer various inconveniences, from being unable to purchase a driving license to threats of deportation (ICT, 2011). They are also very insecure in the conditions of political instability, as Nepal receives regular material support from China, and in times of economic difficulties the Tibetan minority is seen as a scapegoat, and as an obstacle for a closer bond with China (Tibet Justice Centre, 2002). On the other hand, the ongoing injustice is restricted by international organizations, represented also within Nepal, supporting democracy and human rights observation. Numerous international organizations, for instance, International Red Cross, YMCA, and governments, particularly the U.S., Switzerland and Taiwan have been providing support to Tibetan diasporas for decades (Mountcastle, 1997). However, some researchers are arguing that the side effects of the international patrons’ aid may

endanger 'Tibetan cultural identity' (Frechette, 2002; Mouncastle, 1997).

The recent time has been marked by especially tight restrictions put upon Tibetans in gathering outside their refugee settlements and, particularly, publically celebrating their national holidays. Despite the historical religious coexistence the celebrations have to be forbidden, if the officials construe them to be 'anti-Chinese' (Tibet Justice Center, 2002). The situation has been deteriorating first after the protests in Tibet during the time of Olympic games in Beijing in 2008, when peaceful demonstrations held by Tibetan refugees in the cities of Nepal were violently stopped by the police. And second, after the first self-immolation by a Tibetan monk that took place in Kathmandu on February, 13th 2013, which triggered a series of checks in Tibetan refugee camps, Buddhist monasteries and related NGO.

One solution for the Tibetans residing in Nepal, suggested by foreign supporting organizations, is their resettlement in other countries, particularly, the U.S. and Canada, but also into smaller exiles in Europe. The major issue is that the Tibetan refugees, who arrived in Nepal before 1989 are claimed to be "firmly resettled", therefore their applications are not considered to be justified. Ironically, the freedoms and rights, ascribed to the Tibetan refugees, deprive them of a possibility of resettlement to third countries, but in reality these freedoms and rights are not exercised (Tibet Justice Center, 2002). In contrast to the "firmly resettled" refugees, the transiting refugees, who arrived after 1989, and those who did not manage to obtain or renew their RC or had to obtain an illegal Nepali identity card at their risk, do not possess a legal refugee status, therefore cannot be accepted either.

Apart from the problems that Tibetans face in trying to resettle to the West, it is also questionable whether it allows them to preserve their cultural identity. Although the standards of living in the country of resettlement may be significantly higher, the Tibetan communities are much smaller and usually scattered and there are much humbler positions reserved for Tibetans within these countries. Most lay Tibetans, who find themselves, for

example, in America face difficult circumstances again, still struggling with poverty, and trying to make a decent living in a society which is completely foreign culturally and socially, but presents opportunities and comfortable life to those who have money, which refugees seldom happen to do (Dorjee, 2006). As a result they face unequal competition and the necessity to adapt, often at the expense of keeping to their own cultural origins. Communities in Europe, the largest one being in Switzerland, may seem to be a better option, because even the most basic job in a European country can give them enough money to provide not only for themselves and the close family members, but also to help those relatives and friends that were left in Nepal. In any case, although the material support for the kin is very important for Tibetans, other aspects of culture are at serious threat, because of the size of communities. Although Tibetans emigrating to the West are expected to use their freedom to work for the Tibet cause, as Hess (2009) claims on the basis of research done in India and U.S., the resettled refugees have to struggle with problems of their own to catch up with the standards of living and to adapt, and few of them can visibly contribute to Tibet's issue. And finally, in Nepal particularly, it is only the luckiest few, who manage to escape for a western country at all, for example, by marrying a foreigner, for the majority it may remain only a dream, where the pros are exaggerated and cons overlooked.

Identity dynamics

The delicate topic of how international support, resettlement, and exposure to the big and keen outer world affects the dynamics of Tibetan identity formation and negotiation, has been studied by a number of authors (Brox 2008; Frechette, 2002; Hess, 2009; Mountcastle, 1997). One important point is the effect of international assistance on the exiles, and accommodation of values, brought together with donations. Another issue is the

transformation that the identity undergoes in exiled people's active interaction and cooperation in the face of strong political support.

Frechette (2002) expressed a bold idea in her book 'Tibetans in Nepal', based on an 18-month field research in Kathmandu and other regions in Nepal, interviews with refugees of various occupations and backgrounds and representatives of organizations involved.

Frechette (2002) outlined a number of factors that make the international assistance incompatible with the refugees' healthy accommodation in the country. She claimed that the foreign helpers are driven not only by humanism and generosity in their striving to help the Tibetans, but also by their own goals. For instance, the U.S. support establishing of democracy to presumptuously promote this concept among the people, whose cultural values imply theocratic rule and obedience to authorities. Moreover, the term is often misinterpreted and misunderstood (Frechette, 2002). Particularly, there are two spellings of the Tibetan term for democracy, the initial one meaning literally "low-caste rule", the further one translated as "masses rule" (Frechette, 2002, p. 79). If the latter needs more clarification, the first one creates complete misunderstanding. The situation when democracy is imposed on the masses from above, while the masses are used to fully obeying the "enlightened rulers", is shown to be quite ridiculous. However, after a closer look at how democracy is presented to exiled Tibetans in the words of the Dalai Lama, their leader, her arguments may be easily disputed. Brox (2008) analysed the notion of democracy in the Tibetan society in its construction, development, incorporation with traditional Buddhist values, and perception by the people. It becomes clear that the term 'democracy', or particularly 'liberal democracy' is not an imported idea transmitted to Tibetans as an example to copy. It is rather a vibrantly developing conglomerate, which becomes connected with the religious outlook, at the same time incorporating the moral values of Buddhism into secular rule to match the modern world. In his call for democracy the Dalai Lama has been trying to bring the idea of abandoning the

harmful social ways of the past, and opening up to a social order which is more compatible with common sense (Brox, 2008).

Apart from democracy, there are other ideas Frechette (2002) claimed to be artificially introduced to the Tibetan exile in Nepal to match the elevated expectations of the western helpers. The problem that is triggered by foreign assistance is breaching the sovereignty of the state, consequently opposing it to the exile. According to Frechette (2002):

International assistance organizations may promote the values of democracy, for example, within a state decidedly undemocratic. They may promote women's empowerment within a state that defines women's roles as subordinate to men. They may promote rights to religious expression within a state that considers certain forms of religious expression a threat to national interests.

(Frechette, 2002, p. 15)

The tension between Tibetans and the Nepali authorities may of course, be partially explained by the explicit difference in values of Nepali society and those nourished in exiled Tibetans. But there are two major counter arguments to this assumption. Firstly, it presents the incorporation of the values that have the same sound with those of liberal democracy (a western term) to communities of refugees (from a country with historically different value system) as a problem. This implies inherent belonging of ideas of liberal democracy to the West, and inherent stability of Tibetan identity, even in the face of undergoing the stress of escape, adaptation and encountering global interconnectedness. It is recognized in modern research on identity (Schwartz et al., 2011), that there can be no stability and rigidity in identity, moreover, it is liable to constant change and variety of manifestations (Ting-Toomey, 1998). As it is seen from the study of how the global values are presented to Tibetans by the Dalai Lama, no fixed imported concepts are imposed on them, but rather these values are summoned to resonate with the traditional values of Tibetans and with common sense (Brox,

2008). The process of incorporating these values and adhering to them may not be painless. The Tibetan identity, which appeals to western helpers, is constructed to reflect their own high value standards, and this process has a rather artificial nature (Mountcastle, 1997). These standards are not always easy to digest and practice for all Tibetans, but generally, they are seen as the most relevant system and a goal to strive to in exiles and in Tibet (Brox, 2008). Secondly, the question that arises from Frechette's (2002) argument that these values threaten the sovereignty of Nepal and the welfare of Tibetans residing there, as a consequence, is whether the problem of incompatibility is in the values or in the current value system in Nepal. In the highly unstable political and economic environment, and massive presence of foreign tourists, volunteers and development workers, the value system of Nepali people can hardly be seen as stable and homogeneous. If ideas like 'women empowerment' and 'religious freedom' are seen to be culture specific, the opportunity for a positive change in the society is substantially decreased. Definitely, the cultural peculiarities of the region are very important to consider, but the ultimate goal of international organizations, providing aid to developing countries, is to reduce people's suffering and social inequality, also in terms of caste and gender. Therefore, the alleged incompatibility of freedom and social equality with the environment of Nepal reveals issues to work on within the environment, and not the problem of international aid to Tibetans as a refugee group.

Another point is that the helpers' ideas of Tibetan identity and its preservation and development are often very detached from reality. The idea of happiness for Tibetan refugees as seen by Swiss NGOs may vary from that of the benefactors of Taiwan, and both at the same time have their own benefits that are often in breach with the interest of the host environment of Nepal (Frechette, 2002). The refugees attract foreign sympathy, resonating with humanistic values of western helpers. However, their ideas that are overlaid onto Tibetans are often conflicting with the reality of Tibetan exiles (Mountcastle, 1997). Due to

large investments and donations and to Tibetans' own flair for trade, integrity and hard work, many refugees seem to have better lives than the locals, which creates an incongruence in their helpers' perception (Prost, 2006). The wishes and interests of communities, supported by charity organizations, and personal interests of individuals, receiving personal sponsorship, very often are seen inferior to those of donors (Prost, 2006). Mountcastle (1997) and Prost (2006) have mentioned distinct priorities for donations within the exile society, and these are organizations or ventures connected with maintaining the spiritual tradition (funding monasteries and individual practitioners), and promoting education (funding Tibetan schools and sponsoring Tibetan pupils). Women's rights, education and empowerment are also very popular. On the one hand, these aspects of the society are seen as the most directly related to the preservation of what westerners see as Tibetan identity. On the other hand, they urge Tibetans to shift their personal life goals in accordance with those expected of them (Mountcastle, 1997). The moral side of the issue is not clear, since for individual Tibetans it may represent a positive guiding force, or a limiting obligation, depending on their personal situation. The practical side of the issue is growing opposition between the popular Tibetans and the poor locals. The educational opportunities provide a material help, but the exile situation in Nepal seldom allows Tibetans to complete their high school education, and some of them have to go to India to do it, and if they manage to, they face the challenge of being accepted to a university, to which they officially are not eligible (Frechette, 2002). If some of them succeed in graduating from a university either in Nepal (which is technically illegal due to their unrecognized refugee status), or in India (which is hard financially), they find themselves unemployed nevertheless, because of being a refugee. Mountcastle's (1997) presentation of the issue is much more descriptive rather than persuasive, and unlike Frechette (2002) she did not emphasize potential threats and problems in foreign interference, but rather describes the dynamics of identity in these circumstances, with its ups and downs.

Another stumbling block for Tibetans and their helpers is their political stance. While some support freedom in Tibet within the PRC, others pledge to fight for freedom of Tibet from the PRC. The differentiation between these two may not be transparent to all helpers, but it is absolutely crucial for the Tibetan cause as such. The political direction that has been adopted by the Dalai-Lama XIV is the so-called 'Middle-way approach', freedom of religious expression, human rights observation, and cultural preservation under the authority of the PRC. Tibetans are encouraged to perform solely non-violent acts of protest, however, not to yield to the pressure of the Chinese rule. They aim at establishing dialogue with the Chinese government representatives, and drawing publicity and raising awareness of global organizations and governments. The Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration insist Tibet's independence to be a historical fact (DIIR, 2010), but do not demand to restore complete independence. What they demand is a genuine autonomy within China that would not harm the sovereignty of China, but will grant Tibet with the freedoms they need (Dorjee et al, 2011). The supporters of complete independence enumerate the downfalls of the Middle Way, such as Chinese control over internal and external affairs of TAR, the legitimacy of its mobilization in case of a war China may engage in with other states, and the loss of large areas of Tibetan province, Kham and Amdo, which refer to historical Tibet, but are not included in the TAR. These drawbacks may seem rather weighty, but considering the facts and circumstances of the modern world, this striving is highly unrealistic. First, the population of Tibetans in Tibet is a minority in number, and role in running the region. Second, there is no suggested way to obtain the territory of historical Tibet from the firmly established Chinese population and authorities. Third, the Chinese rule has brought not only devastation and genocide to the region, but also modernization and improved the life-standards, such as good roads, electricity, medical institutions, civil education opportunities, and a semblance of a market economy. Besides, there is no historical tension between

Tibetan and Chinese people, and the two cultures have no visible obstacles to peacefully co-exist, benefitting each other. There are people who secretly work for the Chinese intelligence among Tibetans, on the one hand, and there Chinese activists who support human rights, democratization and freedom in the PRC and in Tibet. Despite the argumentation that the Dalai Lama XIV continuously reiterates, the overwhelming majority of NGOs and individuals, who support Tibet, insist on complete independence. Some of them claim to keep to non-violent resistance, but others see violent methods as just in some circumstances. Interestingly, Tibetan independence fighters do not see their ideology to be in breach with their reverence for the Dalai Lama, and use the principles of democracy to justify their defiance of his advice. In these circumstances, creating a clash between China and Tibet as nations can be very dangerous, and extremely inefficient in making a positive change in the TAR. As for exiles, this clash is especially likely to have effect on that in Nepal because the difficulties with Nepali authorities that the Tibetans are experiencing are due to Nepal's close political integration with China. Therefore, the political orientation of Tibetan exiles in Nepal is pivotal to the diaspora's welfare within Nepal.

According to previous research, the Tibetan identity in exile is caught between different, often overlapping influential forces. Initially, being refugees, they harbour a bitter feeling of freedom fighters, pledging to support Tibet and oppose to the injustice they escaped. This factor makes their identity salience stronger (Ting-Toomey, 1998). Being guests in Nepal, they remain linked to their identity, as they are being surrendered by Buddhist monuments, monasteries and non-Tibetan followers. However, beyond personal and every-day level, they feel threatened by the authorities, which conduct explicitly Maoist policy in relation to them, blocking their freedom of expression and life opportunities. The stable support for Tibetans comes from foreign donors, who are sympathetic with Tibet. It ensures catering, provision of clothes, medication and education to the communities and at the same

time focuses on supporting their spiritual, educational and democratization strivings. But the assistance providers are claimed to sometimes have unrealistic ideas about what makes a Tibetan identity, and exploit the image of Tibet in pursuit of their own political strivings. Apart from that, they are alleged to interfere with the natural dynamics of Tibetan identity evolving, encouraging the values, which they see as positive (Mountcastle, 1997). In the long run it is forecasted to make the gap between them and the local environment more dramatic, and trigger confusion in their feeling of cultural belonging (Frechette, 2002). Despite this argument, financial help from abroad is the only chance for many Tibetans to avoid starvation, let alone threat to their cultural maintenance in exile (Prost, 2006), therefore its importance is crucial. All these factors play significant roles in the development of Tibetan identity in exiles and globally, while the preservation of Tibetan identity in Tibet is under threat. The negative changes could be traced in reports of Tibetans in Dharamsala, India, receiving the freshly coming refugees, mentioned in Mountcastle's research dating back to 1997. The new refugees are said to be angry and aggressive, and ignorant of Tibetan history, religion and culture (Mountcastle, 1997). Therefore, analyzing the dynamics of identity development in Tibetan diasporas is pivotal to preserving the Tibetan cultural identity, which attracts so much resonance from the global community.

Chapter 2: Theory review

Identity Negotiation Theory

The topic of identity has been discussed by many scientists in many contexts. In order to see the dynamics of the Tibetan cultural identity in the Tibetan diaspora in Nepal it was necessary to select a theory or theories that would tackle the issue of cultural identity and identity negotiation process. A lot of sources on cultural identity, for example, Collier's *Cultural Identity* (1988) seem to represent a very in-depth theoretical description, oftentimes from the social science perspective or psychology. This approach would not be suitable for the purposes of this study.

