COMMUNITY IN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

An Ethnographic Exploration of Bhutanese Refugees in Manchester (UK)

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Für meine Familie

"Mache alles so, als wäre es Dein Lebensziel."

Authorship Declaration

I hereby certify that this thesis is the result of my own work except where otherwise indicated and due acknowledgement is given.

Signed: …………………………   Date: …………………

Abstract

After being expelled from Bhutan in the 1980s and 1990s, more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees were forced to reside in refugee camps in Nepal. Twenty years later, in 2006, a global resettlement programme was initiated to relocate them in eight different nations: the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands, and the UK. Since 2010, about 350 Bhutanese refugees have been resettled in Greater Manchester through the *Gateway Protection Programme*. This thesis is based on 14 months of ethnographic research with members of this community.

This thesis analyses the complex relationship between forced migrants, social networks, and ruling, organisational entities, which facilitate refugee resettlement. This qualitative study looks at the structure, role and everyday utility of social networks amongst a small refugee community, and emphasizes that the creation of similarity and difference is an inherent part of community development. The research calls into question the assumptions of UK policy makers, service providers and academics alike, which hold that refugees are removed from their 'original' cultures through forced displacement, and thereafter strive to return to a state of 'normalcy' or 'originality', re-creating and re-inventing singular 'traditions', identities and communities. In response to these assumptions, policy makers and service providers in refugee camps and in the UK adopt a *Community Development Approach* (CDA).

However, I argue that there is no fixed and bounded community amongst Bhutanese refugees, but that they actively reshape and adapt their interpretations, meanings and actions through their experiences of forced migration, and thus create novel communities out of old *and* new social networks. In the process, I juxtapose my informants' emic understandings of community as *samaj*, with bureaucratized refugee community organisations (RCOs).

This research shows that rather than a creating singular, formalized RCO to serve the 'good of all', the Bhutanese refugee community in Manchester is rife with divisions based on personal animosities and events stretching back to the refugee camps in Nepal. I conclude that RCOs may not be equipped to effectively deal with the divisive issues that arise due to refugee resettlement.

The thesis is situated at the centre of anthropological investigations of forced migration, community, and policy, and uses interdisciplinary sources (such as policy documents, historical accounts) to highlight the complexities of forced migration and refugee resettlement. This critical research is also a response to the call to make qualitative, ethnographic research more relevant for policy makers and service provision, which is all the more important in this 'century of the refugee'.

Word Count (Thesis body and Bibliography): 103,185

Table of Contents

List of Figures, Graphs, Images and Maps

Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

AGM	Annual General Meeting (of RCOs)
AI	Amnesty International
AMDA	Association of Medical Doctors of Asia
BCA	Bhutan Citizenship Acts
BMA	Bhutan Marriage Acts
BPP	Bhutan Peoples Party (Nepali political party in Bhutan)
BRFP	Bhutanese Refugee Film Project (2013)
BRRCC	Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Co-ordinating Committee
BSC	Bhutan State Congress (Nepali political party in Bhutan)
BWA (UK)	Bhutanese Welfare Association UK
CBP	Community Party of Bhutan (Nepali political party in refugee camps)
CDA	Community Development Approach
CDW	Community Development Worker (by UK service providers)
COELT	Cultural Orientation and English Language Training
DZ	Dzongkha (Language of Bhutan)
FEL	Front End Loading Approach UK)
GPP	Gateway Protection Programme (UK resettlement programme)
HNC	Himalayan Nepali Church UK
ICT	Internet Communication Technology (e.g. Facebook, Skype)
ILR	Indefinite Leave to Remain (UK residential status)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JSA	Job Seekers Allowance (UK)
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MCT	Mobile Communication Technology (e.g. mobile phones)
MRSN	Manchester Refugee Support Network

NCC	Northmoor Community Centre, Longsight (Manchester)
NP	Nepali (Language of Nepal)
PRS	Protracted Refugee Situation
RA (UK)	Refugee Action UK
RCO	Refugee Community Organisation
RC (UK)	Refugee Council UK
RGB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RY (UK)	Refugee Youth UK
TA (UK)	Takin Association UK
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UKBA	UK Border Agency
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
WFP	World Food Program

Chapter 1 - Introduction

"Most human beings reside somewhere near their place of birth. Willingly leaving home to live and work elsewhere or being dispossessed and forced out seems, for many, to be more the exception than the rule of human existence. Yet migration is the story of human life. It is the story of population movement across the face of the earth. Migration has seen the planet conquered and societies and cultures shaped and reshaped by successive waves of human movement. Forced migration is one part of the migration history of humanity" (Chatty, 2010: 17).

In 2014/15, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced that 59.5 million people[1] across the world are forcibly displaced[2] (see Figure 1[3]; UNHCR, 2015: 2). More than 32,000 people are forced to flee from their homes each day (ibid.). This is the highest number since World War II, overtaking the twentieth century[4] as the "century of the refugee" (Colson, 2003: 2). As Antonio Gueterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, states: "We are witnessing a paradigm change, an unchecked slide into an era in which the scale of global forced displacement as well as the response required is now clearly dwarfing anything seen before" (UNHCR, 2015: 3).

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[1] In 2013/14 the number was just over 51 million, making 2015 the year with the highest annual increase (more than 8 million people) of forcibly displaced people since the UNHCR was founded in 1950 (UNHCR, 2015: 2).

[2] These numbers are likely to be much higher since 2014, due to the conflict in Syria and other Middle Eastern nations.

[3] Data from UNHCR, 2015: 2; graph by Yamen Albadin, commissioned by the author of this thesis.

[4] The numbers from 1999/2000 indicate that at the end of the 20th century, just under 40 million people were forcibly displaced.

Displaced people in 2014

19.5 million
refugees

1.8 million
asylum-seekers

38.2 million
internally displaced persons
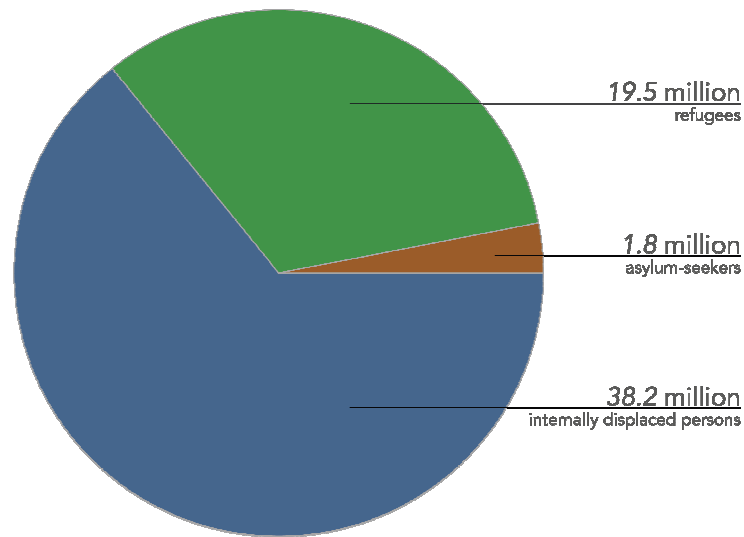
59.5 million forcibly displaced worldwide

Figure 1: Displaced people in 2014 (pie chart)

Daily news across the Western world is filled with stories about refugees and asylum seekers, dangerous journeys across lands and seas to reach developed nations, and refugee camps filled with forcibly displaced people. In today's world, mass-migration, transnationalism and migration policies are facts of everyday life for millions of people across the planet[5]. Globalisation is not only about the worldwide movement of goods and ideas, but also involves the global movement of people, often brought about through conflict and threats of violence (Appadurai, 1996; Soguk, 1999 in Chatty, 2010: 28). In these complex times of global migration, the world finds itself, as Bhaba (2004: 31) aptly put it, in a "moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion".

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[5] According to the latest statistics (see graphic – from UNHCR, 2015) there are 19.5m refugees across the world (an increase of seventy percent since the late 1990s), mostly from Palestine, Afghanistan, Syria and Somalia. At the time of writing this thesis, this number is likely to have significantly increased due to ongoing conflicts across the world. There are approximately 1.8 million asylum seekers, predominantly in European countries, with the highest number from Syria. The largest group of displaced people, however, are the 38.2 million individuals who are forced out of their homes, but remain within their country. These internally displaced people are not only individuals fleeing conflict and violence, but also environmental disasters, such as the major earthquake that hit Nepal in 2015.

How are we anthropologists to understand, research and address these issues? What is the role of anthropology in addressing problematic questions related to forced migration?

Several anthropologists (e.g. Chatty, 2010 and Malkki, 1995) called on social scientists, international agencies *and* governments to address refugees and asylum seekers not as 'defenceless' victims only knowable through their needs, but rather to recognize these person's 'agency' and ability to bring about political and economic change and stability both for themselves and for the international community. Moreover, social scientists (e.g. Baumann, 1996; Colson, 2003; Muggah, 2005; Turton,2005 and Zetter, 2007) highlight that research has to critically review social policies, and the assumption that all refugees, asylum seekers and migrants can be conveniently encompassed in a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. As Malkki (1995: 496) argues, we have to address the "extraordinarily diverse historical and political causes and involve people who while all displaced, find themselves in qualitatively different situations and predicament". More importantly, Malkki (1997: 225) urges anthropologists to critically reflect on aid intervention impacting on forced migrants.

Anthropological research with forced migrants is focused on how 'normality' is restored in a time of uncertainty, following the anthropological definition of refugees as a "categorical anomaly" (Malkki, 1992) - as Harrell-Bond et al. (1996: 1077) claim:

> "[R]efugees are people who have undergone a violent 'rite' of separation and … find themselves in transition, in a state of liminality. This betwixt-and-between status may contain social and economic dimensions as well as legal and psychological ones".

This perception of refugees assumes that individuals move – or *are* moved involuntarily – from an 'original', coherent and homogenous culture, identity, location and community to a state of uncertainty and in-betweenness, which

can be overcome through (re-) integration in either their homelands or in new geographical and societal locations. Turton (2005) argues that forced migration is a traumatic experience[6], which requires the re-creation and reestablishment of a sense of home and continuity (also see Chatty, 2010: 463-4). Forced migration is thus viewed as an example of Victor Turner's (1967) 'rite de passage' moving from separation, to liminality, and ultimately to (re-) assimilation (see Chapter 4). The latter is seen as necessary to overcome the "shocking and disruptive experience" of forced migration (Chatty, 2010: 463).

My research findings, however, based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork with Bhutanese refugees in resettlement in the UK, do not support these assumptions. To the contrary, my research calls into question the hypothesis that refugees are removed from their 'original', homogeneous cultures through forced displacement, and thereafter strive to return to this state of 'normalcy' or 'originality', re-creating and re-inventing singular 'traditions', identities and communities. Throughout this thesis, I argue that there is no 'Bhutanese Nepali-ness' or 'Bhutanese-refugee-ness' as a culture that was "acquired at birth", no shared and fixed identity *and* community that refugees "desperate[ly] attempt to re-create" (Gemie, 2010: 31). Rather, migrants reshape and adapt their values and meanings through their experiences, and thus create *new* norms and shared principles to which they may or may not choose to conform (Baumann, 1996: 13; 102). In Stuart Hall's (2010: 448) words, migrants inhabit a "cultural third space", characterised by social and cultural change, hybridity and reorientation through "social encounters and cultural articulations".

Therefore, my research is not based on the exploration of 'traditional' or 'original' communities, cultures and identities amongst Bhutanese refugees, and how they reinvent and restore coherent, homogenous and traditional cultures in resettlement 'how they were before' (see Voiscu, 2013: 163). Rather, this thesis focuses on how these elements are actively produced by *both* Bhutanese refugees and external bodies, such as aid and relief agencies

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[6] I do not discuss the emotional and psychological impact of refugee resettlement in this thesis. See Chase's work (2011, 2012, 2013a, 2013b) for excellent ethnographies on Bhutanese refugee's 'coping strategies' both in the refugee camps and in resettlement in the USA (also see Hutt, 2007; Evans, 2010, Muggah, 2005).

and UK policy makers and service providers. As Kalra et al. (2005: 15) summarise:

> "Migration is not a one-off event with one-way consequences, but an ongoing process of building links and relationships at the material and cultural level, changing both sending and receiving countries".

I explore how refugee resettlement brings about novel values and norms, which are largely informed by Western aid intervention and 'social re-engineering' (Chapter 4). I demonstrate that amongst Bhutanese refugees, definitions and understandings (of e.g. culture, identity, community) are changing, and my informants are not the 'same' persons they were in Bhutan or Nepal before resettling in the UK. However, rather than viewing this as a negative consequence of forced migration, I argue that these changes and adaptations are a response by migrating individuals who make their own informed decisions and engender transformation.