The Identity Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 1998, 2005) satisfied the need for a theoretical illustration of the real intercultural phenomenon, as it contains assumptions of how a cultural identity is considered to develop in different circumstances in the host environment, especially considering discriminatory cases, and also approaches identity negotiation from an individual's point of view, conceptualizing mindful intercultural communication. This concept may be linked with the spiritual understanding that the vast majority of Tibetan people hold due to the religious teachings they follow (Dorjee, 2006). The ideas of multiculturalism (Adler, 1985) and intercultural personhood (Kim, 2008) can also be linked well with Ting-Toomey's (1993) communicative resourcefulness. This way, the theory and the practical issue of this study seem to be beneficial for each other, since the theory provides an explanation and support for the identity negotiation dynamics, and the practical case of the Tibetan refugees, in its turn, illustrates and tests the assumptions and ideas of a multiculturally-oriented mindset.

In addition to this, approaching identity negotiation in ethnic minority groups, Ting-Toomey describes the concept of Discrimination, which is important to consider while studying the process of refugee identity negotiation.

Identity Negotiation Perspective

First, it is necessary to define identity negotiation according to this theory:

Identity is viewed as reflective self-images, constructed, experienced, and communicated by the individuals within a culture and in a particular interaction situation. The concept *negotiation* is defined as a transactional interaction process whereby individuals in an intercultural situation attempt to assert, define, modify, challenge, and/or support their own and others' desired self-images.

(Ting-Toomey, 2005, p. 217)

As it follows from the definition, identity is not seen as something solid and stable, but rather an ever-developing amalgamation of multi-leveled self-related elements, manifesting and formed via negotiation process in social interactions. It consists of self-images, both unarticulated (unconscious) and articulate (that we are openly aware of), that are “maintained, re-created, and changed through mutual affirmation and mutual enhancement processes”

(Ting-Toomey, 1993, p.76).

Ting-Toomey approached this phenomenon from the so-called Identity Negotiation Perspective (Ting-Toomey, 1998). From the eight identity domains she described (cultural, ethnic, gender, personal, role, relational, facework, symbolic interaction identities) the purposes of this thesis would only require the analysis of the first two.

The term cultural identity is associated with our sense of belonging to a larger culture and the emotional significance we attach to it (Ting-Toomey, 1998), while ethnic identity is a more specific means of identification and includes our ascription to an ethnic group of people, including shared ancestry, language, religion, national origin and historical ties. Ting-Toomey claimed it be not only an objective notion, but also subjective, mentioning ethnic identity salience, or the strength of our personal attributing to some particular ethnic group,

which is “linked closely with the intergroup boundary maintenance across generations” (Ting-Toomey, 1998, p. 32).

In the case of Tibetans, who had been secluded from the rest of world till the middle of the previous century, these two are tightly intertwined. However, it is necessary to consider that due to spreading of Tibetan Buddhist practices all over the world, its strong influence in the Himalayan region, and their rootedness in the Indian philosophical tradition, the cultural ties may also be seen spreading much broader and involving the people sharing absolutely no ethnic ties with Tibetans.

Assumptions

The theoretical argument that underlies the Identity Negotiation Perspective results in the Identity Negotiation Theory, consisting of 10 basic assumptions described below (Ting-Toomey, 1998, 2005). These assumptions are significant for efficient and fulfilling intercultural communication, as all individuals are presumed to be concerned about positive self-images (Ting-Toomey, 1998). The research is expected to bring a better understanding of what makes up the Tibetan cultural identity and how it manifests and develops in the host environment of Nepal by analyzing the manifestations of these assumptions in how they speak of their behavior, attitudes and mindset.

The first four assumptions have some relevant implications. First of all, regardless of one’s ethnic group and culture, every individual is presumed to have the “need for identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection and consistency” (Ting-Toomey, 2005, p.219). Emotional security is provided by a culturally familiar environment and positive endorsement. On the other hand, identity insecurity (vulnerability) is a result of culturally unfamiliar environment and stigmatization of group membership identities. Cultural familiarity leads to identity trust and positive endorsement leads to inclusion. The inclusion – differentiation

dichotomy, in its turn, depends on a cultural value system, particularly, individualism – collectivism, and construal of self (Ting-Toomey, 1993), which in the case of Tibetans is interdependent, as opposed to independent. This dialectic also influences a person's global self-esteem and sense of coherence, consisting of identity comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. In simpler words, the effective management of this dialectic brings mental and emotional comfort and sense of existential purpose, and requires the feeling of long-term in-group harmony (Ting-Toomey, 1993).

Ting Toomey (1998) argued that an unfamiliar cultural environment is certain to make an individual rely upon ethnocentrism and stereotyping in their attempt to adapt to the environment. In addition to identity security – vulnerability dialectic, there are four other pairs of opposing characteristics that follow the same pattern, namely: inclusion – differentiation, predictability – unpredictability, connection – autonomy, consistency – change. In her later presentation of Assumption 2 Ting-Toomey (2005) added that excessive emotional security is claimed to tighten ethnocentrism, while emotional vulnerability leads to fear of and distrust towards out-groups. The same principle is supposed to be valid for each of the pairs.

According to the first assumption, the core cultural and ethnic identity dynamics are formed together with people's reflective self-images during their enculturation process (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Based on the first four assumptions and the interdependence between familiarity and openness of the other culture and an individual's identity dialectics, it can be concluded that a drastic change of environment, which presupposes active interaction with culturally dissimilar others, is likely to also trigger very strong changes in the group members' self-perception. Specifically, in the context of Tibetan refugees who settled down, acculturated, but enjoy very limited civil rights and future prospects, the ethnic group members are basically, pending on the swings of the contrasting attitude of the locals and

positive, often idealized and controversial image they have in the eyes of visitors from the west (Frechette, 2002). This means, that the position on the scales of the identity dialectics can range dramatically.

Assumption 5 highlights specifically the dialectics of identity predictability – unpredictability (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Referring to Gudykunst (1995 in Ting-Toomey 2005) and Brewer (1991 in Ting-Toomey 2005), Ting-Toomey claimed interactors have to observe mindful boundary regulation in order to reduce unpredictability and anxiety in communication which is otherwise likely to cause defensive attitude.

The argument of Assumption 6 is that additional emotional security can be created or enhanced via meaningful close interpersonal relations (Ting-Toomey, 2005). This, however, may be hard to trace in the interviews, but this idea is also be included in the interview questions, revealing the cases of close friendship or love relationships with non-Tibetans, either local group members or foreigners, and their significance for self-perceived identity.

Assumption 7 dwells upon the issue of balance between identity stability and identity change, or in other words, between rootedness and rootlessness. The receptivity of environment and regularity of identity reaffirmation via ethnic / cultural adherence, practices, rituals, influence an individual's intensity of grasping to her or his identity. Factors like identity threats, frustration, exclusion and feeling of disconnection result in a person's clinging to old identity habits, creating a frigid mindset that is stably rooted in one's identity. However, when the level of identity security / stability is maintained optimally, an individual is expected to be open to a constructive change (Ting-Toomey, 1998). The word 'constructive' is of crucial importance in this context, while the author later goes on to mention that too much rootlessness (identity change) creates identity chaos and turns a person into a "highly marginal type with no moral center" (Ting-Toomey, 1998, p. 44). The balanced way is described as "a pendulum-like swing" or "oscillation" within the tolerable

range of identity consistency (or stability, rootedness) and identity change (rootlessness). The balanced and mindful approach to this process not only helps to avoid the critical edges, but also brings benefits to a person's individual and professional growth (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Related to this study, it is important not only to inquire how well the Tibetan refugees manage to maintain this balance, but also to pinpoint the quality of identity change, i.e. not only to see whether and to what extent their identity changes, but also what spheres of life, attitudes, practices and habits are eliminated, changed or maintained.

Assumption 8 draws another perspective to the process of identity negotiation, namely the influence of personal and cultural variability dimensions on how ethnic group members interpret and evaluate the discussed factors.

Cultural beliefs and values provide the implicit standards for evaluating and enacting different identity related practices..., direct how we think about our identities, how we construct the identities of others and how these interactive identities play out in ... symbolic interaction. (Ting-Toomey, 1998, p. 45)

The author explains it in broader and less conscious context, referring to different value systems that vary from one large cultural group to the other and are formed over a long period of time under various interdependent circumstances (Hofstede, 1984), like for instance, individualism – collectivism. By personal beliefs and values she means the current personality traits, like tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility and construal of self. I would dare to assume here that in the context of my study, the larger cultural and personal values are intertwined mutually and together with the religious / spiritual values and worldview that is practiced among Tibetans (Dorjee, 2006). In this case and for these purposes, the range of values and beliefs has to be broadened to include the principles like non-violence, interconnectivity of self and others, dependent-arising, impermanence and contemplation (Powers, 2007). These are some core notions underlying Buddhist philosophy in general, and

Tibetans' spiritual stand particularly (Dorjee, 2006). These notions would probably be hard to arrange into a list of differentiated variables to see how these values and beliefs manifest in the process of Tibetans' identity negotiation, but in order to draw a certain picture of the generally recognized spiritual view that the Tibetan people share (Dorjee et al., 2005), a part of the theoretical review is dedicated to a general analysis of some key Buddhist views upon identity or 'self' and its relation to 'outer' phenomena and individuals. Although the Buddhist philosophy has traditionally been studied in detail mainly in monasteries over a very long time (Dorjee, 2006), and lay people not always enjoy the possibility and demonstrate willingness to submerge into it so selflessly, but however the general ideas reach them from their spiritual teachers, particularly by their spiritual leader, the Dalai-Lama XIV, and are popularly spread, shared and cherished by and within the community (Dorjee, 2006).

Assumptions 9 and 10 are not explained separately in the book or in the article, but their meaning is nevertheless, quite clear. It is assumed that successful intercultural identity negotiation results in "the feeling of being understood, respected and supported" (Ting-Toomey, 1998, p. 47). This satisfactory intercultural communication requires mindful integration of intercultural knowledge, motivations and skills.

Communicative resourcefulness

A common thread running through the Identity Negotiation Theory is the concept of mindfulness. It is regarded as a pre-requisite of successful intercultural communication that has three characteristics: appropriateness, effectiveness and satisfaction. In the context of intercultural communication it means the willingness to shift one's cultural framework in favour of new categories in order to understand cultural or ethnic differences instead of relying on one's own customary frame. Ting-Toomey (1998) outlined three components of mindful intercultural communication, namely: knowledge, motivation and skills. In the terms

of Ting-Toomey's (1993) Communicative Resourcefulness the same framework is described as cognitive, affective and behavioural resourcefulness. The cognitive component includes mindfulness – mindlessness opposition, categorization – particularization, and framing-reframing. The argument is that successful identity negotiation in a novel situation requires mindful reflexivity, ability to create categories, without going into extremes of fixed stereotypes, and reframing strange encounters as beneficial cultural challenges (Ting-Toomey, 1993).

The affective component is made of reactive emotions (the ability to restrain spontaneous emotional impulses arising from a strange interaction), ego-focused and other-focused emotions (derived from cultural values), and affective and cognitive congruence (congruence of thought, emotions, actions and environment). The general meaning of all the three can be formulated as a person's necessity to summon up one's powers of empathy to understand the position of the partner, balance one's self-conception and ego-focused emotions, and tune one's mind and heart to the cultural environment (Ting-Toomey, 1993).

A resourceful communicator is supposed to keep to reasonable and creative behavioural patterns in protecting one's self-esteem, both personal and group face, and monitor other's expressed self-views, in order to attain meaningful and negotiable goals (Ting-Toomey, 1993). She or he is able to transcend the cultural and ideological boundaries to see the relation of their own self-conception and that of equally important other.

Ting-Toomey (1993) also added the Ethical resourcefulness as a separate point, calling it "the underlying root" to the domains described above. In her argument, Ting-Toomey expressed support of the idea of ethical universalism, acknowledging, however, a large scope of culture-bound ethical and moral norms. The ability that she ascribes to a resourceful communicator, is to hold a responsive dialogue, discovering and emphasizing the general human moral issues, for example that of peace (Ting-Toomey, 1993).

The context of my study can help investigate how these pre-requisites manifest on the example of Tibetan people, whose Buddhist background nurtures the corresponding mindset of compassion, reflexive mindfulness, caring for others and equanimity. The idea of accommodating to the other and skillful flexible behavior striving for mutually-beneficial outcome is also essential to the spiritual doctrine the Tibetan people are brought up with during their life (Dorjee, 2006). Therefore, the study can reveal how this mindset manifests, as the Tibetans describe their intercultural encounters.

Adaptation and discrimination

The role of the host environment in the process of refugee adaptation can hardly be underestimated. As described in the Context part of this study, the situation of Tibetan refugees in Nepal has not always been as difficult as it is now. Apart from political tension, there are also socio-economic factors that aggravate the lack of tolerance and hospitality towards dissimilar ethnic groups. When the life of insiders is not stable and secure, outsider groups may oftentimes become “scapegoats” of the society (Ting-Toomey, 1998). Therefore, the attitude of locals is crucial for harmonious adaptation of the refugees. In this relation, the environment has been really versatile, providing all kinds of attitudes and actions towards the Tibetan community, ranging from open and scot-free discrimination to sometimes inordinately lavish support (Frechette, 2002). The research has to examine how Tibetan refugees residing in Nepal feel they are perceived by locals and foreigners and how much this attitude is connected to their belonging to their ethnic and cultural group.

Ting-Toomey (1998) described different stages of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, where the first presupposes clinging to our ethnic views and ways in dealing with outgroups, and the latter means open and empathetic attitude towards them. She forms a scale from distance of disparagement (including chauvinistic jokes, hostility and even violence) to

interaction support (cooperation and inclusion based on affirmation). The stages in between include avoidance, indifference, understanding and respect successively.

When we disconfirm someone's identity we tend to pretend that they do not exist, resorting to one-sided communication instead of dialogues, distrust their self-expression and use sarcasm, blame and hostile attacks (Cissna & Sieburg, 1986 in Ting-Toomey, 1998). We do the opposite to create the relations built upon trust and mutual acceptance.

Identity disconfirmation without any constraint is likely to lead to discrimination, which Ting-Toomey (1998, p. 164) defined as "antagonistic degradational treatment and behavior aimed at members of an out-group". It can manifest on the level of: individuals (isolate discrimination); groups of individuals (small-group discrimination); general community by way of issuing or neglecting specific regulations against some particular group, for example segregation (direct institutional discrimination); community by way of accepting rules indirectly violating the rights of outgroups (indirect institutional discrimination) (Feagin, 1989 in Ting-Toomey 1998).

The context part of this study clearly shows the environment in Nepal is becoming increasingly rich in examples of discrimination of all sorts, primarily direct and indirect institutional discrimination. The legislation and governmental practices are becoming tougher, transforming the refugees into defenseless types, deprived not only of state and class, but also of basic human rights and freedoms (Tibetan Justice Office, 2002). There are also hostile groups of civil individuals that may represent a material threat to the refugee groups (Tibetan Justice Office, 2002). The sympathetic local individuals or groups may demonstrate support and provide assistance, but with a collectivistic mindset and caste-bound prejudices, the refugee group-members are not very likely to receive much help when it comes to social interaction and they can hardly be accepted as equal. The foreign visitors may have no awareness or concern about the discrimination problems, and anyways, can only offer

material help, which is often a mixed blessing (Frechette, 2002; Mountcastle, 1997).