Research and thesis focus

Since 2006, more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees, who resided in refugee camps in Nepal for almost twenty years, have been resettled in eight different resettlement nations: the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands, along with the UK, which has been host to about 400 of these refugees, who have been resettled through the UK's *Gateway Protection Programme* since 2010 (Chapter 3). My research is based on 14 months of ethnographic research in Greater Manchester, as well as Leeds, Sheffield and Bradford, where most of the UK's Bhutanese refugees have been resettled. I identified about 30 key informants amongst Bhutanese refugees, and collected data from around 200 to 300 Bhutanese refugees.

In this thesis I focus on community development – that is, on how Bhutanese refugees create and maintain community in a time of transition – both within

their own understanding as *samaj*[7] (see Chapter 7) and as formalized networks within refugee community organisations (henceforth RCOs[8]). For my informants, close personal relationships that are forged within a community are important elements of daily life in resettlement. However, personal networks are sensitive to individuals' moods, values, personal preferences and interactions (Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 508). They are also prone to mistrust and personal animosities, leading – as we shall see in Chapter 9 - to disagreements between Bhutanese refugees in Manchester, and the split between three distinct RCOs, undermining the UK government's aim to outsource governmental support to formalized community organisations.

Moreover, neither *samaj* nor RCOs are a continuation or reproduction of social networks in Bhutan and Nepal, as my informants highlighted on several occasions. Chatty (2010:39) and Malkki (1992: 35) caution that the communities developed through migration are not an exact replica of the social networks individuals had before relocation. Bhutanese refugees fashion old *and* new social relationships within formalized settings under the authority of external, Euro-American bodies (e.g. UNHCR, International Organization for Migration [IOM]), who have their own long-term agenda related to community development (see Chapter 4). Consequently, aid intervention and service provision in refugee camps and in resettlement influences how Bhutanese refugees perceive themselves and their relationships with others. In turn, RCOs operate within British social policies, funding regimes and Euro-American definitions and values. Therefore, RCOs are not Bhutanese Nepalese organisations, but are British associations with non-British members, to which my informants (more or less successfully) comply.

Although community-development is important, there are other, equally vital elements that have an impact on the daily lives of my informants. For example, a whole thesis could be written on the significant alterations of perceptions of gender relations, or on the impact that forces migration has had on traditional

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[7] *Samaj* is the Nepali word for 'community' used by Bhutanese refugees to refer to their family and friendship networks, which are not formalized. My informants perceive *samaj* to be based on shared understandings of mutuality, trust, reciprocity and social interaction, as I outline in detail in Chapter 7.
[8] A list of all abbreviations used in this thesis can be found at the beginning of this thesis.

forms of political participation or social stratification[9] (e.g. the caste system). By focusing exclusively on community development, however, I am able to provide valuable details on the impact that social re-engineering has on refugees in *one* important aspect of everyday life.

Relevance of research

Malkki (2002: 358) cautions that refugees and their everyday experiences are a difficult study subject, and ethnographies on refugees may not be easily decontextualized (and thus generalised), as refugees' experiences can "differ radically from context to context, from person to person" (ibid.). Traditionally, anthropologists worked with people in geographically bound areas, studying our informants' lives, experiences and 'cultures' as something permanent – in Bourdieu's (1977) term, a "habitus" which determines behaviours and interactions. However, in a globalised world, our informants no longer perceive themselves to be bounded to a specific locality or a 'unique', enduring culture (Baba, 2013: 2; Lovell, 1998: 5). As I shall show in my research, Bhutanese refugees are migratory individuals experiencing transition and change. They are in a continuous process of adapting to the context in which they find themselves, influenced by external forces, such as national and transnational policies, aid intervention (e.g. UNHCR, IOM), and nation states (Bhutan, Nepal, UK), whilst actively reworking their histories, identities, cultures, languages and socio-cultural practices. There is no unique Nepalese Bhutanese 'habitus' with distinct cultures and practices that are persistent across space and time. Rather, they are a community-of-change, creating multiple hybrid selves and cultures that are inconsistent and often contradictory. The term Nepalese Bhutanese is, in fact, misleading, because they are neither Nepali or Bhutanese, nor a combination of the two. I argue that there is no coherent, bounded group serving as the subject of my research – they are different individuals, with varying values, norms, identities and perceptions, influenced by history, aid intervention and forced migration.

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[9] I remain confident that after the completion of my PhD, I will be able to address these other multifaceted areas of research, utilizing the vast bulk of qualitative data which cannot be included in this work.

Throughout my fieldwork, I have observed the changes in perception and behaviours amongst my informants – a transformation that is ongoing since I have left the field.

This thesis also considers the "policy nexus" (Baba, 2013: 1) that affects migration and my informants' lives. Here, I follow Baba's (2013), Colson's (2003) and Turton's (2005) call for anthropology to become more relevant for social policy. I have intentionally chosen to study "policy through those affected" (Baba, 2013: 4) – that is, how policy impacts on Bhutanese refugees – rather than focusing on the interactions between policy makers, service providers, and their 'clients' (i.e. my informants). On the one hand, this has allowed me to gain unparalleled rapport with my informants, as they trusted in my 'independence' from service providers, governments and funding bodies[10]. On the other hand, my thesis is limited by the lack of voices from both policy makers and service providers.

Moreover, although there are many ethnographies about refugee camps across the world, and studies on asylum seekers in the UK, there are hardly any anthropological investigations of organized refugee resettlement (in the UK) and the long-term consequences of resettlement on refugees. My thesis attempts to fill this gap in the literature, which is all the more important in a time in which the British government pledges to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees from refugee camps in the Middle East (Home Office et al., 2015).

This thesis is situated within three primary bodies of (anthropological) works: firstly, the foundation of my study is the anthropology of forced migration, drawing on works by Baumann (1996), Chatty (2010), Cohen (1985) and Malkki (1992, 1995, 1997, 2002). Secondly, my specific focus on community

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[10] I am a mostly a self-funded student – that is, I have funded my Masters and PhD course myself through savings and part time employment, although I have received financial support from Brunel University, covering my tuition fees for three years. Therefore, I was independent of funding bodies' agendas, whilst at the same time experiencing a severely decreased living standard, often below my informants, who received welfare and benefit payments from the UK government – something I (as a full time EU national) am not entitled to. The need to work at least 20 to 30 hours a week in unrelated part time jobs throughout my Masters and PhD courses significantly reduced my time in the field, as well as my ability to visit e.g. the refugee camps in Nepal, or Bhutanese refugee communities in other resettlement nations (although I did visit the Bhutanese community in Pittsburgh, USA in line with the SfAA conference in 2015).

requires a discussion of anthropological theories of community (Amit and Rapport, 2002; Anderson, 2006; Barth, 1998; Bauman, 1996: 14; Cohen, 1985). Lastly, my research problematizes the policy nexus, and therefore looks at anthropological discussions of policy (in regards to [forced] migration; see Baba, 2013; Colson, 2003; and Turton, 2005). Throughout this thesis, ethnographic examples are used to exemplify my arguments, bringing to life the everyday experience of Bhutanese refugees in resettlement in the UK.

Questions of definitions

Before exploring the anthropological theories in which my research is situated, it is important to emphasize that I address my informants – that is, my contacts in the field who are comprised of Bhutanese refugees who resettled in the UK from 2010 onwards - by several terms, such as *Bhutanese refugees*, *Bhutanese Nepalese* or *Nepalese Bhutanese*[11]. As I explore in Chapter 5, this choice is informed by my respondents themselves[12], and their request to refrain from addressing them as *Lhotshampas,* a term created by the Bhutanese government to denote Nepalese Bhutanese prior to their expulsion in the 1990s.

I also emphasize that the phrase *Bhutanese refugee community* broadly refers to the whole group of Bhutanese refugees in the UK. *Samaj*, on the other hand, denotes the various social networks my informants create amongst themselves, including non-refugees such as myself (see Chapter 7). *Samaj* is based on mutuality, trust, and social interaction, and serves as a support network. *Refugee community organisations* (RCOs) signify the formalized associations Bhutanese refugees founded in the UK. There are three

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[11] I use 'Nepalese' instead of 'Nepali' when referring to my informants (Nepali signifies the language and people of Nepal), although my informants and the literature on Bhutanese refugees use both terms.

[12] My informants in Manchester always self-identify as *Nepalese Bhutanese*, rather than Nepalese *or* Bhutanese. They place emphasis on the fact that although they retained Nepali language and socio-cultural practices (e.g. Hinduism, in contrast to Bhutan's Buddhism) whilst living in Bhutan, they are *not* Nepalese. But because of their migratory background over generations, they also stressed that they are *not* Bhutanese, but somehow both and neither. Similar to refugee-ness, this is an important distinction for my informants, creating sameness and difference, and in turn, a unique community with certain boundaries, as I show throughout this work.

Bhutanese RCOs operating in Manchester: *Takin Association UK* (abbreviated as *Takin* or TA), *Bhutanese Welfare Association* (referred to as *Welfare* or BWA) and *Himalayan Nepali Church* (henceforth HNC or the *Christian community*[13]). Although *samaj* is the foundation of RCOs, they are an outcome of refugee policies, and are based on highly formalized and politicised conditions and relations (see below).

Furthermore, I will not follow Baumann (1996) and use the term *community* in italics or inverted commas in this work, as I define the use of the term below. Similarly, the term *culture* is used throughout this work, broadly referring to the "highly complex and fluid behaviours, norms, values, knowledges and practices people create, maintain and follow" (Taylor, 1871; cited in Pelissier, 1991: 77). *Culture* has to be distinguished from notions of 'race' or 'ethnicity' (see Chapter 5), and as I emphasize throughout this thesis, there is no unified, singular *culture* amongst Bhutanese refugees, but rather a "heterogeneous web of meaning spun by the people themselves" (Rabinow, 1977; cited in Robben and Sluka, 2007: 443). My informants' multiple cultures are created, refashioned and maintained through interactions and discourses, as well as everyday experiences (Lovell, 1998: 5).

The Anthropology of Forced Migration

In the 21st century, we live in a globalised, interconnected world, in which geographical distances and cultural differences have shrunk, and various 'scapes' "chase each other across the world" (Appadurai, 1996). This thesis focuses on *ethno-* and *ideoscapes*: the flows of people and of ideas (and ideologies)[14]. Migration and transnational flows[15] are key aspects of this

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[13] During my fieldwork, all Christian Bhutanese refugees in Manchester were part of HNC.
[14] The other 'scapes' are *financescapes* (flow of capital, investment and currencies); *technoscapes* (flow of technology) and *mediascapes* (flows of information, images and media) (see Appadurai, 1996).
[15] Due to the limited scope of this thesis, I do not discuss diaspora and transnationalism – that is, the interaction of individuals with their place of residency (in this case, the UK) and people's 'homelands' (that is, Bhutan and Nepal). See (amongst others) Jain (2011); Kalra et al (2005) Lavie and Swedenburg (2001), Werbner (2002) and Ybarrola (2012) for relevant discussions on these topics.

globalisation[16]: in 2013, it was estimated that 232 million people reside outside of their country of birth (OHCHR, 2013).

As Said (1979) argued, in today's world, we are all subject to a "general condition of homelessness" (cited in Malkki, 1992: 25), resulting in a vast diversity of people, cultures and languages within local spaces, which intersect, interact and co-exist (Bromley, 2000: 14). We can indeed speak of an interdependent, transnational and heterogeneous "world culture", which reshapes, delocalizes and redefines our notions of identity, community and nationality (ibid.: 7; 24). This 'world culture' has to be distinguished from 'multiculturalism', which denotes the ethnic and cultural diversity within a locality. Multiculturalism assumes that each social ('ethnic') group has separate, bounded and homogeneous characteristics by maintaining internal "communal conformity", and various 'cultures' co-exist locally, whilst remaining separate (Turner, 1993; cited in Baumann, 1996: 20).

However, as I demonstrate throughout this thesis, social groups are *not* bounded: they do not share one homogeneous culture internally. Multiple cultures overlap and influence one another, putting into question the rigidity of boundaries assumed in discourses of multiculturalism. In fact, in a globalised world, the "very concepts of homogenous national cultures, the consensual or contiguous transmission of historical traditions, or 'organic' ethnic communities" (Bhabha, 2004: 36) have to be examined and ultimately, abandoned. Migration (especially if involuntary) brings about drastic changes, which involve radical modifications of identities, communities and hierarchies[17], and redefine the boundaries of cultures (Colson, 2003: 1). Migration goes hand-in-hand with processes of "cultural translation" (Bhabha, 2004: 40), which detach individuals from their past, in order to create 'new persons', shaped by

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[16] Appadurai (1996) sums up the other key aspects of globalisation: free global trade, capitalism and market competition; consumerism; rise of electronic media and global electronic content creation; deterritorialization and decentralisation of nation states, people and cultures; global diversity of cultural forms; and loss of boundaries, certainty and regularity.

[17] In this thesis, I use a standard definition of hierarchy as the (political, social) organisation and social stratification of people in ranks depending on power, authority and various forms of capital (Halsey, 1996: 361-2; also see Chapter 8).

politics, history and personal experiences – Bhutanese refugees are one example of this.