On the basis of Identity Negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2005), challenging situations within the host environment towards refugee groups are likely to impede the development and accommodation of cultural identity to the surroundings in two extreme ways. One the one hand, it can increase insecurity and ethnocentrism, fueling mutual antagonism and prejudice. In this situation an insecure minority becomes marginalized and unwilling to engage in a constructive change. On the other hand, it can force assimilation and deprive a person of his or her cultural “root”, putting the invaluable cultural heritage at risk. A healthy communication experience presupposes openness and effort both from the side of the host environment and the minority. Both sides are responsible for keeping a tolerant and cooperative tone on the level of mind, emotions and actions. An inquiry into Tibetans’ mental, emotional and practical intercultural skills may provide a deeper understanding of the cause of their problems as a minority. The present research also shows what attitudes and actions, both discriminatory and helpful, the Tibetan refugees see in their intercourse with locals and western visitors, and how they make them feel about their identity.

Dialectics

As a summing-up of the assumptions presented by Ting-Toomey in her Identity Negotiation Theory, considering the concept of mindful intercultural communication and the role of existing discrimination challenges in the host environment, the scheme of Identity Dialectics is presented below and this mechanism is described in the context of this study.

Identity Security	–	Identity Vulnerability
Identity Inclusion	–	Identity Differentiation
Identity Predictability	–	Identity Unpredictability
Identity Connection	–	Identity Autonomy

Identity Consistency – Identity Change

The first dichotomy measures the degree of emotional safety or unsafety, based on group membership in a particular cultural setting (Ting-Toomey, 2005). The aim of this study is to find out the degree of emotional security Tibetan refugees report in difficult circumstances, based on their experiences with other Tibetans, locals and westerners.

The second scope is inclusion – differentiation. Based on the assumptions it is revealed how close the refugees feel to other Tibetans, locals, and westerners, whether they see the necessity for affiliation, cooperation, or strengthening boundary maintenance. These factors are, of course closely connected with the feeling of security, not only identity security, but also personal safety. It can hardly be easy to maintain trust and willingness to cooperate when discriminatory practices are not only allowed, but also conducted by the authorities.

As predictability nurtures trust, the third opposition exposes how much trust they report to have towards other Tibetans, locals and westerners, and how they substantiate their feeling.

Connection and autonomy is valid more for interpersonal context of close relationships. Ting-Toomey (2005) presented this paradigm on a deep level, correlating it with deep knowledge of participants' value orientations, but for the purposes of this study, it concerns the possibility of close relations and their effect on the overall attitude to outgroups.

The final opposition of identity consistency and change represents the biggest interest to this study, as it concerns the self-reported identity dynamics. Ting-Toomey's assumptions help reveal whether and how Tibetans keep to their ethnic identity in controversial interactions with out-groups. Specifically, the two largest areas of concern are: a) spiritual principles, practices and study; and b) native language. The present study shows what inner and outer circumstances represent the biggest challenges, and what gives them hope.

In addition to reporting the current state of affairs, based on out-group interaction

experiences, the interviewees are asked about possible future scenarios, specifically the nearest future in Nepal and long-term prospects for the global Tibetan diaspora in general.

Thus, the lens of Ting-Toomey's (2005) dichotomies, can be used to the situation of Tibetans in Nepal from the perspective of identity inclusion, security, predictability, connectedness, and consistency. These elements of meaningful co-existence of minority and majority cultures can be traced from the answers of Tibetan refugees, based on their self-observation, and perceived image in the mind of non-Tibetans. They can demonstrate it when telling about their emotional security, integration in host society, trust towards its members, feeling of being accepted, and their identity dynamics in these circumstances. The main focus is their identity consistence, i.e. eagerness and effort to preserve their culture, and estimation of whether and how it can be preserved or gradually lost.

The application of the theory in practice is presented under the next heading. Unfortunately, it was not possible to find a more extended scope of research based on Ting-Toomey's (1998; 2005) Identity Negotiation theory, and applicable to the present study. The available research using the concept of 'identity negotiation' did not refer to Ting-Toomey's theory. Whereas the research, based on Ting-Toomey's focused mostly on her Face Negotiation. Among the research, which is based upon Ting-Toomey's Identity Negotiation (1998, 2005) some authors apply these theory to situations, which have no relation to the present study, or build their own theories on top of it. A big part of such research deals with Chinese immigrants in America or Black Americans, and especially with the topic of biculturalism. These sources were used as examples of qualitative of quantitative applications of the theory, but they are not referred to in this thesis, as they do not challenge or test the theory as such. However, some follow-up theories and comparative analyses were useful to broaden the scope of this study to provide a more detailed and comprehensive insight into the issue.

Developments of the theory

Identity Negotiation Competence and Intercultural Personhood

Ting-Toomey's (1998) notion of Identity Negotiation Competence echoes with the concept of Intercultural Personhood, developed by Kim (2008). This bilateral view is very useful for the present study since it describes the mechanism of developing a holistic cultural identity, which is not in conflict with the contrasting environment.

Dai (2009) described intercultural personhood as a mechanism, underlying intercultural communication, connecting it to Ting-Toomey's (1993) Identity Negotiation competence. This view can give a good insight of whether and how the Tibetans' spiritual mindset helps in negotiating their cultural identity in a complicated situation. The Intercultural Personhood is equated to intercultural identity, which echoes with the notions that have been introduced by other authors, who tackled this issue, for example Adler's (1998) multicultural man. Adler's (1998) multicultural man surpasses the limits of one's own culture and nationality and stretches them towards the global human community (Adler, 1998). This person sees the world from multiple points of view, is committed to the unity of all beings, at the same time accepting the differences between them. Adler (1998) calls him 'a new kind of man', and at the same time, he described the multicultural man as timeless, since this worldview has been celebrated by many philosophers in all ages (Adler, 1998). The fundamental difference of his identity is fluidity and susceptibility to change. The paradox of a multicultural man that the author brings up is that he is equally committed to people's similarities across cultures, as well as to their differences.

Adler (1998) gave three key characteristics to the multicultural man: a) psychocultural adaptiveness; b) undergoing personal transitions (continuously becoming and 'un-becoming'); and c) infinite boundaries of the self, i.e. having a flexible self-conception. He embodies three ground principles: a) coherence and significance of every cultural system; b) impossibility of

inherent superiority / inferiority of one culture compared to another; and c) some extent of cultural stipulation (Adler, 1998).

Dai (2009) tended to criticize Adler's concept of multicultural man, accusing him of 'cosmopolitanism', which neglects historical differences in cultures and their development. Instead, Dai (2009) preferred Y. Kim's vision of intercultural personhood, describing it as “not defined rigidly by any single culture”, “open to further transformation” and “representing a high degree of psychic evolution” (Dai, 2009, p.2). However, she critically points out that Kim's argument declared preservation of cultural differences, although its technical achievement via individuation and universalization in personal contacts, actually presupposes the opposite. Kim (2008) also mentioned that the process of developing an intercultural personhood inevitably implies acculturation and deculturation.

Dai (2009) emphasized the importance of knowledge, positive attitude and mindful implementation of them, recognized by Ting-Toomey, for negotiating cultural differences and resolving intercultural clash. She also pointed out that this process is individual, and some particular persons within the same culture can be willing or unwilling to develop a culturally relativistic view (Dai, 2009).

Dai (2009) described the mechanism of development of an intercultural personhood in three stages: unconscious, conscious and creative. Although a person may not realize the change that is happening in his or her mind as a result of intercultural experiences, with their crises and insights, there is a certain development that takes place. Further on, by way of taking interest in, analyzing and accepting the culturally dissimilar other's position, one can consciously participate in this process by making intentional intercultural agreements. In the circumstances of a minority culture within a host culture, this awareness is supposed to help to avoid two radical outcomes: rigidly sticking to one's own values as absolute and dropping them in favour of those of another (host) culture. Moreover, she argues strong family and

ethnic connection is an obstacle in building up an intercultural personhood. When an individual reaches the third stage, he or she is able to not only accept and comprehend, but also to shift to another cultural perspective in order to make an intercultural agreement. Similarly to Adler's (1996) view, at this stage a person does not abandon his or her own culture, but is strongly committed to maintaining his or her own uniqueness.

Finally, Dai (2009) correlated her seeing of the issue with the dialectics presented by Ting-Toomey (1998). She highlighted the importance of identity validation and trust in intercultural situations, as it creates mutual positive attitude, which leads to a more ethno-relativistic mindset. It is personally beneficial, and helps to keep to one's cultural legacy, at the same time welcoming a necessary identity change.

On the level of practical research, Collie (2010) analysed this process interviewing young Assyrian women living in New Zealand. Collie (2010) employed Identity Negotiation lens for a qualitative research and offered a more intuitive vision of the theory working in practice with the help of interview-based inquiry. She combined the two parallel topics, discussed above: identity negotiation and acculturation. On the one hand, she regarded the type of acculturation, according to Berry's (1997 in Collie et al. 2010) framework, categorizing it as integration, which means that the participants of the study mostly prefer to be involved in the host culture, at the same time reasonably keeping to their national traditions and self-image. On the other hand, she resorted to Ting-Toomey's Identity Negotiation Perspective to demonstrate the process of finding a balance between inclusion and autonomy in interpersonal intercultural contacts. As evident from the headline of the article, the research is summoned to demonstrate mindful intercultural communication, meaning a shift from personal ethnocentric perspective without marginalization, and the mindless type of it (Collie et al., 2010). Collie's research (2010) demonstrated elements of mindful intercultural communication in the women's narratives, and the difficulty of integration. Despite the

women's wish to find balance between adapting to the host culture and preserving their own, this balance is described to be more of an oscillation between the two extremes depending on the situation (Collie et al., 2010). The research topic is somehow parallel to the present one, as the focus group is also refugees and a religious minority in their home country.

Expanding Intercultural Competence Model on the basis of Identity Negotiation Theory

Another extension of Identity Negotiation Theory that can bring more understanding to the issue of this research is developed by Arasaratnam (2005) in her attempt to draw up an ICC Model applicable to all cultures, i.e. deprived of the usual western-oriented perspective (Arasaratnam, 2005). Using Ting-Toomey's (1993) developments, as well as other research in the topic of intercultural communication, she added concepts, normally tackled in interpersonal communication, social psychology and anthropology, as well as responses from representatives of 15 different national cultures to suggest a broader vision of the concept.

Arasaratnam (2005) included five elements into her ICC model, which are: Motivation, Experience, Empathy, Global Attitude, Ability to listen / pay attention. These elements can be applied to the context of the present study from the point of the view of Tibetan culture, presented in above chapters.

The first element means any motivation driving a person to consciously engage in an intercultural experience. Experience refers to a person's prior exposure to contacts with people of other cultures. Empathy means other-orientedness and ability to put oneself in other's shoes. Global Attitude is opposite to Ethnocentrism, which means that a person accepts the plurality of cultural mentalities and behaviours, and respects difference. Ability to listen was the last, but not least element elicited in Arasaratnam's (2005) research. All of the

elements can be expected to emerge in Tibetans' communication experiences, and interviews can help to check it.

To test her own model Arasaratnam (2006) applied regression analysis to the answers of 400 respondents, and managed to prove the different extent of positive influence of all the 5 elements on ICC, especially emphasizing the factor of Empathy. Although her study is not deprived of limitations, such as relatively homogeneous cultural background of respondents (mostly Caucasian Americans), and drawbacks of the scale, the quantitative test of this model gives a solid ground for referring to the model. Mindful intercultural communication can be conceptualized using the elements of Motivation, Experience, Empathy, Global Attitude, and Ability to listen / pay attention, and these elements can be traced in the answers of Tibetan refugees as they speak about their intercultural communication encounters, their attitude to cultural diversity and experience in the host environment.

Application to the context

On the basis of the analysis of the Identity Negotiation Perspective as it is presented by Ting-Toomey (1998, 2005), its connection to Kim's (2008) concept of intercultural personhood and Adler's (1998) multicultural man a number of ideas useful for the current study can be derived. The way Tibetans negotiate their identity with locals and westerners is traced from their reflective answers and analyzed with the lens of identity dialectics. Ting-Toomey's (1993) communicative resourcefulness, together with Kim's (2008) intercultural personhood help analyze how well Tibetans manage their intercultural encounters.

Additionally, the study inquires about how and whether the spiritual values are reflected in the way the Tibetans tell about their relations with locals and westerners, and the way they claim to treat culturally different others. For this purpose, a brief description of the Buddhist view of identity is presented further.

Buddhist view of identity

As it has been said before, the Tibetan mentality and self-perception, especially their perception of *self* as a phenomenon is very much connected with their religious tradition, the philosophy of which is spread among people owing to the effort of the Dalai Lama XIV. It is not possible to understand Tibetans' identity negotiation without basic knowledge of the Tibetan Buddhist view of identity. In order to give a fuller and deeper picture of the issue, the Buddhist view of identity is presented and analyzed below. The notion 'identity' for the purposes of this analysis is equated to that of 'self' or 'I', as the term 'identity' is a relatively new and academic designation for what has been referred to as 'I' or 'self' in Indian doctrines.

Buddha's discovery about identity

The exact time when Buddhism originated as a spiritual doctrine is still a debatable issue, but all the sources refer to the same story that happened 2,500 years ago (Dalai Lama XIV, 2005). Buddha Shakyamuni was born as Prince Siddhartha Gautama in a royal family and was not deprived of any mundane happiness (Powers, 2007). Before his birth his father received a prophecy that Siddhartha was going to become either a great ruler, or a great spiritual leader, and being afraid of the latter outcome, his father decided to protect him from the crude reality of existence by confining him inside of the walls of his palace.

When he managed to visit the city outside the palace, he was astonished at the sight of aging, sickness, and death, and even more, at their inevitability (Powers, 2007). He decided to abandon the luxury life he was granted, and dedicate all his effort to intensive ascetic practice. After six years of such exercises he saw them as completely unsatisfactory, and pledged to meditate until he reached the full and complete enlightenment (Dalai Lama XIV, 2005). Forty-nine days after he reached what is commonly referred to 'enlightenment' in

Buddhism, he gave the first teaching.

What he shared is known as the first turning of the wheel of Dharma, and it concerns the Four Noble Truths: the truth of suffering, the truth of the origin of suffering, the truth of cessation of suffering, and the truth of path towards this cessation (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995). The Buddhist term 'suffering' should not be associated merely with what is normally seen as suffering. In fact, what we generally see as pleasurable, would be associated with the suffering of change, meaning that one extreme suffering is extinguished with its opposite, which, although bringing temporary contentment, never fully satisfies and soon leads the sufferer to another form of suffering. The problem of grasping to earthly pleasures or happiness, according to the Buddha, is their impermanent and relative nature that deceives ordinary beings and leads them into suffering. The origin of suffering is considered to be one's grasping to a permanent and inherently existing 'self' or 'I', which has little to do with the reality (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995).

What the Buddha saw when he became enlightened, was the beginningless continuum of his own and others' lives, in which all living beings were involved because of their tendency to grasp at the reality of 'I' (Giles, 1997). This grasping is the root delusion and the source of all other negative states, like anger and attachment, and it is called ignorance. Due to their ignorance, all unenlightened beings are caught in sansara going from one cycle of birth, aging and death to another according to their karma, i.e. their actions and the results of those. The cessation of suffering is one's final empirical recognition of the absence of a solid 'I' or 'self'. This realization, if meditated upon (the truth of path) for sufficient amount of time, leads to one's liberation from sansara, and complete enlightenment (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995).

Dalai Lama XIV (1995) called the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths 'the blueprint for the entire body of the Buddhist thought' (p.16), and many schools of Buddhism actually

restrict their philosophical view to the doctrine originated from the first turning of the wheel of Dharma (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995). However, the Buddha went on to give two more. The second turning of the wheel of Dharma presents a broader and deeper view of emptiness, not only of one's own inherently existing identity and self, but also of outer phenomena. And the third turning is dedicated to the nature of our mind and phenomena, and to the special practices of attaining it (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995).

Vision of different schools

The Buddhist view of personal identity is generally the same in all schools (Dalai Lama XIV, 2005) and pivotal to Buddhism in general, which essentially, makes the teaching of the Buddha a comprehensive theory of identity, or in fact, identitylessness.