What is (forced) migration?

In anthropology, migration is perceived as a complex process entailing interactions, formations and adaptations of relationships and socio-cultural practices, which impact both on the migrants themselves and the host society (Kalra et al., 2005: 15). As Baumann (1996: 13) claims, migration "*produces* culture, rather than being produced *by* it" (my emphasis).

Chatty (2010: 24) argues that many academic discussions on migration focus predominantly on the economic reasons for migration, whilst leaving little room for the individuals' agencies and motivations[18]. Forced migration does not fit neatly into these theories. Although economic factors may play a part in how displacement comes about, it is far more complex and contextualized than voluntary migration. Some argue that forced migration transcends an all-encompassing theory because it is too "spontaneous and unpredictable" (ibid.: 23). Each refugee group's story can only be understood within the context in which it occurred, and requires interdisciplinary analyses of the various historic, political and individual processes that led to displacement. Therefore, this thesis offers a detailed overview of the 'making of Bhutanese refugees' (Chapter 2), providing the necessary historic and political background leading to my informants' expulsion from Bhutan. Moreover, Bhutanese refugees migrated to the UK within a highly formalized resettlement programme, which depends on international and national policies, as I demonstrate in Chapters 3, 4 and 6.

Some anthropologists use Agamben's (1998; 2004) theories of the 'homo sacer'[19] to theoretically frame forced migration (e.g. Chatty, 2010; Malkki,

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[18] For a detailed discussion on theories of migration, see Castles et al. (2014).
[19] From Latin 'scared man' – under Classic Roman law, a man who is 'in-between': someone who has lost his citizenship, and can be killed by anybody, but not in a ritual sacrifice (Agamben, 1998)

1992; Zetter, 2007). Here, the refugee is excluded from a nation[20] (by loss of citizenship), and not yet a citizen of another nation, whilst being subject to international laws (Zeus, 2011: 259). The category 'refugee' poses problems to the already fragmented, 'globalised' nation state, and the refugees' histories and individual experiences are underpinned by forces far beyond economy. Refugees are in what Agamben (1998) calls an '*Ausnahmezustand*'[21] – a state of exemption outside the "natural order" of nations and laws (Chatty, 2010; Malkki, 1992; see Chapters 3 and 4).

Refugees as 'abnormality'

Globalisation puts nation states in a crisis, leading to the breakdown of borders, the growth of transnational markets, laws and corporations, and decentralisation (Appadurai, 1996[22]). Nations protect and control their populations, which are assumed to be comprised of homogenous, "historically continuous" groups of people (Turton, 2002: 25), complying with the norms and regulations of the nation state (see Anderson, 2006; Foucault, 1989). The control and surveillance of immigration is a central feature of national politics, and is widely discussed in public discourses, as explored in Chapter 5 (Baba, 2013: 3; Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 676). However, refugees, as a people "out of place", add an additional dimension to these complexities, transcending nation states and their laws (Turton, 2002: 26).

Refugees are "liminal beings in a transitional state" of exception (Mortland, 1987: 401) – an *Ausnahmezustand* – in which they are subject *not* to the laws

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[20] Here, nation is defined as an "imagined political community" as proposed by Anderson (2006: 6): the notion of nation states as bounded and sovereign is imagined in the minds of its citizens, as these communities are not based on face-to-face interactions and personal relationships, but on the imagination of its members to 'belong' to a national community regardless of personal social networks. Rather than seeing the state as a centralized consent of citizens, the nation state itself is a site of struggle (Baba, 2013: 4).

[21] From German: *Ausnahme* (exemption) and *Zustand* (condition, state, circumstance) - in German language use, a person (or group, country, etc.) out-of-order and not complying with the status quo. In such a 'state' of exception or emergency, people are exempt from consequences of irrational actions and behaviours. The word implicitly suggests that a person is not responsible for the situation they are in, ascribing 'victimhood', in which responsibility can be denied (based on my experiences as a German native speaker).

[22] Following Habermas' (1973 in Gissurarson, 2003: 39) assertion that nation states face a legitimation crisis, during which states lose their autonomy, power and authority over their 'subjects'.

of nation states, but to international "refugee regimes", and transnational organisations and institutions, such as the UNHCR (Turton, 2012: 27-8; Chatty, 2010: 23). Nation states who signed the *1951 Refugee Convention* (Chapter 5) have the duty to offer protection to refugees (Turton, 2012: 28). However, as nations aim to achieve socio-cultural homogeneity amongst its citizens in order to control them, the refugees' temporary state of exception has to be overcome by 'integration'[23] (Chatty, 2010: 459; Gemie, 2010: 34). This standardization begins in UNHCR-led refugee camps through *social re-engineering* (Muggah, 2005), aiming to "civilize" individuals by erasing "theocratic, premodern…and superstitious ways" (Robins, 1996: 68), such as (in my informants' case) the caste system or gender inequality (see Chapter 4). This paves the way for non-Western refugees to overcome their state of liminality and be resettled in Euro-American nation states[24].

Several scholars (e.g. Chatty, 2010; Mortland, 1987; Zeus, 2011) make use of Victor Turner's (1967; 2002) discussion of liminality in *rite de passage* to describe the refugees' experience of fundamental transformations. Turner (2002: 359) uses Van Gennep's (1960) tripartite model of rites of passage as any process which requires a "change of place, state, social position and age". Refugee displacement and resettlement can be understood as a 'phase of transition', because refugees have been separated from a previous state and socio-cultural structure (i.e. Bhutan), and 'strive' to be incorporated in a new state and organisation (Mortland, 1987: 377). In between, these liminal persons undergo an ambiguous 'stateless' period of *Ausnahmezustand* (Turner, 2002: 359). They are 'neither here nor there' – refugees are detached from the past (Bhutanese citizens) and are not what they will be in the future (e.g. British citizens), but are also not similar to the present, surrounding society (Mortland, 1987: 380). According to discourses on refugees, their state of liminality is something that has to be 'overcome' by re-integration in a community by one of the three so-called 'durable solutions' (Mortland, 1987; see Chapter 3). However, my research suggests that Bhutanese refugees do

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[23] The concept and definition of 'integration' is widely debated in social sciences, and is referred to as 'integration' (with inverted commas) in this work, to highlight the problematic nature of the term. Chapter 4 offers a definition of 'integration' as proposed by the UK government.
[24] Third-country resettlement as a durable solution for protracted refugee situations – see Chapter 3.

not experience their 'in-betweeness' as a problem, but rather adapt to and adopt newly acquired norms and identities in order to gain advantages. This is contrary to the view that refugees are "fundamentally flawed human beings" who are not "social agents and historical subjects" but "passive victims", who need to be managed and controlled (Turton, 2005: 278; also see Malkki, 1995).