In the Tibetan tradition the view of 'self' and phenomena is explained in stages, starting from the most basic philosophical schools to the most advanced. Already in Vaibhashika and Soutrantika, the 'lower' philosophy schools a 'self' is considered to be merely a designator for a series of impermanent psychophysical elements, i.e. material elements, feelings, perceptions, volitions and consciousness, merged together for a limited time into something that we label as a 'person' (Siderits, 2003). However, the existence of 'self', 'I' or 'identity' is not negated. It is simply explained in the terms of the elements that constitute it, other persons and outer reality, and seen as a convenient designator for all this ever-changing conglomeration. It is the illusion created by this designation that leads us into afflictions, powered by our seeing our self as existing separately and independently from the rest of reality (Siderits, 2003). What really is negated in this context is the inherent nature of this 'self', which individuals tend to imagine. The idea of identitylessness is quite foreign to the western philosophical thought (Siderits, 2003), but not completely new. A similar view is

said to be presented as Reductionism (Siderits, 2003), according to which identity is approached not as an entity, but as a set of entities, to which it can be reduced. The view is logically proven by some scholars (Siderits, 2003; Giles, 1997), who also mention that it receives certain criticism of others.

Giles (1997) explained identitylessness in philosophical terms, employing extensive logical analysis, and referring to other scholars, who have expressed similar or critical views on it. He only referred to the Buddhist doctrine as laid out in one of his references, but it clearly resonates with the argument he presented in his work.

According to Buddhist theory, what we call a person is really just an aggregation of the five *skhandhas* or elements. These are physical form, perceptions, feelings, motives, and consciousness. But none of these elements, whether considered separately or in combination, can rightly be identified with the self, for they lack the various qualities we attribute to the self.

(Giles, 1997, p. 142)

The 'qualities' mentioned in this quotation by Giles (1997) are explained by Powers (2007):

When one analyses this concept to locate its basis, however, all one finds are these five factors, none of which can constitute a self because they are constantly changing, whereas the self that sentient beings imagine is self-sufficient and enduring.

(Powers, 2007, p. 72)

Giles (1997) emphasized a differentiation between the ultimate level of existence (absence of inherent identity, 'self', or 'I'), and conventional level, on which these notions function unfailingly. Referring to Powers (2007), it is seeing the mental label 'self' as enduring and self-sufficient, that is negated, not the actual existence or non-existence of it. The conventional level of existence of identity, the way the 'self' appears to us, is not a random illusion. It is described to be governed by the law of conditionality, or cause and

effect, referred to as the law of *karma* (a Sanskrit word meaning ‘action’). The law of cause and effect implies that the actions of body, speech and mind one commits, consequently create the form and the reality one finds oneself in. In other words, the ‘self’ (and in Mahayana doctrine also phenomena) that appears to us is dependent-arising (Powers, 2007), where every single element is dependent on its caused, instead of existing in a self-sufficient and enduring way. This term implies conditionality and dependence on diversity of elements, and, as Giles (1997) suggests referring to the words of the Buddha, “where there is diversity, there can be no identity” (p. 130); no ‘identity’ of a “self-sufficient” and “enduring” kind, no ‘identity’ in ultimate sense. However, on conventional level, the dependent-arising identity is acknowledged as a conglomerate of aggregates (Powers, 2007).

The ultimate purpose is not to stick to a perfect conceptualization of one’s identity, but rather it is to break the habit of mistaking the conglomerate of elements with something imaginary, which individuals have a habit of equating with. In Buddhism this is done in order to become liberated of afflictions, such as anger, attachment, and ignorance, which not only veil the true nature of reality, but also complicate our lives (Giles, 1997). It is to this purpose, that the tool of meditation is employed. Both Giles (1997) and Siderits (2003) used the argument presented in Pali Canon, which is followed in Theravada school. This view is considered to lead its follower to the solitary liberation from the habit of grasping to the illusory designator, mistaking it for inherently existing 'I', that is why it is called Individual Vehicle (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995).

However, this is not exactly the point of view, recognized by the schools of Buddhism practiced by Tibetans. Those philosophers who follow the Buddha's teachings originating from all the three turnings of the wheel of Dharma, refer to the Great Vehicle, or Mahayana (Powers, 2007), as opposed to the Individual Vehicle (Hinayana). Apart from theoretical differences there, the schools also differ in aims: individual liberation versus liberating all the

living beings; and in the scope of practices they use. The emphasis on compassion in Tibetan tradition lies in its understanding of emptiness (Dalai Lama XIV, 2005). Whereas the lower schools accept the self or personal identity as being empty of inherent existence, the higher schools extend the principle of selflessness to the scope of all existents, all phenomena (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995). Practically, this stance is supposed to eliminate the delusions, not only connected with the misconception of 'I', or the perceiver, but also with mistaking the nature of reality, or the perceived, as inherently existent (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995). With the help of logical analysis Mahayana texts prove utter sensibility of the selfless ambition of a Bodhisattva to lead absolutely every sentient being to liberation before plunging into Nirvana.

The Mahayana tradition includes two major schools of thought, specifically Chittamatra, or Mind-Only, and Prasangika, Middle Way. The lower of the two, Mind-Only school is based in its philosophical doctrine on the third turning of the wheel of Dharma. The adherents of this school portray all phenomena as actually being only the projections of one's mind. This way, identity is presented as a set of perceptual and mental functions contained in the ever-lasting mind. Other beings, however, are not described as projections, although the way they are perceived is conditioned only by one's mind, or is exclusively subjective.

The view of the Middle-Way school on the emptiness of 'self' is explained particularly with the reference to the *Heart Sutra*, which is the shortest and also the most important sutra in the Mahayana tradition (Dalai Lama XIV, 2005). The principal difference from the previous Mind-Only school is that the Middle-Way adherents also challenge the solid existence of the perceiving mind, i.e. the differentiation between the subject and object. The Madhyamikas resort to the discursive tool of degrading any solid inherent existence as absurd by way of logical analysis (Dalai Lama XIV, 2005).

However, the object of negation is the intrinsic reality, which individuals believe in, due to their unawareness, not the actual existence of oneself and reality (Dalai Lama XIV,

2005). Self and phenomena do exist, but the way they exist is described as depend-arising. Whereas in the lower schools it meant depending on cause and effect, the Middle-Way school advocates 'dependence upon the conceptual designation of the subject' (Dalai Lama XIV, 2005, p.111). The understanding of this truth is not the immediate conceptual conclusion, but a realization that eliminates the juxtaposition of object and subject, self and reality, and self and other. From this perspective, there is no fundamental or ultimate difference between oneself and the other. This conclusion, even accepted conceptually, is supposed to automatically lead to the feeling of interdependence of all beings, decrease the possible tensions between different individuals and increase empathy. However, the genuine realization of this truth requires not only an immaculate theory, but also incessant practice. The spiritual realization is measured by the degree of habituation to this idea on the deepest level of the mind, hence the Tibetan word for meditation is 'gom', which denotes 'habituation' (Dalai Lama XIV, 2005).

Effect on identity

The Buddhist view of identity, at least on crude conceptual level (not on the level of direct realization), may bear a significant touch of the spiritual doctrine of Tibetan Buddhism. In fact, there is no word for our concept of religion in the Tibetan language. Brox (2008) explains that the word used to describe Buddhism is *chös*, a Tibetan word for *dharma* (Sanskrit). There are many meanings to the Sanskrit word, but in the context of a spiritual teaching, it means "things as they are". In simple words, engaging in religious practice for a Tibetan is not the matter of adopting some religion as a label for oneself, as it is done in many other cultures by naming oneself "Christian", "Muslim" or "Atheist". It is rather a decision to discover the way things are. Religion is not opposed to secularism, and is not a matter of

faithful adherence to a doctrine (Brox, 2008). *Chös* not only accepts, but also encourages challenge and testing. Any seeming discrepancy with common sense or inapplicability of some prescriptions in a particular situation excuses the follower to reject it without the feeling of guilt. Therefore, a Tibetan does not have to be a religious follower in order to assume *chös* to be true. If we look at the Tibetan identity in terms of Tibetan *chös*:

we find that the notion of Self clearly remains located in a paradoxical realm.

Governed by the laws of cause and effect [*depend-arising*], here the Self is understood as a nominal entity that acquires an existence by the mutual interdependence of a number of attributes, the summation of which imparts a semblance of holism and gives rise to a constellation to which we then by agreement ascribe the denomination 'Self'.

(Vahali, 2009, p. 247)

"Reflective self-images" which Ting-Toomey (2005, p. 217) claimed to form what we call identity, are also referred to as "deluded perceptions" in Buddhism. As Ricard (2003) writes following the Dalai Lama's conference at MIT:

If we could remedy our tendency toward deluded perceptions, it would definitely be a step toward understanding the true nature of reality: this in turn would help us stop clinging to it as something solid, but instead to recognize the illusory nature of our conception of the perceiver as a unitary distinct entity within.

(Ricard in Harrington et al, p.71)

However, as it was stated above, there is no refutation or negation of identity as such. So he continues: "This recognition does not result in the loss of identity. Instead one wins inner freedom in relation to phenomena and to stream of one's thoughts" (Ricard in Harrington et al, p.71).

The same idea is explained by the Dalai Lama XIV not only scholarly in terms of

Buddhist philosophy, but also conveyed in simpler language on a more practical level of human relations:

Whether one is rich or poor, educated or illiterate, religious or nonbelieving, man or woman, black, white, or brown, we are all the same. Physically, emotionally, and mentally, we are all equal. We all share basic needs for food, shelter, safety, and love. We all aspire to happiness and we all shun suffering. Each of us has hopes, worries, fears, and dreams. Each of us wants the best for our family and loved ones. We all experience pain when we suffer loss and joy when we achieve what we seek. On this fundamental level, religion, ethnicity, culture, and language make no difference.

(Dalai Lama XIV, 2010, p.180)

This kind of attitude promotes seeing all people essentially as human beings, endowed with the same senses and wish for happiness as oneself, and seeing cultural, religious, ethnic and language identity as secondary to the common human core. Seeing one's and other's identity from this fundamental level nourishes empathy to people and reduce anger and attachment to them on the basis of their identity labels.

It would be a misconception to expect every Tibetan to have possibilities and willingness to follow their philosophic tradition. However, the connection between the Buddhist view of identity, which is spread to people by the Dalai Lama XIV, and manifestations of Tibetan people's perception of their own identity in intercultural encounters, is something that can be sought in the interviews.

Research questions

This discussion leads to the following research questions:

1. How do Tibetan refugees in Nepal report to negotiate their identity in encounters with a) locals and b) westerners, compared to other Tibetans?
2. How much communicative resourcefulness can be traced in how they describe their identity negotiation?
3. What is the role of their spiritual view in forming their communicative resourcefulness?
4. How do they describe the role, means and prospects of preserving their cultural heritage?

The first question reveals how identity dialectics (security – vulnerability, inclusion – differentiation, predictability – unpredictability, connection – autonomy, consistency – change) manifest in their intercultural encounters. It also includes the cultural contracts (assimilation, adaptation, mutual valuation) Tibetans sign as a result of their encounters.

The second question analyses their reported intercultural encounters in terms of Ting-Toomey's (1993) three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioural resourcefulness. On a cognitive level it aims to discover how mindful and reflexive they are in their intercultural encounters, how able they are to form categories without stereotyping, and derive experience from their intercultural encounters. On an emotional level it means the power of empathy and ability to control ego-focused emotions. On a behavioural level the question concerns the skills in choosing suitable behavioural patterns in order to protect one's face, including group face, and adjust to other's self-views and cultural environment. The question also includes ethical resourcefulness, or an ability to emphasize general human values to maintain a responsive dialogue.

The third question deals with Tibetans' spiritual mindset, and the way it affects their communicative resourcefulness and identity negotiation process. The answers of Tibetan

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refugees in Nepal are expected to provide a glimpse into how their philosophical stance is reflected in their attitudes, feelings and behavior, and how they themselves assess its role.

Finally, the fourth question deals with the issue of cultural preservation. The Tibetans are expected to tell what aspects of their culture are the most important to preserve and how it can be done, and also what are the prospects for their culture, whether and how it can be preserved for further generations.

To answer these research questions a list of interview questions was prepared and is presented as Appendix A.

Chapter 3: Method

Collecting the data

To find the answers to the research questions 12 interviews were conducted among Tibetan refugees in Nepal. Six of them were taken in Pokhara and six in Kathmandu, eight with men and four with women. Four interviewees were born in refugee families in Nepal and eight came from Tibet. To connect the theory with the answers, I used structured respondent interviews, consisting of 17 questions, referring to different aspects of identity negotiation and further research on the topic.

The qualitative method was chosen due to the complicated nature of the research questions and a technical impossibility to perform a valid quantitative study in the absence of sufficient number of respondents and language barrier. The two approaches differ essentially: “Quantitative researchers look for relationships among phenomena; qualitative researchers look to understand how phenomena are seen through the eyes of their research participants” (Treadwell, 2014). This way, apart from technical impossibility, a qualitative insight also provided a possibility to analyze the answers in more detail, bringing in the background knowledge and allowing free space for comments and considering surrounding circumstances, non-verbal messages, the general tone of the narratives, and other details that form a comprehensive picture of the issue. However, the choice of a qualitative approach could not ensure the validity of selection and reliability of findings (Treadwell, 2014).

The fieldwork took place in spring 2013, right after a self-immolation by a Tibetan monk in Boudha, Kathmandu, so the tense atmosphere around Tibetans had escalated dramatically. Therefore, when I started in Kathmandu it was very hard to find any respondents who were not afraid to talk. Fortunately, some people had already given their consent before the beginning of the fieldwork, but still they showed carefulness and suggested to first meet up and chat before they could be recorded. As a sampling strategy I used

purposeful sampling, because the respondents needed to have some intercultural experience not only with the locals, but also with westerners, and needed a sufficient command of English to express themselves. In the case of elusive population Lindlof et al. (2002) recommends using snowball sampling, as the respondent may be hard to find openly. However, not all respondents were eager to engage their friends and contacts, and politely refused to cooperate, not to put them at risk. A certain uneasiness and mistrust of the in-groups is common when entering the environment (Lindlof et al., 2002), especially considering the time and place I started the research in, so addressing the heads of settlements in advance was a good way to obtain a more trust-provoking image among other respondents.

The length and extensiveness of interviews differed quite a lot, depending on the language skills and succinctness of the respondents. Relatively short interviews were given by those, who had either poor language skills, as they were unable to express themselves fully, or very good ones, as they were able to verbalize their ideas very concisely and accurately. One woman even asked me to send her the questions by email and came to our meeting with a copybook, where all her answers were written in perfect English. Her interview lasted only 22 minutes, and still included many details, that she had not initially mention in her notes. Overall language skills were sufficient for understanding the questions and expressing ideas, but repetitions and filler words took so much time that the interview could stretch for over an hour. Some respondents just seemed to like talking and philosophizing, so they often deviated from the question topic, and demanded a lot of attention to their ideas and background knowledge, and gave information I did not inquire, and very often their narratives also bore an implicit or even explicit political appeal.

When the answers were relevant to the questions, there were still two more important pitfalls to consider. Both of them concern the precision and reliability of the reports and both of them are mentioned in qualitative research guides (Lindlof, 2002; Barbour, 2008;

Treadwell, 2014). The first was a positive picture the respondents were sure to be trying to convey of themselves. Regular donations, on both individual and organizational level, motivate them to maintain a good record and often to shift and alter their real opinion, lifestyle and values to those of their sponsors, even prospective ones (Mountcastle, 1997). One of the respondents made a tongue-slip, which is illustrative to this, saying without any irony: “*Tibetans are very important to generate love, peace, all these... words*”. However, an individual impression, received from non-verbal signals, general tone and other factors beyond the actual content of the narratives, can help a researcher to distinguish a reference to a person’s real genuine feelings and attitudes from well learnt vocabulary they adopt in front of a third party, which is sympathetic to their case.