However, as I address in Chapter 4, the analogy of refugee situations to anthropological theories on rites of passage is not as straightforward or useful as scholars assumed in the past[25]. The purpose of 'integration' is the return to 'normality', without giving a clue what this "normal order of things" should be (Mortland, 1987: 378). For Bhutanese refugees there is no possibility to return to Bhutan, and therefore they are obliged to learn to exist in and interact with their new environment in resettlement. Rather than regarding resettlement as the end of liminality, their negotiation, adaptation and transformation is a life-long process that may never result in 're-integration' (ibid.). In Chapter 5 I discuss how refugees actively use their presumed state of in-betweeness in resettlement, and create multiple identities depending on the experience in situ (Lovell, 1988: 5).

A note on agency and hybridity

In the past, scholars often assumed that forced migration is inevitably challenging[26] (Colson, 2003: 6). Refugees are portrayed as individuals who lost their community, property, culture, identities and 'roots', and are therefore in a state of uncertainty that needs to be overcome through the re-invention of culture and emplacement in their new environment (ibid.: 3; 6). But as Malkki (1997) cautions, treating forced migrants merely as victims, "dehumanizes and

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[25] The most notable difference between the experience of refugees and scholarly explorations of rites of passage is that in the latter, individuals are re-integrated into a society familiar to them, but do so with a new status (e.g. manhood). Refugees, however, are (involuntarily) thrown into unfamiliar cultures and spaces and have to confront the significant differences between their own cultures and values and the new environment (Mortland, 1987: 378-9).

[26] See Chase (2011, 2012, 2013a, 2013b), Colson (2003) and Mortland (1987) for detailed discussions of the presupposed psychological and emotional impact of migration.

dehistoricizes" refugees, and denies them agency to take control of their lives.

As highlighted throughout this work, migration is not a one-way process: top-down policies may impact on refugees, but they are not passive 'subjects of policy and care' – they actively use policies and 'labels' (e.g. 'refugee') for their own advantage, and negotiate their place and everyday lives in their host country (Gemie, 2010: 30; Muggah, 2005: 153; Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 91; Williams, 2006: 866). Forced migrants are proactive and tactical actors who employ the "art of the weak", as De Certeau refers to it (1984; cited in Williams, 2006: 867), in order to regain control over their lives. Furthermore, rather than mourning their lost 'roots', Bhutanese refugees actively adopt multiple identities, adapting to the contexts and discourses in which they find themselves. It allows us, as Chatty (2010: 437) puts it, to "comprehend and admire the capacity of the human being to survive [and] overcome indescribable suffering".

We live in a "world culture" of "encounter", with the possibility to belong "simultaneously, mentally, psychologically and experimentally to a diversity of cultures" (Bromley, 2000: 7). Culture is no longer perceived as static, but is created through interactions, experiences, practices and 'translations', by which we negotiate and fashion our multiple senses of belonging (Hall, 2010: 448; Baumann, 2996: 13; Lovell, 1998: 5). These assumptions accentuate the rudimentary argument of this thesis that Bhutanese refugees are not one, homogeneous group of people with a bounded culture, that remained unchanged before displacement and resettlement occurred. When they were forced to leave Bhutan, they took with them cultures, languages and identities that were already hybridized, and what I call 'Bhutanese Nepalese-ness'. Resettlement in the UK brought additional changes to these complex, multiple identities, resulting in a multifaceted community of 'British Bhutanese Nepalese refugees' (my term).

These new hybrid individuals are urged (by UK service providers) to create bureaucratised communities to serve the 'greater good'. Therefore, it is all the more important to ground my thesis in the anthropology of community, which I

explore in the following section. As I argue through this work, the optimistic assumption of community (in both anthropology and within policies) as a purely positive force has to be reconsidered, and the notion of community has to become the focus of our analysis, rather than taking it as a taken-for-granted idea which is shared across difference.

The Anthropology of Community

Community is, as Chatty (2010: 475) asserts, a "notoriously 'fuzzy'" concept[27], which in spite of being widely used and cited across the social sciences, resists precise definitions (Rapport and Overing, 2000:60). It is the "most taken-for-granted and unexamined form as a unit of analysis, the location rather than the object of research" (Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 919). That is, community often remains undefined in anthropology, which typically locates research *within* a community, rather than making the notion of community *itself* the focus of deeper investigations (Chatty, 2010: 475; Rapport and Overing, 2000:60; also see Amit and Rapport, 2002). Similarly, policy makers do not critically reflect on the notion of community, and therefore, it is important to examine the term itself to highlight the shortcomings of policy-intervention for refugees. In this thesis, my informants' uses of 'community' are juxtaposed with the meanings service providers in the UK bestow on it, demonstrating the fissure between 'native' understandings of community (as with Bhutanese refugees) and bureaucratic and public interpretation (which inform the refugees' lives).

The problematic nature of community in Anthropology

In the past, social anthropology located most research within small, local communities, and contrasted them with the broader concepts of modern,

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[27] Drawing on Chatterjee's (1998) work on community in India.

industrial and urban societies and organisations (Seymour-Smith, 1986: 46). Community was broadly defined as "any group or persons united by a 'community of interest'" (ibid.), which tells us virtually nothing of the contextual meaning of the notion of community. Rapport and Overing (2000: 60-1) criticise that communities have been treated as empirical things-in-themselves… apart from other things", neglecting the wider bureaucratic environment and macrocosm of the state in which life takes place.

My informants refer to community as both personal *samaj* and formalized RCOs founded in resettlement. However, this is not a reflection of the sociological theories of Tönnis (2002 [1887]), who juxtaposed *community* as personal, social relations (*Gemeinschaft*) that are "organic", "authentic" and permanent (equating it with ethnic, 'racial' traits), with *society* (*Gesellschaft*) as a form of collectivity (Azarya, 1996: 114). Rather, the notion of community must be contextualized in the larger, historical and hierarchical structures in which social relations are imbedded (Shaw, 2008: 24, 30-2). I do not argue that *samaj* denotes *Gemeinschaft* and RCOs are *Gesellschaft*. Both are constructed around personal relationships based on mutuality and trust, grounded in face-to-face interactions. RCOs are engendered by personal social networks, but are also formalized within a framework of British social policies, as I explore in detail in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Thus, rather than following Tönnis, I make use of Anderson's (2006) 'imagined communities'[28] and Cohen's (1985) 'symbolic communities'. Moreover, drawing on Barth's (1998) work, I show that communities are not only created by means of establishing similarity and solidarity, but also by creating the 'imagined other', defining boundaries between 'us' and 'them' (Chapters 8 and 9). As I demonstrate in this thesis, intra-community divisions are not based on structural issues, but on individual, "ego-based" struggles and animosities (Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 508).