The second problem concerns examples and stories the refugees tell. For the purposes of the research, they cannot be treated as *stories lived*, as factual information or depiction of real events (Eastmond, 2007). The refugees’ narratives are deeply rooted in the stories of their common past, the ideas of Tibet, both real and artificial, their common cultural heritage, and have to be perceived in this context. The narratives bear much more individual perception and interpretation, than real information and facts, and the attitude to the facts should also be considered in the analysis (Eastmond, 2007).

This way, in the case of self-reported questions it is not easy to distinguish between a person’s real intercultural communication competence and wishful thinking. But at least, answers like these can be confidently analyzed as their desired position. The stories they tell and the logic they use in their reasoning were analyzed to draw a more realistic picture of their intercultural mindset.

Analyzing the data

Lindlof et al. (2002) mentions there is a wide range of applicable ways, when it comes to the precision of transcription, and it can also be done by a side person. I transcribed the interviews myself in order to avoid the mistakes another person could make not knowing the specific vocabulary the respondents used, as well as names and events they referred to. Many respondents used filler words and repetition, and I tried to preserve them, where they seemed meaningful, although moderately weeding the text to be easier to make sense of. The messages I received in the interviews were categorized and analyzed with thematic analysis. Categorization and analysis were assisted a lot by the structured form of the interviews, and the answers could mostly be connected to research questions. The broad conceptual network provided by the theory review, the detailed description of context, and structured interviews allowed to sort answers into categories for the purposes of analysis (fixed coding) rather than let the categories emerge in the process of analysis (flexible coding) (Treadwell, 2014). Theoretic thematic analysis ('top-down') was found to be more suitable for the study than inductive ('bottom-up'). Approaching the data from the perspective of theoretical presumptions did not provide a very broad analysis of the overall answers, but ensured a deeper insight into the most relevant aspects of the data (Braun et al., 2006).

The data was analyzed manually in MS Word, as structured interviews and fixed coding made it rather clear and easy to handle without using specialized programmes. Barbour (2008) suggested that colors can be used for marking and arranging the data in the transcripts, and I found this tool surprisingly useful. The colour not only marked a certain category, but also its intensity and brightness signified cohesion or dissonance with the theory. Then the results were arranged in categories, the emerged themes were reviewed and defined, following the theoretical line and the order of interview questions. Braun et al. (2006) warn against six pitfalls of doing a thematic analysis. In my case of using 'bottom-up' approach

and following the interview schedule, a typical mistake to be aware of was using the questions as themes. This was avoided by relying on the messages and theoretical topics in fixing the themes, while using the interview questions as a map, but not as a route.

The first question was introductory and asked about Tibetans' self-perception. Questions 2-10 and 13-15 elicited answers mostly to research questions 1 and 2, allowing to create categories referring to the processes of identity negotiation, with the dichotomy of identity consistency versus change regarded separately, and communicative resourcefulness on 3 levels: attitudinal, emotional and behavioral. Some of the replies to these questions were used in answering research question 3, tackling the role of their spiritual beliefs in their intercultural competence. Interview questions 11 and 12 present more direct answers to the same questions. The focus in this part is etic, i.e. the given answers are analyzed in terms of the research, based on theory. In approaching the questions concerning the respondents' worldview the focus is emic, i.e. the data is analyzed in terms they use, from the viewpoint of their philosophy and belief. Then concepts are analyzed to see how they resonate with the ideas of communicative resourcefulness and intercultural personhood. Finally, the last two questions of the interview inquire about the prospects of preserving the culture, the aspects, primarily worth preserving, and the ways to preserve it. The direct answers to these questions are analyzed alongside with tacit knowledge and indirect messages given throughout the interview, for example, when they admit forgetting the language. The latter questions added two more categories: the role of spiritual view and the prospects of preserving the culture. The interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

All these tools made it possible to make sense of how Tibetan refugees in Nepal negotiate their identity, how much communicative resourcefulness they show, what role their religious belief plays in this process, and how their culture can be preserved.

Chapter 4: Results

General trends and outline

The majority of interviewees have similar trends in their responses, which have to be considered in the analysis and may be seen as limitations to the research. First of all, the concept of culture is very much connected in their mindset with religion, and they differentiate people by the religion they refer to. Another peculiarity is that it seems to be difficult for them to conceive a question: “What do you think they think of you?” Many respondents faced difficulties understanding it, and when it was explained, some were still talking either about their attitude to or their relations with ‘them’. Lastly, the answers sometimes sound more like their desired way of thinking rather than what they really think.

The results are presented and discussed below in order to answer the research questions and illustrate the theoretical assumptions, analyzed in previous chapters. The first point is how Tibetans perceive their own identity, what they associate with being Tibetan and what it means for them. Then the discussion deals with Ting-Toomey’s (1998) dialectics and analyzes the answers from the perspective of her assumptions. A separate section analyses the dichotomy of identity consistency and identity change to see how the Tibetan identity develops in this negotiation process. These parts of Results and Discussion answer the first research question: How do Tibetan refugees in Nepal negotiate their identity in encounters with a) locals and b) westerners, compared to other Tibetans?

The next section looks at the answers in order to assess the Tibetans’ communicative resourcefulness, and is based not only on Ting-Toomey’s (1993) homonymous concept, but also on her concept of mindfulness, correlation with Kim’s (1998) and Adler’s (1996) concepts of Intercultural Identity and Multicultural Man, as well as Arasaratnam’s (2005) ICC model, based on Ting-Toomey’s research. This section answers on the second question: How much communicative resourcefulness do they show in their identity negotiation?

The third research question is answered by bringing quotations of the respondents speaking about the role of their spiritual doctrine in their life, and especially in their intercultural encounters, and connecting their ideas to the intercultural communication research, analyzed above. And finally, the last question concerning the preservation and prospects of the Tibetan culture is answered by sharing the Tibetans' ideas of threats and opportunities for the preservation of their culture, the ways it can be and has so far been preserved, as well as the challenges it is likely to face.

Self-perception

When asked about what it means for them to be Tibetan, some respondents mentioned qualities of character they associate with it, such as compassion and honesty. For example, "Compassion, peace and peace-loving, this one I feel as Tibetan"; "moral people in Nepal"; "we are doing very well because of hard work and honesty". As Karma, an activist puts it:

Since our great-grand-parents, and high lamas they always pass us one thing. That we need to be honest, we need to be compassionate, we need to be kind, and so that is human quality, and for that reason, I think that thing is very important. This is the difference. I didn't mean that in other cultures they don't have that, but in my point of view, I am very proud that in Tibetan community and Tibetan culture we have that count as one main important thing.

This way, the values they are taught from childhood, are very much associated with their cultural identity.

Another thing they mention is how proud and fortunate they feel about their identity. "Tibetan is something really I can be proud of, and be privileged"; "I'm very proud to be Tibetan and we have such good nation leader as His Holiness the Dalai Lama"; "I was very

fortunate to be born in a Tibetan family, where we have so much culture and tradition”.

Some describe their culture as ‘ancient’, ‘unique’, especially with its connection with Buddhism and the Dalai Lama, and how important it is to preserve it.

A few simply said that it is their nationality, and they do not put much meaning into it. “Because that was my country”; “my father, mother, which one you know, of the Tibetans, then I feel you know, it’s the same with Tibetan people”.

Identity negotiation: Simplified dialectics

From the point of view of identity negotiation theory we can analyze the responses through the prism of dialectics. Although the real answers obtained from the Tibetans do not provide a detailed insight into Ting-Toomey's (1998; 2005) assumptions, the general trends suggested by Ting-Toomey can be traced from the responses.

The Tibetans gave rather homogeneous answers concerning their cultural closeness with Nepali. All of them mention that the population of the Himalayan region is very close to them culturally and ethnically. They share the same religion and some regions had even been parts of Tibet at some point. However they do not feel the same closeness with the Hindu population, which is the majority in Nepal. All interviewees mention that they perceive the Hindu Nepali different to a various extent. Apart from the religion, the differences are seen in several other aspects. First, it is traditions of family life, cast and animal sacrifice;

Pema, a school headmistress, mentions specifically traditions Tibetans do not understand or approve of: “like animal sacrifice, which we don’t practice at all ... cast system, low cast high cast, this too much, we don’t have”. She also mentions traditions of women mistreatment.

Tinley, a language teacher, is rather neutral and general in describing differences in

family life: "...we both are working together, no differences in husband and wife, any work they do both of them. Other than Tibetan, Indian or Nepali, like wife stays at home and husband will go for the work".

A social sciences student Sonam, who is married to a Nepali woman, sounds very positive speaking about Nepali "male chauvinist" culture:

Most of my Tibetan friends, they may not be agreed with my idea, but I think in comparison to Tibetan girls, Nepali girls are more understandable, they are more simple and they have high sense of respect towards her husband and family, because of the culture. Because Nepali culture is more male chauvinistic, more male-dominant [and you like it? laughing] Yes. Because when we had our education we learned about equality between the male and female, like the same. But now in the real life when I entered to real life, I think you know... I'm not arguing that my wife should respect me and all these things, there should be a mutual understanding between male and female, or even husband and wife. But according to the situation and location, we have to be adapted. [giggling]

Most respondents when asked whether a love relationship or marriage with locals would be possible confidently answer positively, unless they are monastic or married.

Another difference seen is the way of treating other people in general. A Buddhist nun describes it:

Nepali, in their homes or houses, they are not much going into helping each other, and they don't want to know each other's feelings, what they dream, how he feels, he feels like that, m... And especially, I feel like their culture everything is a little bit like... Not caring for others.

A few more people mention the same. However, they immediately explain it by either the Nepalis' not knowing, not understanding or lacking belief in their religion, like an activist

Dawa says:

They are relating to their religion and it says karma is right. But many of the people practically, they never, they do not believe in it. Cause they need in reality a good guru to teach them what is really karma is;

Or they explain it by lack of education and knowledge about the Tibet issue, which their Chinese-pressured political parties use in “brainwashing” them about Tibetans: “mostly these left-sided, they’re uneducated”; “China is trying to disturb our cooperation in Nepal. For instance now the Chinese all wish all these Himalayan people also to be against Tibetans, not to support the case of Tibet”; “This is because the Chinese government with all its pressure, the Chinese speak the army, to the Nepalese government, and the Nepalese government brainwash the people”.

Surprisingly, Tibetans feel much more closeness to the westerners they come to meet in their life. Speaking about westerners Tibetans admire their education and open mind: “Tibetans are more shy, the westerners are very interested for the world, and they are very open”; “their attitude, and the way they are doing, and the openness, I just appreciate that”.

They also feel much more closeness with those of them, who take real interest in Tibetan culture, and especially, who follow Buddhism, for example, according to Karma:

There a lot of westerners who really like to be Buddhist. Especially, when so many westerners I met, most of them are Buddhist I think. They were turned into Buddhism. So that means we have like same culture. The kind of kindness characteristic, love, compassion, equanimity, all these we use to be, I mean. Now for westerners ... we have seen the culture of Buddhism.

Although generally there is more closeness than with westerners, there are also some specific differences: several respondents mentioned short-temperedness, lack of patience, and particularity about time and arrangements.

Another point of difference is that westerners do not show the same respect to books and texts, which is traditional among Tibetans: “One of my friends, she’s a Buddhist and she has been 16 years to become Buddhist. But one day she kept her socks and underwear on the Buddha text. I was very surprised”. However, the nun, who mentioned it, showed good tolerance to such differences at the same time: “I thought, it’s okay, okay. You know, the different culture.”

One mentioned the difference in the attitude to old age in the West and among Tibetans: “In our culture when we speak of age of the people, this is more respect. But in western culture, if I mention your age, I'm very close up”. Dorje, an activist in his late 60s, said that he had noticed it many times with older western people, and gave an example of an American lady, who took his comment “It must be difficult in your age” very much to heart.

Sonam, a student of social sciences, said that westerners act more from the mind, whereas Tibetans act more from the heart: “So they have a system, we have emotions. They have, there are many social workers, they work with mind. But we, eastern people, work with heart”. Sonam was also the only respondent who said he could fully trust the Nepali, while he could only trust westerners “institutionally, not personally”.

Despite these differences, westerners are still seen closer, even though some respondents say that they can only make this conclusion judging by the tourists and volunteers, taking interest in Tibetans, and they are not so sure that their relations with westerners would be the same if they came to their country, like Norbu, meditation centre administrator, born in Nepal:

They come on vacation, they have a very relaxed mind, very comfortable. But in their respective country, I don't know! [laughing] Might be different people! [laughing] you see? ... Emotionally feel secure, sharing, caring, everything is okay. But I heard many stories about being in the west, it's not like here and being the west, it's different

people, you see? Here you feel, oh these poor people, this sympathy and yes, but back at home, you are stressed, you work, you have this many things, schedule and everything. And I say: hey, we met in Nepal, hi, how are you? - What you? I don't know. You want a meeting? Make an appointment!

Or Pema:

As a matter of fact, some of my friends also told me, some westerners can also be not so nice, also when they come here, they are very friendly, but when you go to their country, they don't treat us that well as we treat them here. I heard.

Several respondents also mentioned the gratitude they feel towards westerners for the help they provide to Tibetans and the Tibet issue, like Tsering, head of settlement, says:

(...) the Tibetan exile community is based on the financial, technical, educational and other support of westerners. In the name of UN, or UNICEF, UNESCO, European Union, like that. I mean Tibetan community is held by European community, supported by European community. That's why we are really happy and we are really thankful towards European people, because of their kind support.

However, three people described the motives behind the help rather as “pity” or “sympathy”, than real compassion, explaining the difference between the concepts: “compassion is from the heart, level to level, same you give. Sympathy means you look down, like poor guys, sympathy”.

According to Ting-Toomey (1998) cultural closeness creates identity predictability (trust). All respondents say that there is cultural closeness with Himalayan Nepali, but the local Nepali people enjoy very little or no trust of the Tibetan refugees regardless of their origin and religion: “it's very difficult to trust them”; “local people we cannot trust in a sense, there are many ways, in a sense politically, I cannot trust them”; “My trust level is going every day lower with local people”.

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The reasons for identity unpredictability can be on personal level due to difference in values, or due to political instability and the activity of the Chinese-minded government: “if tomorrow, we are going to organize some kind of a religious feast then if we speak with local people, then it will lead to this, you know, police and all these things”

The two people, who said they could fully trust Nepali, were from Pokhara. One of them was a student, married to a Nepali (Sonam), who also said he did not speak Tibetan as well as Nepali, and had much more Nepali friends. He was a rather vivid example of identity change as a result of openness to the host culture in other ways as well. The other lady (Jampa) spoke almost exclusively positively about everything. She was the director of a settlement, and claimed there to be full mutual trust between Tibetans and Nepali, “because without trust to them, trust to Nepali, and Nepali government, they won't let us stay here”.

The categories are flexible and the amount of trust depends on individual: “If like, I'm a Tibetan, if she's a Nepali, and we are married, I can trust”; “Marriage means full trust, friends means trust. If you don't have trust you don't make friends”; “if we have a good relationship with someone, we can trust”.

For some there may not be a distinction on individual level between a local and another Tibetan in terms of trust: “If I don't know the person, or the Tibetan people, if I don't know, we interact, if we don't know each other, the trust is a little bit difficult.”

However surprising it may seem, almost all respondents state full emotional comfort with the local population, and even those who do not, say that they have or have had really good Nepali friends, “like brothers”. Those refugees, who have lived in both Nepal and India, mention that Nepali people are much more easy-going and comfortable to deal with, than Indians, and overall impression is that Tibetans and Nepali have very little conflict or cultural misunderstanding. On this background their identity unpredictability is especially contrasting. For example, Tinley was saying how smooth and harmonious relations with locals are, but

when asked about trust, kept a long pause and said quietly: “I cannot trust at all”.