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[28] Anderson's work has been criticised by Amit and Rapport (2002: Loc 3521) and Barth (1998) who argue that communities cannot be sustained merely by 'imagining' it, but need to be actively maintained, predominantly through social interaction and by the creation of sameness and difference, discussed in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Moreover, contrary to the 'communitarian tradition' in anthropology, which stresses singular and permanent "rootedness, sense of locality, identity" (Shaw, 2008: 25), I argue that Bhutanese refugees create multiple 'roots', belongings and identities depending on the situation in which they find themselves. Bhutanese refugees do not 're-invent' a 'traditional' community as it was in Bhutan or Nepal. Rather, they form new, multiple communities, influenced by migration and social policies.

I remain critical of the optimistic assumptions of the term community as a "concept of always positive evaluation and evocation…to which people would expect, advocate, or wish to belong" (Rapport and Overing, 2000:65). Community in public and even academic discourses has become an ideal, and a possibility to create homogeneity and equality from *within* a social group (Shaw, 2008: 27-8; 31). In public and political discourses in the UK, community is a "warmly persuasive word" that unlike other forms of social relations and organisations (e.g. the nation state) is seldom "used unfavourably" (Baumann, 1996: 15). Within these discourses, community is characterised by "mutuality, co-operation, identification" and loyalty, perpetuating the credulous stereotype of "uniform commonality" within communities.

My study, however, demonstrates that community can be a very problematic. It is imposed on my informants 'from above': firstly through the Bhutanese government's categorisation of all Nepali-speaking Bhutanese as one homogenous community of 'anti-nationals' (discussed in Chapter 2); secondly through the *Community Development Approach* (CDA) in the refugee camps in Nepal (see Chapter 3); and thirdly through British policy makers, who outsource support-provision to formalized RCOs, disregarding the power relations that come into play in any social group that bridge "micro" (i.e. individual concerns) with "macro politics" (i.e. public issues) (Shaw, 2008: 31-2; Williams, 2006: 870). The divisions between Bhutanese refugee communities demonstrate that positive functions of community development may not reflect in real life. Therefore, a more critical stance towards the term community has to be employed. Many contemporary anthropologists go as far as to argue that 'community', similar to other terms such as 'culture' or 'nation', is too

ambiguous and elusive to be of any use as an analytical tool for research (e.g. Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 323; Bauman, 1996: 14; Cohen, 1985: 165).

The notion of community, however, continues to have "practical and ideological significance" in public, political and academic discourses (Amit and Rapport, 2002: 323; Rapport and Overing, 2000: 64). Policy makers and development agencies outsource support and responsibilities to communities. After all, bounded, homogenous and collaborative communities can easily be identified and serve political categorisation, such as the 'Asian', the 'Black' or the 'Muslim' community. This allows policy makers *and* the public to put people in (what they believe to be) easily identifiable categories[29] by means of stereotyping, by for example physical characteristics, religion or ethnicity (also see Chapter 5).

But community is also an important linguistic tool (to describe various formations of social relationships) and symbolic referent (to create identity, belonging and emplacement, see Cohen, 1985) for my informants. As a symbolic signifier, community is useful *because* it is vague, as it can be applied in various situations and social groups (Baumann, 1996: 177). Although Amit and Rapport (2002: Loc 323) warn us that the multiple uses of the term may "reduce the concept to banality", anthropological research has the advantage of teasing out and analysing how and why notions of community are "negotiated and contested", contextualizing it within the specific interpretations related to our fieldsites and informants, recognizing that such concepts are used, maintained and changed over time in specific contexts in which they emerge (Rapport and Overing, 2000:62).

This does not, however, deny the positive effects of community as providing "a sense of purpose, belonging [and] security" (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 94). Bhutanese refugees – as individuals in transition – assure continuity, rootedness and a sense of 'home'[30] by belonging to a (more or less well

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[29] As Baumann (1996: 15, 29) highlights, in the UK (and indeed, across the global North), community became a "polite term for 'ethnic minority'", serving to identify people with a 'common' identity, ethnicity, religion or political affiliation (see Chapter 5).
[30] Nepali: *ghar*, see Nelson, 2015

defined) community (see Rapport and Overing, 2000: 63). For them, community becomes a useful tool to denote commonality whilst maintaining multiplicities of meanings. It defines boundaries whilst sustaining diversity. At the same time, however, community became a problem, rather than a solution for the many issues Bhutanese refugees face in resettlement. Their daily lives and communities are affected by both the UK's and global migration policies, and intra-community divisions. This underlines my argument that in my fieldsite, community is, as Cohen (1985) argues, a symbolic concept that changes over time and space, rather than a fixed, structural paradigm.

Community as the creation of similarity and difference

Instead of focusing on community as a tangible and bounded social group of people sharing common traits and interests, as policy makers do, anthropology has shifted its gaze to community as a "categorical referent" (Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 185). Cohen's (1985: 98) symbolic approach to community offers an alternative tactic to analyse community, defining it not as a sociological "fact" but as a concept created and maintained in the minds of community members[31]. Community, in this definition, does not exist independently of the meanings people attach to it, and the context in which community takes place (Chatty, 2010: 54; Rapport and Overing, 2000: 62).

Community is reliant on commonality between its members. These shared traits, beliefs and histories, may not be actual (socio-cultural, physical, historical, etc.) realities, but are located in the imagination of community members (Anderson, 2006), who give meanings to these shared symbols or vocabularies (Rapport and Overing, 2000:63). These interpretations are not fixed, static or homogenous, but allow diverse, heterogeneous and even contradictory communities to emerge (ibid.:62). The adaptation of the term

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[31] However, I do not go as far as to argue that community is merely a signifier of an idea rather than an organised social network of people (Amit and Rapport, 2002: 185). Both *samaj* and RCOs are dependent on face-to-face social interaction, through which relationships are created and maintained (see Chapters 7 and 8).

community amongst Bhutanese refugees to denote social groups from close family to the global diaspora, is testament to this contextualisation.