Identity negotiation: Consistency – Change

As the dichotomy of identity consistency – identity change is particularly important not only to answer the first research question about identity negotiation, but also the fourth one, to analyze prospects of preservation of the Tibetan culture, it is considered under a separate sub-heading.

When asked about the transformation and identity change Tibetans are undergoing in Nepal, the respondents give varying answers. About a half of them said with different level of certainty that their cultural identity remains consistent. The most assuring answers sounded like: “Nothing has been changed, we’re all the same. You are a Tibetan refugee, whether you are staying in Nepal, whether you are staying in Switzerland, whether you are staying in America, whether you are staying in India”; “I don’t think we are becoming less Tibetan. In fact, I feel like we are becoming stronger here”.

The two monastic respondents, a monk and a nun, said that they have little contact with the outer lay society and their lifestyle is very traditional, so they said with some hesitation that their identity remains the same, and they do not see any major change or transformation. Karma and Dawa point out that there is outer change due to the requirements of the environment and the restrictions to gather, but internally Tibetans do not become or feel less Tibetan. In fact, they even say that the outer restrictions make the essence of being Tibetan grow stronger:

(...) now culture is like, less culture, in a sense, outwardly, we don’t see that much gatherings and all these things, but internally, I feel like there’s more, I mean, culture within us, like there is more, and there is a suffering inside, that we should keep the

culture, religion all these things.

Some mention education to be the first point of transformation for Tibetans in exile, the change in political, social and economic system and facing other cultures. Sonam is definitely positive about it:

That moral processes changed, political system also changed, because in 1972 His Holiness the Dalai Lama declared that the Exile community, the Tibetan community will be based on democratic system. ... So transformation, changing in our administrative system, our economic, economic structure of society changed. ... Supposed if my country is still independent. I don't think I would have the same kind of living. I don't think I would be working with laptop. I may have a mobile like that, but I think, I'm riding a horse. [laughing] You know, I would be a cowboy.

(...)

And this is the transformation, myself, my attitude, how to be with, if you are living in a different society, how to go with this society. This is grown up. This is transformation which I have learned being with those people and in this society, this is internal transformation.

The answers also arouse an assumption about what conditions are better for Tibetans in terms of identity consistency. In Nepal the government institutions create the conditions of discrimination and scapegoating. Some respondents complain that the pressure is not only seen in the government's defiance to cooperate and even to acknowledge the presence of Tibetans, but also in the local people's lack of interest in and sympathy for Tibet issue. Political lobbying leads to creating an image of Tibetans as of immigrants who usurp their resources and are richer than locals. This creates jealousy from the side of Nepali, and Tibetans lose their trust towards Nepali people. However, emotionally the relations between the local population and Tibetans are described as “cooperative”, “very emotionally

comfortable” and “friendly”, regardless of cultural, ethnic and religious differences. The size of the Tibetan community, the settlement structure, the vicinity of cultural and religious objects and the interest of foreigners, on the other hand, serve as positive factors.

However, when it comes to Tibetans coming to the west, the situation may be different. Two people recalled stories of visiting Europe they heard, when western people did not show the same hospitality and friendliness they enjoyed from Tibetans. When Tibetans come to western countries to live, according to the interviewees, is also a totally different matter. In the highly competitive environment, isolated from their community, they often face the option of assimilation instead of mutual valuation. Norbu and Dechen mention it:

Many of my friends, relatives live in America, I know how much they are suffering now. Because you have to make your living standards. Before your living standard is this much - dahlbhat [Nepali rice and lentil], okay? [laughing] And now your living standard is this much [showing high]. Because you have chosen this, you got sucked into American society, you have to keep it up. To keep it is not easy, it's difficult. I'm fortunate that I hadn't got tricked.

When Tibetan child was born in the West he doesn't have that much opportunity to gain Tibetan culture from the parents, and the parents used to be busy and all these things, so that's why the Tibetan culture that we used to preserve we try to preserve, now that's declining.

This way, despite the hardships of life in Nepal, it may represent a good environment for identity rootedness, allowing a positive change. Moving to the west, on the other hand, despite the tempting level of life, may bring a threat of assimilation.

Intercultural personhood and communicative resourcefulness

The basic scheme to analyze the respondents' intercultural communication competence is Ting-Toomey's (1993) communicative resourcefulness, which manifests on three levels: attitude, emotions and behaviour. All of the three levels are vividly presented in the answers of the interviewees. The mental level of mind, which includes mindful includes reflexivity, categorization without stereotyping and deriving positive experience out of intercultural encounters, for example, Dawa mentions:

Culturally different is not a big thing, in my point of view. Because everyone of us may have a unique country, and according to that country, where you grow up, where you're raised, we all have slightly different. Even we all human beings are same, but still we grew up, the way we are raised according to our nation's rules and regulations, everybody have a little bit different way. So culturally different is, it is our self, we have to understand it. And we have to adapt. Those things are not a big deal, everybody has differences. Or that is you don't need to think about, your culture is the best and everybody should be like your culture.

Other respondents also pointed out mutual learning and cultural exchange, importance of global responsibility over cultural background, and see culture as not an inherent, but “man-made” thing.

It is also reflected on emotional level, which presupposed emphatic attitude, other-based emotions and attunement to the environment:

Tibetan, Nepali, Americans, Europeans and whoever may be, we always love each other. There's always, there's no gap. For more human value. The word human doesn't mean that you are American, or Japanese. You are human, I am human. I am respecting your value, you are respecting my value, there's no contradiction, there's always harmony there. If there's harmony, then you feel love to each other. When

there's harmony, it's very nice and wonderful.

Many respondents mention that people deserve respect and cherishing regardless of their culture. They claim there to be no contradiction between cultures, since every culture is “beautiful” and suitable for its representatives, and it depends on geographical and historical factors.

And lastly, it manifests on behavioural level, which means creative use of suitable behavioural patterns for protecting personal and group face and achieving intercultural goals:

My own individual approach is working. I don't know others, but this is dependent on how you just compliment and express, how you just make them that is right. (...) The police and people who beat me, I success to this. If your attitude is positive, and you're going to solve the problem, most of time you will do it.

Apart from positive and constructive action, they also introduce strict discipline in the settlements, attend local festivals, and in case of a conflict, refer to common human values.

Bringing up Adler's (1996) concept, discussed in the theory review, an example of a multicultural man was the student of social sciences Sonam. He was born in Nepal, went to a Nepali university, married a Nepali, spoke Nepali better than Tibetan and had a lot of Nepali friends. He considered himself “Buddhist”, but said he respected all traditions, and actually would go to Hindu temples to pray. These signs definitely signify cultural assimilation to the host society, but at the same time at the time of the interview Sonam was hoping for an opportunity to go to study abroad, spoke excellent English, and was known in the settlement as an ardent fighter for Tibet cause. The multicultural thinking behind Sonam's lifestyle and actions is reflected in his own words: “If we are shouting that my culture is great, your culture is not, my religion is great, your religion is not. That is outfashioned, outdated, expired ideas”. He gives a good illustration to it:

For example, in Africa there is one island, like, New Papua Guinea, a small small

island. That island people they worship a pig, a big black pig as a god, and other people of other island they kill that pig and enjoy it in their festival and their ceremony.

Actually, it is the same pig for that same pig, is differently seen by different people. Sonam also mentions that cultural differences can be “misutilized” politically, like they are “in Nepal in the name of federalism”, or “now some people they realize Iraq war is not only the war between NATO and Iraq, it is also a religious war, some people, some philosophers, they think like that”, and claims “debate in the name of culture” to be a “sign of foolishness”.

For Sonam being open to different cultures means “feeling and sharing the culture of different people” and practical learning. He says:

So I think that culture difference is... is the way to understand other cultures people. If we understand that culture difference in positive way, positively then I think that culture difference make people more and more knowledge. Like Christians, they have their own ideology, they have their own faith, right. But if a Christian wants, he’s interested, he wants to do some study in Buddhism, then he may get more ideas, the new idea in Buddhism, that is not possible to get in Christianity. And similarly, I’m Buddhist follower and if I’m interested to learn some in Christian, because that’s the culture difference, if I start to learn that Christian that I may get new idea, that is not possible to get in Buddhism. So that culture difference if we understand that culture difference positively, it is a learning process, it is a process of enriching our mind, not only that, it is like, you know, source of creating harmonious relationships with people.

According to Sonam, this broad attitude does not change his Tibetan heart: “my main heart is Tibetan, my main heart is lama Buddhism, but I want to learn things about others”. He brought an example of his western friend, whom he had entertained in Nepal, taking interest in Hindu temples and Buddhist monasteries: “Actually, his heart is Christian, I know. But he wants to keep respect to other religions and he wants to be adjusted with the situation in

other's country. That's why he's changing his mind. That means out-minded, that means modern-minded".

Sonam agrees with most respondents, saying that the main thing to be preserved about the Tibetan culture is religion, which he defines as "the constitution of your heart". However, when he talks about his religious beliefs he speaks in theistic terms, foreign to Buddhism: "(...) we believe that there is one God. If I say a lie, if I do some wrong work then God will be disappointed, after my deed there may be some problem (...) when God is satisfied, then God may help me".

Two activists, Dawa and Karma demonstrate a high degree of universal outlook, panhuman values, and global responsibility in their words. Dawa says: "I don't differentiate, we are just different in colours, but generally we are all the same. Just we both need love and don't want to be in suffering"; "whether you are Buddhist, or non-Buddhist, there is no difference, but at least you are just making somebody's life"; "Cause we all are interdependent and somehow, someday you are here, somehow you'll be somewhere. At that time you'll have to adjust with that place. And actually we have intereffect". And Karma says: "For me culture, as a universal, where we should take responsibility, we should say like, we have to save this planet (...) preserve this humanity, the kind of humanity, preserving truth (...); "Even what kind of culture they are different, we all need happiness and we don't need sorrow, and this is what we are, and I think we are same"; "For me it is open minded culture. There is no difference between cultures, but in the name of culture people used to destroy this world, [laughing], so that is different".

However, from their answers it becomes clear that "same" does not mean uniform, it means equal. Therefore, the universalism they are speaking about does not eliminate cultural differences, or merge people into a culturally homogeneous mass, but rather it celebrates the cultural variety, exchange, and learning, creating space for different cultures to co-exist being

different in form and essence, but equal in rights and importance. In these words Dawa explains cultural differences and his attitude: “So, I have a lot of experience, how to, they kind of people, think, behave, every experience brings new knowledge”; “people who belong to this location (...) they are proud of their culture (...) all the religions is important, because that culture is important for that place. Because geographically, these people have their own kind of tradition, culture”.

And Karma draws the line between universalization and individuation when he speaks about preserving his own Tibetan culture: “there is a suffering inside, that we should keep the culture, religion all these things”.

Another activist, Dorje from Pokhara, expresses a similar global attitude, but keeps loyal to his own culture: “Unfortunately the world is divided into more than 200 countries, you know. Unfortunately I call, I wish one world. (...) So that is we have the truth and everybody speaks peace, everybody speaks peace”.

He speaks of cultural exchange and sharing the good things, recalling his experience of a yoga retreat at a Hindu Sri Sri Ravishankar centre, where people from different cultures gathered to do yoga:

This centre is huge, one time 1600 people gathered, very peace, no complains, I have trained in some shops, they just leave things there with price, people take things and leave the money, no shopkeeper. So they try to create heavenly, peacefully world, which is wonderful I think. So that gave me such platform to my Buddhist belief.

Three other respondents: an NGO director, a settlement director and a teacher, also demonstrate a similar stance, however without stressing cultural universalism:

Even we all human beings are same, but still we grew up, the way we are raised according to our nation’s rules and regulations, everybody have a little bit different way. So culturally different is, it is our self, we have to understand it. And we have to

adapt. Those things are not a big deal, everybody has differences. Or that is you don't need to think about, your culture is the best and everybody should be like your culture, - says Dechen.

Though we are different in culture, religion, and everything, but first you have to think we are the human being. This is one of the great things, the essence of a human being, we are having the same same thing, only thing our skin is different, our hair colour is different, speaking is different, mother tongue is different. Only thing is these difference, - says Jampa.

Tinley admits seeing cultures as “different”, but thinks they should not compete in importance, but learn from each other:

In our whole universe we have a different different culture... for me like they are all different, I cannot say any bad things about any other traditions, I cannot say like my religion, my tradition, my identity is cool, I cannot say.

The importance of cultural exchange and education is also mentioned to monastic interviewees, a monk:

Education is the best way. ... To get knowledge from others. That is very important.

It's my opinion, you know. Mostly educated you can learn, and then also one thing is travel. Travelling to different country and you learn about different culture.

And a nun: “learn something, each other's thing, like different culture. What specialty in Nepali culture is going, and what is special in Tibetan culture”.

These examples seem to disprove Dai's (2009) criticism of Kim (1998), showing that a universal attitude does not necessarily lead to gradual losing one's culture. On the contrary, if one keeps to one's culture and enriches it with intercultural encounters, it is more likely to increase cultural identity salience. However, the first example of Sonam shows that multiculturalism can lead to rootlessness if the host culture assimilative pressure is high and

not resisted.

Another point under analysis was Arasaratnam's (2005) ICC model developed on the basis of Ting-Toomey's (1993) communicative resourcefulness. The model includes five pillars of mindful intercultural communication, which are: Motivation, Experience, Empathy, Global Attitude, Ability to listen / pay attention. Nine of the abovementioned interviewees demonstrated these points in their answers to some extent. The remaining three were not as universalist in their intercultural attitudes, and rather demonstrated high identity salience and rootedness, making clear that loyalty to Tibetan culture is their priority.

Norbu, a meditation centre administrator, who was open, but skeptical about cultural closeness with locals or westerners, said:

For me personally, I respect other cultures and things, but I'm not really interested. You know? Because I'm very much satisfied with what I have, and it helps me a lot with myself. ... It doesn't mean that I'm not open to anything, just not interested. If I'm interested, I would open to it, but at the moment I'm not interested.

This way Norbu's ICC model is missing the first pillar: motivation. However, he does not see it as a permanent stance.

Pema, a school headmistress, implicitly shows a similar ICC model pattern. She talks very high about Tibetan culture, and admits Tibetans to be the only people she could trust ahead of knowing them well, and when asked about attitude to other cultures, she reiterates her motto: "live and let others also live".

An example that stands out from the overall excellent or exceptional intercultural communication competence of the Tibetan respondents, was that of a settlement director, Tsering. Tsering says a lot of elevated things about intercultural harmony, respect for human essence of each person, but when talking about relations with the locals and with westerners, he does not seem to demonstrate the first, mental level of Ting-Toomey's (1993)

communicative resourcefulness, i.e. ability to categorize without stereotyping. Throughout the interview, I had a feeling that it was not the researcher, who was conducting the interview, but Tsering, who was trying to send his message across squeezing it into the interview questions. He was talking lavishly and exaltingly about Tibetans, Tibetan culture, their peace and harmony, and their ardent, but wise struggle against the blatant injustice of the situation in Tibet and in Nepal by means of the middle-way approach. He was also proudly demonstrating his knowledge of geography, history and Nepali society, and interacting to grasp more attention, for example like this:

In English they say when in Rome, do as Romans do. When in Russia, what are you doing? Now you are no more in Russia, you are in Finland. So you have to act as Finland's culture, otherwise, they'll criticize you. 'My God! This girl from Russia is wearing a big fur hat, my God!' They will tell you: 'my dear lady, this is not Russia, this is Finland, there is no snow.' [there is a lot of snow, more than in Russia] 'no need to have a husky dog here.' Am I right?

However, when telling me about westerners Tsering was not as generous and open-minded: "They have so many dollars in a bank, so many properties, so many cars, in reality, innermost they always treat angry, because they can't produce inner love, they don't feel compassion, they never respect for others. Always that myself is first"; "as far as thinking power is concerned, we are far more higher developed. Even better than Europeans, we have more mental peace"; and talking about locals he said Tibetans have "100%" cultural difficulties because of ethnic and traditional differences.

These were rather exclusions outstanding on the generally tolerant background of Tsering's talk, but these phrases, together with the praises to his individual and group face, put a big question mark to his positive words. Roughly correlating this interview with Arasaratnam's (2005) model, the missing pillar would be the last one: the ability to listen /

pay attention. However, despite these points, the general sounding of the interviews is very much in accord with the ICC model.

Ethical resourcefulness

Ting-Toomey (1993; 1998) also mentioned ethical component and ethical resourcefulness in the process of identity negotiation. She claimed there to be universal moral values, which all people share regardless of the culture they belong to. The paradigm of communicative resourcefulness, according to Ting-Toomey (1998) was to a large extent rooted in the understanding of the universal moral values. In intercultural encounters, referring to human ethics could be often used as a strategic tool of one's identity negotiation. The results demonstrate this very clearly: Tibetans use their good qualities as an asset for negotiation. As Karma puts it: "they feel like, we are the key moral people in Nepal". For example, when they are arrested during a demonstration they try to apply gentle moral pressure to the police. Facing violence, they appeal to common sense and human nature of the police, who beat and arrest them. Dawa shared his experience:

I also like to talk to the inspectors, then just asking questions, like why are you guys just arresting Tibetan people? Cause we are not doing anything bad for the country, and like me, I'm just taking full responsibility for what the Nepalese government and Nepalese people are doing, and the environment, in any situation, I feel like this is my country. Because I live in this place. So actually, my feeling at that time, and he says "you're Tibetan and you're not allowed to talk about our country". And... so you have nothing to say about these things, because you are not born in this place. I just say, "this is not our country, but I live and I've grown up in this place, and I know this place, and I have worries if something happens in this place, I'm also worried. This is

not only your country”.

They also face a vital necessity to maintain their image of “moral people in Nepal” by avoiding common and criminal clashes of any kind: it is done not only on personal level, but also, in the case of settlements on the level of regulations and restrictions. Norbu remembered a case from his settlement:

That time there was a few Tibetan young kids, I think they had a fight with a taxi driver or something, and so taxi driver got killed. Because of few young Tibetans, it becomes huge big problem for the whole Tibetan community, because all Nepali people come with fire, they said we want to burn this whole refugee camp. But that time the government was strong because of the democratic, I don't know it was quite strong, not like now. So that time the police had tear gas, everything, they dispersed the crowd and they helped it like that. So it's quite dangerous because of one Tibetan's mistake every Tibetan can suffer. That much dangerous it can happen. So that's why it's in the Tibetan communities they make a strict discipline especially young boys, that gate is closed immediately after 8, and if somebody is coming late, then they would give punishment or something. Because one boy who gets crazy, drunk, fights, creates big problems for everybody. So that's why there is so... image of refuge camps.

The role of spiritual view in mindful identity negotiation

The key to the successful intercultural attitude that the Tibetans demonstrated in the interviews can be found in their spiritual tradition and ideology, propagated to them by the Dalai Lama XIV and other Buddhist teachers. To understand this, the respondents were asked about the spiritual practice in their life, and how it helped them to deal with controversial situations they face with locals or westerners, as well as their answers throughout the whole

interview were scanned to trace the effect of their spiritual attitude on the intercultural one.

When asked about how their religious belief helps them in controversial situations with non-Tibetans, most respondents say that it helps greatly in their life in general, not only in some particular situations. The first thing that most people mention is patience, i.e. ability to handle negative emotions and tolerate difficult conditions. The majority of respondents mention the belief in the law of karma to be the first factor that gives them this power:

You know, the first, we believe in karma, so any problems we have, of course we do cry and we do feel bad. But the own general, like generally, we say, oh it's our karma, maybe we did something bad in the past, so we have to bear it because of ourselves.

Other factors that help them deal with difficult situations are thinking about Buddhist concepts of emptiness and impermanence: "Like when I was in prison sometimes, I'd lost control. So when I do some kind of meditation, like meditation on emptiness"; "Like it's the nature of samsara, sometimes come and sometimes go".

These concepts are also tightly connected with interdependence, which makes them do their best for others, because of thinking that everything is connected with cause-effect relations:

So we say we will struggle for our freedom, but in a positive way. Nonviolence way.

So we create positive karma, so we can have, at least in our future life, positive result, not only future, even in this life. We are enjoying positive results, because many people respect.

And particularly this belief makes them feel happy and peaceful in the difficult circumstances they are caught in: "And if you see some Tibetans are even happier than the local people. You know that they have no more freedom and so much pressure and things, but still they have a happy life because of the spiritual".

Apart from this, some interviewees mention the role of education for the purpose of

creating intercultural harmony: “Educating for others very good, not like this, with money, but through the education...”; “we can educate them, they will understand”.

Most Tibetan respondents stress that their belief is not based merely on faith, but has to be practical. The conviction in the power of the human mind, interconnection and good qualities win over traditional religious premonitions: “I’m a religious person, but I don’t believe anything that is not... I believe in some practical. If there’s reason and logic in religion, I believe”; “I believe in religion, but I never want to believe a religion in orthodox way”; “We are not so supersensitive, we are not so dogmatic, you know, orthodox. We are not so... conservative”.

What concerns the Buddhist view of identity, the Tibetans do not mention it directly as a factor. What they say about different cultures and different people can be seen as inspired by their spiritual doctrine, but their answers do not reveal any connection they would be aware of.

Prospects for Tibetan culture

The replies of the Tibetans are analyzed first to see, what they find to be the most important aspects to preserve in their culture, how it is and can be preserved, challenges and ways.

The aspect that is mentioned by all Tibetans is the religion: “In order to preserve our culture for a long time, we need to preserve our religion. Because the religion is like heart and brain in a human body”. However, almost all respondents see the religion first of all as an attitude, a philosophy, a value system, not as a formal tradition: “As always Dalai-Lama preaches to us, do not harm, it’s our religion. So basically, Tibetans are really compassionate, and also try not to be judgmental. So these are the key aspects of our culture, I think”. Pema

was the only respondent to mention the ritualistic part of the practice among the aspects:

They go the monasteries, and they respect statues of gods and goddesses. Even in our school we have our daily prayers in the morning, before we eat, we offer to god or goddesses, things like that, we have the daily practices.

The other important aspect to preserve is the Tibetan language: “When we preserve the religion, language is automatically preserved. You know? When language script is preserved than other culture parts will be preserved”.

The third aspect of Tibetan culture to be preserved, according to the Tibetans, is the desire to return back to Tibet: “And this land is very precious for us. So I think the first point is that we have to reach there, and then we can preserve our culture slowly”.

The factors that create challenges to preserving the culture are seen in the increasing outer influences, however, not as much from the host society as from the western, global culture, and consequently increasing materialism. Sonam explains it by the general trend of globalization:

That's why we are preserving our culture, but we are becoming less Tibetan, day by day, frankly speaking. We are preserving culture, but I think, gradually in course of time, not only of Tibetan culture, even Muslim, Arabic culture will be mixed in one culture, that is western culture.

Norbu sees that the Tibetan culture is more complicated, compared to popular values: (...) the younger generation needs something more simple they are able to understand and put into practice. At least some faith may come out. So because of lack of this, some kids tend to go to this materialist. Because it's easier to go that way, body comfort, body pleasure, who doesn't want? Everybody wants! It's easier to go there.

He also mentions another reason why both language and religion are endangered: young people do not understand the Tibetan language, in which the teachings are given. He

says:

I understand Buddhism in better English than in Tibetan. Because nowadays, every, I think 90% Tibetans are literate. And... but Tibetan language, normal language is okay, but the text language, all the teachings are done in text language. Difficult to understand. Quite difficult. But then in English - easy.

What concerns the language, the biggest threat for its preservation is the host society, as Sonam acknowledges: "I'm Tibetan but I was grown up in Nepali society, that's why I cannot speak Tibetan well. I can speak Nepali, like Nepali people, but I can't speak Tibetan, because I was grown up in the Nepali society".

On personal level some respondents also see marriages with non-Tibetan as a threat to preserving one's culture: "Obstacle is, if one goes out of Tibetan community and gets married with the other culture's people, like Nepali or westerner. Then I think, he or she might change or lose his identity".

The positive factors are keeping community, sharing cultural values in the family, educating the younger generation: "As far as culture is concerned, if the Tibetan culture is taught by Tibetan teachers from school level, from primary school level up to college level".

The efforts of the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration (the CTA, Dharamsala, India) also make it more probable: "And all this will be preserved wonderfully even in refugee community by the grace of His Holiness the Dalai-Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration, politically headed by our Prime Minister, Dr. Lobsang Sangye".

My first respondent Pema looked through the questions before the interview, and answered to this question pensively: "Of course, it will be diluted". Nevertheless, all the interviewees expressed a generally positive feeling about the preservation of their culture.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Identity Negotiation

The question of how Tibetans negotiate their identity is analyzed under this heading in terms of Ting-Toomey's (2005) assumptions and dialectics.

The predominant trend among the answers is that westerners are seen as more culturally close than locals, but locals are also subdivided into the Buddhist population, which is very close, and Hindu. The dissimilarities with the local Hindu population are noticed, but not criticized, and sometimes even made advantage of, like in the case of a Tibetan man marrying a more traditional Nepali woman. However, they do not lose adherence or respect to their own cultural ways. Regardless of the differences seen with the locals, most respondents find it rather easy to function in their society, feel comfortable and friendly, therefore rating high on connectedness and inclusion. The same is seen with the westerners, although many pointed out behavioral dissimilarities, such as impatience, short-temperedness, less respect to texts, aversion of old age, and a more systematic and rational (opposed to emotional) type of thinking. However, when it comes to identity predictability, the locals enjoy much less trust than westerners do, since all interviewees but two stated having a cautious attitude to the Nepalis in general.

Nevertheless, individuals are judged primarily in terms of their personal qualities and actions rather than cultural background. For instance, the possibility of a marriage of a close love or friendship relationship with an out-group is seen as individually possible, although not beneficial for culture preservation. All this reflects Ting-Toomey's (1998) idea of the role of cultural beliefs and values. People who share the same beliefs and values are seen close, while the local Buddhists, who are close to Tibetans culturally, religiously, ethnically, and language-wise, but do not manifest the same values, are judged in the same way as Hindu locals. The same goes for trust: although most respondents mention relative closeness, the

identity differentiation, autonomy and unpredictability persist as long as there are reasons to keep distance: the government's pressure and brainwashing using the lack of education of locals to fuel hostility and jealousy towards Tibetans.

Most Tibetans I talked with do not connect their mistrust with some inherent untrustworthiness of Nepali. They admit that a few decades ago they had full understanding with the locals, but the reasons why they cannot trust them now is the propaganda that some parties of their government lead against Tibetans. The parties and the government have to do it due to “the Chinese pressure”, according to most Tibetans, and some immediately justify this by the fact that Nepal is a small and poor country, which has to comply with the rough policy of its neighbours. As they mention, it makes them feel “sad”, not “angry”, and does not change their attitude towards Nepali.

The answers illustrate Ting-Toomey's (1998; 2005) assumptions, showing that Tibetans generally manage to observe boundary regulation by managing amount of trust depending on the situation, without changing their own emotional attitude to the locals, and understanding the circumstances, which make them potentially untrustworthy. This reduces risks connected with unpredictability and also allows to avoid anxiety, tension and defensiveness in their daily intercultural encounters. Contrary to Ting-Toomey's argument, identity predictability does not appear from common cultural and historical ties, or from formally belonging to the same religion, but rather from the values and beliefs shared, and of personal experience with a particular individual. Identity unpredictability is always the initial position of their identity negotiations with locals, and sometimes with westerners and even with other Tibetans, due to certain political circumstances. However, concessions are easily made if a particular individual proves to deserve trust. Regardless of how much trust Tibetans decide to give, or how much connectedness or inclusion they feel, there usually seems to feel emotional comfort and identity security, and no personal hostility even in challenging

situations. Categorizing does not develop into stereotyping or stigmatizing, cooperative and flexible attitude is much more common than fixed borders and prejudices.

The Tibetans also seem to maintain a good balance between identity consistency and change. Being in a culturally kindred environment of Nepal, they manage to be preserving their culture and traditions, especially if they are living in a settlement and / or are monastic. Exile plays an important role of bringing Tibetans from different parts of Tibet together, under one and the same cultural identity, and the outer pressure and discrimination makes their identity salience even stronger. However, natural challenges of assimilation are faced, especially in case of an inter-group marriage, which has no essential obstacles, but is frowned at by some. The native language also, despite its crucial importance for the preservation of Tibetan culture, loses its priority as a means of communication, since they have to operate mostly in Nepali and have a good command of English as well.

Education is one of the biggest changes Tibetans point out, and it seems to be accelerating both, a positive change and a healthy consistency. Education in Tibetan exiles combines the modern schooling with learning more about one's traditions, language and culture. Apart from it, it often gives the Tibetans additional assets in fighting for their cause, for example, when they employ their language and computer skills for the purposes of their cause, or connect their university education with Tibet-inspired topics. Generally, despite being mentioned in this relation, education can hardly be regarded as a cultural concept, and is instead a universal right. However, although the change seen in education may not essentially refer to the paradigm of identity negotiation, the influence of education on the society and the mindset of an individual can definitely be seen as the constructive change, spoken about by Ting-Toomey (2005).

Concerning other kinds of change that do refer to this paradigm, there is one negative point mentioned as well. Three people mentioned transformation as becoming more

materialistic and concerned about money because of western influence. Traditional values, language preservation, and religion suffer as a result of this tendency, according to them. The other nine did not mention this change, and signaled identity consistency instead. There seems to be no connection between the conditions and the situation of the respondent and his or her opinion about this tendency in the society. Therefore it can be assumed that all of these things can be taking place in the current circumstances, but the way of seeing depends on individual, and what he or she tends to notice and focus on.

This variability of the answers can be related to Ting-Toomey's (2005) assumption, described below, suggesting that a mindful and healthy identity negotiation is marked by oscillation and balancing between identity consistency / rootedness and identity change / rootlessness, avoiding the edges, giving potential for constructive change, and still, allowing to preserve one's culture. On the basis of the varying answers, which rather add up to each other than contradict, we can make a general conclusion that in the difficult circumstances of exile and discrimination Tibetans feel their cultural identity stronger, swaying to the side of identity consistency. The popularity their culture enjoys around the world also makes them feel more respect to it. However, they tend to keep their mind open to new cultural ways, take advantage of international contacts and modern education, which creates a constructive change, not only in their mind, but also in their society. Apart from this positive drive that sways them to the edge of identity change, there is also the challenge of materialism and globalization. This conclusion illustrates this point of Ting-Toomey's (2005) theory fairly well. Emigrating to the west, on the other hand, poses the challenge of assimilation and loss of native culture, and the benefits of a more comfortable life are fought for at the expense of identity consistency. Despite the hardships, most interviewees claim that the tense identity negotiation makes their 'Tibetanness' stronger, as well as makes their community more united. This way, from the point of view of the preservation of their identity, it seems that the

scattered refugee communities in the west are less favourable for their survival as a culturally unique people.

Communicative resourcefulness

This part is going to analyze the data from the perspective of communicative resourcefulness the Tibetans demonstrate in their identity negotiation. Apart from Ting-Toomey's (1993) communicative resourcefulness, the academic lens for the analysis is also formed of other conceptual instruments, such as Adler's (1996) multicultural man, Kim's (1999) intercultural personhood, and Arasaratnam's (2005) ICC model, created on the basis of Ting-Toomey's identity negotiation theory (1998; 2005). All of these perspectives have been analyzed above in the Theory Review Chapter.

Since Ting-Toomey's (1993) differentiation is conventional, it is not easy to categorize the manifestations of communicative resourcefulness in practice. The quotations above demonstrate the ideas Tibetans cherish of cultural differences between the people (understanding the reasons for differences, exchanging cultures, learning from others), the emotions they report they feel towards people from other cultures (seeing firstly human essence in all people, paying respect and tolerance), and behavior they choose (keeping group face, working for the common good, cooperation, sharing the fun of others' cultural events). Therefore, all the three levels of communicative resourcefulness are employed in their intercultural encounters. Throughout the interviews Tibetans generally also demonstrate an ability to create categories without stereotyping (attitudinal level), when dealing with others, for example, when they say they cannot give trust to most locals in general, but do not see a problem in having close Nepali friends or partners. In consonance with Ting-Toomey's (1998) emphasis on ethical resourcefulness, universal human values and global responsibility was

broadly used by Tibetans as an asset in their identity negotiation, as they maintain their good record, employ group face keeping and appealing to universal human values as their strategy.

Some answers also illustrate the ideas of multicultural man (Adler, 1996) and intercultural personhood (1998). These two concepts are very close, but as Dai (2009) points out, the first one may practically prove to create a danger to a person's own cultural belonging, and make them rootless. Dai (2009) challenges intercultural personhood in the same way, but still feels it to be more achievable without sacrificing one's own culture.

One of the respondents, whose quotes are brought in the previous chapter, Sonam is clearly the multicultural man Adler (1996) was admiring. But does this multicultural man manage to avoid losing his own cultural roots? His own example speaks for itself. Most probably, if every Tibetan treated culture with the same openness, it would be a big challenge to preserve it.

A few more respondents seemed to be making a step from individuation to universalization in their reasoning, which resonated with the idea of Kim's (1998) intercultural personhood. Dai (2009) suggested that similarly to Adler's (1996) multicultural man, intercultural personhood also leads to rootlessness, or at least decrease of cultural salience. However, the answers of all the other respondents were clearly disproving to this statement. It implies that conscious adherence to one's own cultural values is not an obstacle to developing intercultural personhood, if one's own cultural values are seen as accordant with universal human values, approvable and worth sticking to. It is worth mentioning that most respondents, who demonstrated an open-minded intercultural attitude, without losing rootedness in their own culture were activists, in some way engaged in promoting the Tibet issue. That can be one of the reasons behind their perceiving their cultural values in accord with human values, and therefore being of global benefit and worth preserving. The mere ability to intellectualize on an abstract like this is not a common feature for every person, but

an insight into the problem of balance between rootedness and open-mindedness among simple Tibetans would require a more complicated research inquiry.

Another additional tool of the identity negotiation analysis in this thesis was Arasaratnam's (2005) ICC model, which names five pillars of mindful intercultural communication: Motivation, Experience, Empathy, Global Attitude, Ability to listen / pay attention. The Tibetan respondents demonstrated exceptional or at least excellent Intercultural Communication Competence. Those of them, who did not rate as exceptional, were lacking one of the five pillars: two people confessed not having enough motivation and interest in another culture, being satisfied with their own, and one, although demonstrating interest and background knowledge about various cultures, sounded rather ethno-centric and demanding more attention than ready to devote, i.e. lacking the last pillar, the ability to pay attention. The missing pillars, however, do not nullify the generally impressive results on Arasaratnam's (2005) model, and reiterate the idea that Tibetan refugees can claim natural flair for intercultural communication rooted in their values.

This way, the interviews illustrate Ting-Toomey's (1993) communicative resourcefulness and resolve Dai's (2009) hesitation about the balance between universalist intercultural mindset and loyalty to one's own culture, as described in Kim's (1998) and Adler's (1996) models. As the interviews show, excessively open attitude to cultures can make one yield to host society assimilation easier, in which case preserving one's own culture can be a bigger challenge. However, moderate universal attitude, combined with genuine interest in the culture one was born in, brings a more balanced attitude, which respects and preserves cultural differences, at the same time promoting cultural exchange. As for Tibetans, all the respondents demonstrated at least acceptance and striving for harmony in intercultural encounters, but mostly managed to shift to the perspective of their intercultural counterpart and showed genuine interest, respect, and openness for a constructive change, i.e. soil for

healthy and mutually beneficial cultural integration.

The role of the spiritual view

The third research question concerned the role of the spiritual view the Tibetans are considered to hold in their intercultural encounters. All of them mentioned the importance of the spiritual element in their life, particularly in difficult situations. The first aspect they mention is patience and tolerance, the ability to overcome difficulties by understanding the cause-effect relations and impermanence. The cause-effect relations, interconnectedness, or the law of karma, is a helpful idea for the Tibetans in different ways. First, it helps them overcome difficulties and unfairness by allowing a thought that their own actions in this or previous life caused the problem, and instead of giving way to anger and despair they look for constructive ways to resolve it. Second, by giving meaning to their life and their activity though understanding that they are creating causes for good results in the future for themselves and other people. And third, it highlights the connection and co-dependence of all human beings, and the importance of taking care of others, which also increases empathy and benevolence to others. This kind of empathy and interconnection evidently becomes the key factor in forming the intercultural communication competence of the Tibetans. Patience and tolerance allow them to balance self-focused and other-focused emotions in a constructive manner. By differentiating the person and his or her ways and actions, they manage to avoid bearing grudge on people, who make their life difficult, by understanding the circumstances the abuser is in, and express a confident hope that educating them in the right way can improve the situation. This way, although none of the respondents explicitly mentioned the view of 'self' as a positive factor of their religious outlook, other answers revealed the attitudes, which are supposed to follow this view: inter-connectedness, balance of self-other

emotions, global responsibility, and seeing the common human core. Whether or not these attitudes can be confidently linked to their spiritual doctrine is an assumption, which creates a question for further research.

The Tibetans do not have to understand the Buddhist vision of identity in its full complexity, or have sufficient meditation experience of cognition of its emptiness, but their upbringing in the culture, which stresses interdependence, compassion, relativistic attitude to self, really seems to have impact on their mindset, which, as they claim, has impact on their every-day interpersonal and intercultural encounters. What most respondents point out directly or indirectly, is the universal human core, which lies at the bottom of every person's identity, while the cultural, ethnic, and religious differences are flexible and relative categories, not inherent and fixed labels.

The same flexibility spreads on their attitude to their own religion as well. What the interviewees mention is the practical aspect of their spiritual doctrine, which explains the way people and things exist and function, and what sort of attitude and behavior is more in harmony with it. The ritualistic and dogmatic aspects are seen as secondary and optional, depending a lot on the cultural circumstances. This way the open-minded non-dogmatic religious attitude increases empathy, reflexivity, mindfulness, and patience, which help the Tibetans in their intercultural encounters. Treating religion like “the constitution of the heart”, rather than belonging to some group, helps to even the edges of cultural differences and make their identity negotiation more mindful.

The prospects and implications

The last research question looks into the prospects for the Tibetan culture, as the respondents see them. They were asked to estimate whether it is likely to be preserved in the

future, what aspects of it are most worth preserving, what could facilitate it, and what obstacles it can face. Based on their answers a recommendable strategy can be worked out in order to increase the positive factors and decrease negative influences.

The three most important aspects to be preserved are religion, language, and the desire to return to Tibet. The religion means primarily the philosophy and values, and only few mention ritual element. The importance of the language is not only communication between Tibetans and a feature of cultural identity, but also as a medium of communicating preserving their religious tradition. And finally, the longing for Tibet is seen as allegiance to their roots, to their history and origins.

Among hindrances to preserving the culture many mention materialism, western influence, globalization, language assimilation, and marriages with out-groups. The positive factors are settlement living (like in Pokhara), promoting traditional values and customs at home and at school, studying the language and Buddhism. All this is done by the efforts of the Dalai Lama administration and the CTA, as well as numerous NGOs and individual activists. Unfortunately, many good strivings are institutionally hindered in Nepal because of the Chinese pressure on Nepal's politics, but the Tibetans believe that due to the global interest towards their religion and the efforts of monastics, their spiritual heritage and language are not under threat of extinction.

Although the general feeling is positive, it is important to realize the impact of various factors on the preservation of the culture, which has been attracting so much of admiration globally in the recent decades. There can hardly be any way to influence the Nepali authorities or the pro-Chinese political lobbyists, so it would be wiser to assume the situation as it is. By obstructing the integration for Tibetan refugees in the host society the Nepali government creates segregation, which also has positive effects. The Tibetans have to constantly renegotiate their identity, reiterate their importance for Nepali society and the

global community, not only verbally but also by actions, instead of dissolving into the multi-ethnic melting pot of their exile in Nepal. Having to reiterate their “Tibetanness”, they do not face any challenges of cultural or religious differentiation or conflict, which makes it possible for them to make use of the cultural and religious similarity as a tool for negotiating their rights. Due to the efforts of the CTA, community cooperation and donations, the Tibetan refugees do not have to fight for survival: their basic material needs, food, shelter and necessary clothing are satisfied. Basic education is provided by Tibetan schools, where most children have a sponsor, and higher education is possible for the lucky few thanks to the special programmes abroad. Together with a tense environment, which makes it hard to achieve material wealth, this provides a good platform to develop oneself in other directions, personally and spiritually. Environmental factors are of high importance, but what is most important, is the capability of the Tibetans themselves to make the most out of the controversial situation they have found themselves in in Nepal. Creating families within the community may probably be another efficient contribution to the preservation of their culture, as compared to out-group marriages. Nevertheless, mostly Tibetans tend to be flexible about cultural origins in their encounters with other people, and value human qualities over ethnic and religious background. Marrying a local or a foreigner may also be a step in promoting the Tibetan culture among the locals or westerners, instead of losing one’s own connection with it. The outcome of this act is can depend on one’s personal mindfulness and motivation.

This way, a strategy recommended on the basis of the answers and the analyses of them through the lens of identity negotiation theory can be to make the most of the existing situation in Nepal. The cultural and religious similarity or liking can be emphasized to win respect, trust and cooperation of the locals and westerners, which is bound to increase one’s identity salience. The balance between material restrictions and material help can redirect their efforts from the material sphere to spiritual, educational and personal. The exposure to

various cultural influences, in the case of mindful and sincere interest in and respect for one's own tradition and culture, can create space for constructive change without damage to one's own identity salience, promoting cultural exchange, understanding and cooperation. Among the aspects of their cultural tradition, the most important is the religious thought and the language. A deep knowledge of these aspects requires more persistence and hard-work than simply taking prides of one's ethnicity, but according to the respondents these are the quintessential factors creating the value of Tibetan culture.

Limitations of research

Despite the significance of the conclusions for the future research in the area, there are definite limitations to this research. First of all, the study is not devoid of common limitations of a qualitative research, such as sampling and validity (Threadwell, 2014). Second, the direct questions made it possible for the respondents to give an opinion that they may have been their desired way of thinking, rather than the real one. The stories, impressions and ideas told by the refugees acquire layers of interpretations (Eastmond, 2007), so instead of being treated as mere reported facts should be seen through the prism of the speaker, which may not always be very clear. One more challenge for the Tibetans was the language, both in terms of understanding and expression. While some of them felt at ease speaking their mind, others struggled to articulate their ideas in the foreign language. Another limitation is the selection of the respondents: most people were far from simple refugees, like heads of settlements, activists, university students. Despite the language difficulty, simple people may have given very different answers. Nevertheless, the study reveals common trends, which may be of significant help to and a good basis for further research.

Conclusion

This way, to obtain an insight into the mechanisms of identity negotiation of Tibetans in Nepal, the communicative resourcefulness they show, the value of their spiritual tradition in this process, and the prospects for the preservation of the Tibetan culture in exiles, particularly in Nepal, twelve interviews were held with Tibetan men and women in the cities of Kathmandu and Pokhara, Nepal, in the spring 2012. The answers were analyzed on the basis of the previous research on the difficult historical situation of Tibetans in general, and the Nepal's refugee community in particular, and through the lens of Ting-Toomey's (1998; 2005) Identity Negotiation theory and further research available and applicable to the topic. Most interviewed Tibetans claimed generally positive communicational experience with both locals and westerners, although identity predictability remains a difficult issue due to the political tension. Cultural closeness is perceived mostly on the basis of common values, while dissimilar ways, as well as cultural, ethnic, and religious belonging play a minor role. Therefore, Tibetans tend to measure their closeness according to a particular individual, giving more credit to western visitors and Buddhist peoples of Nepal, as compared to the Hindu majority. The balance between identity consistency and identity change is maintained very well by the system of education that combines modern requirements with learning about their tradition, religion, language and history, but can be disturbed by materialistic influences and globalization trends.

The intercultural communication competence the Tibetan refugees demonstrate in their answers fits very well into Ting-Toomey's (1993) three levels of communicative resourcefulness, mental, emotional and behavioral. Most respondents manage to keep the balance between rootedness and openness by linking their traditional values with the universal human ones, thus making a step from individuation to universalization (Kim, 1998). However, excessive openness without sufficient motivation to keep to own cultural ways,

assuming the host pressure is high, may increase the risk of assimilation. Correlated with Arasaratnam's (2005) ICC model, the answers demonstrated very impressive natural flair for intercultural communication, with only three respondents missing on one of the five pillars.

The spiritual element in their mindset was claimed to be of help, facilitating patience, understanding, benevolence and feeling of meaningfulness and harmony. This attitude is said to work well in intercultural encounters. More significance is given to the essential side of the religion, while the ritualistic part is seen as secondary.

Speaking about the prospects and strategies of the preservation of the tradition, it is necessary to highlight the most important aspects mentioned: religion, language and belonging with Tibet; and the factors contributing to it: community living, education stressing language and spiritual values, both at home and at school, and generally rediscovering the benefit of traditional wisdom for the modern circumstances.

This way, provided the Tibetans keep the trend, visible in the interviews, their culture is considered to have good prospects to be preserved for the future generations of Tibetans and to also bring benefit to non-Tibetan people globally.

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Appendix A

Interview questions:

1. What does it mean to be Tibetan for you?
2. How, do you think, you are perceived by local Nepali people? +/-?
3. How are you seen by westerners? Is it close to reality?
4. Do you feel any cultural difference with non-Tibetan people in Nepal? What? Examples?
5. How close do you see local people compared to other Tibetans? And westerners?
6. How emotionally comfortable do you feel with local people compared to other Tibetans?
And with westerners?
7. How much trust do you feel to the local people compared to other Tibetans? And with westerners?
8. Do you have / have you had any close friendship or even love relationships with non-Tibetan people? If yes, how do you feel compared to those with other Tibetans? If no, do you think it could be possible? Why?
9. Can you remember any controversial situations with local people or with westerners?
For example, when you felt it to be hard to be Tibetan? How did you behave and feel?
What, do you think, were the reasons for misunderstanding?
10. What is your attitude towards culturally different people in general?
11. Do your religious beliefs and/or spiritual practice help you in controversial situations?
How?
12. What, do you think, is the right way to treat culturally different people? Does it work in real life?
13. What transformation do you see in yourself and other Tibetan people, when you live in Nepal?
14. Do you feel that you are becoming more open-minded to other cultures? If yes, does it

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challenge or strengthen your cultural uniqueness?

15. Do you feel like you and other Tibetan people you know here are becoming “less Tibetan” or the opposite?

16. What aspects of your culture do you think are the most important to preserve in yourself and in your (future) children?

17. What do you think are the prospects for the Tibetan culture? Do you feel that people can preserve it in the future? How? What could help? What can be the challenges/obstacles?