As I attempt to unpack these various notions of community, it should become clear that community amongst Bhutanese refugees takes various forms, and operates as much through communality as it does through difference, or 'othering'. Community is often defined not only by what it *is*, but by what it is *not* (Amit and Rapport 2002: Loc 985). Both Cohen (1985) and Anderson (2006) draw on Barth's (1998 [1969]) work on 'othering' amongst ethnic groups, who urges us to focus not on the commonalities between people, but on the boundaries that define social groups – that is, the "organisation of culture difference" and distinction between *us* and *them* (ibid.: 15; Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 1307). Cohen (1985) highlights that unity is created through exclusion, and the imagination and consciousness of others "beyond their boundaries" (in Rapport and Overing, 2000: 63, also see Butler, 2004; Hall, 1992; 1996). As Bhabha (2004: 30) put it, a community "begins its prescencing" exactly *because* of its consciousness of boundaries. The same applies in my study: Bhutanese refugee communities are constructed along "two key axes" (Mohan, 2002: 98): firstly by shared socio-cultural meanings, practices (or performances), histories and experiences, and secondly by means of 'othering', defining themselves vis-à-vis others (Chapters 8 and 9). Anderson (2006) highlights that this creation of similarity and difference is (akin to national identity) *imagined* by the individuals who employ it. That is, the criteria determining in- and outsider are not factual, but are negotiated, contested and amended by the people themselves. As I show in throughout this work, it is this imagined 'othering' that is important for the creation of community amongst Bhutanese refugees in the UK.

Moreover, although people may move across boundaries, and move in space and time (as my informants have done), 'othering' continues, although the means and definitions of boundaries may have changed (Barth [1988] in Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 367). Several scholars suggest that this is accentuated for forced migrants, whose previous notions of similarity and difference have been deconstructed, and who seek familiarity and stability in a

time of transition (see Boddy, 1995: 18; Bromley, 2000: 5; Colson, 2003: 6; Shaw, 2008: 28; Wahlbeck, 1999: 11). My informants recognize that the values, meanings and interpretations that are shared (with insiders) or not shared (with outsiders) are changing through migration (Barth, 1998: 15). For example, my informants emphasized that in Bhutan, and initially in Nepal, boundaries based on gender-differentiations were common. However, due to aid intervention by the UNHCR, discrimination based on gender was prohibited in Bhutanese refugee camps. Nevertheless, new boundaries emerge which determine with whom it *is* and is *not* appropriate to engage in social practice (see Chapter 8).

It is here where optimistic notions of community are most contested. The development of community and its inherent 'othering' has the potential to produce and accentuate internal differences, leading to conflicts and factionalism, rather than unity (Shaw, 2008: 29). My fieldsite is an example of how a social group is internally divided through the creation, negotiation and contestation of imagined differences (Baumann, 1996: 172), leading to the antagonistic assertion of insider versus outsider and the "potentially violent expulsion of those who are not 'my blood, my family, my kin, my clan, my nation, my race'". (Voiscu, 2013: 169; also see Rapport and Overing, 2000: 64). The split between three different Bhutanese RCOs is an outcome of this 'othering', as I show in Chapter 9.

However, as I argue throughout this work, my informants are able to cope with an array of similarity and difference. Mutuality within a community does not imply a "homogeneity of views or interest" (Cohen [1985] in Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 390), but allows for multiple views *within* a social group. They do so by a process of "synchresis"[32], defined by the *mestiza* writer and activist Gloria Anzaldúa (1999) as a coping-strategy of migrants. They develop "tolerance for contradictions" and ambiguities, and learn "to juggle cultures" in order to adopt and operate in "plural personalities…and modes" and "sustain contradictions"

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[32] Syncretism was also adopted by the Manchester University Anthropology School under Gluckman in the 1940s, denoting the emergence of new and hybrid cultural practices in growing urban areas, characterised by a considerable diversity of cultures, classes and personalities (Kalra et al, 2005: 74).

(cited in Bromley, 2000: 4-5), which "opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference" (Bhabha, 2004: 34).

Individuals belong to many social groups simultaneously, and thus adopt several different 'cultures', practices and loyalties, which change over time (Baumann, 1996: 23; 172). Migrants affiliate not only with their 'native' social networks, cultures and practices, but also with those of the receiving society (Zetter, 2007: 187). In turn, this allows for the tolerance of multiple, hybrid notions of boundaries, by recognizing that who and what lies beyond the boundaries of a community in one instance, may be included within its confines on other occasions (Shaw, 2008: 29). 'Othering' may be a key feature of community development and maintenance, but boundaries are adaptable, temporal (Grossberg, 1996), imagined (Anderson, 2006), and symbolic (Cohen, 1985).

However, taking 'othering' to the extreme, Grossberg (1996: 93) appropriately criticises Cohen and Barth's assumption that communities and identities may be analysed as mere "relations of difference". It disregards the historical creation of 'othering' as systems of power, and takes the construction of difference as a given in all social relations (ibid.: 93-4). Although Bhutanese refugees employ 'othering', communities are still based on certain similarities (Chapter 7).

Moreover, boundaries are not only created and maintained from *within* the community. Although I argue throughout this work that Bhutanese refugees have a high level of agency, certain boundaries are imposed from outside (Shaw, 2008: 29-30). Here, I explore the effects of aid intervention, social policy and public discourses on Bhutanese refugees' communal identifications. For instance, refugee-ness is dependent on international definitions rather than on my informants (Chapter 5), and the experience of organized resettlement determines membership to Bhutanese RCOs (Chapters 8 and 9). Thus, formalized associations such as Takin, Welfare and HNC are constructed both by Bhutanese refugees *and* the social policies that underline the community development project (ibid.: 30). Forced migrants consciously politicize their

selves vis-à-vis other identities, and "reproduce a politicized version of an institutional category" (Zetter, 2007: 187, also see Hall, 1996: 15). That is, the development of community is a "professional…and a political practice" based on the relationship between individual agency, socio-political structures and power stratifications (Shaw, 2008: 26-7). A community can expand or limit its boundaries depending on economic, political and social advantages (ibid.: 29), demonstrating both the agency of social groups and the adaptability of 'othering'. Moreover, communities are created through and operate within interactions and experiences (Lovell, 1998: 5). Therefore, Bhutanese refugee communities in the UK are symbolic constructs within the specific context of refugee resettlement and migration policy, as I discuss in the following section.

Refugee communities

One outcome of forced migration is said to be the destruction of "a community's identity, values, activities, livelihoods and visions for the future" [33] (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 91). Within discourses of service providers, refugees are portrayed as "rootless" and utterly dependent individuals, who lost their support network (Williams, 2006: 865). Colson (2003: 8) claims that "[s]ince people define themselves in terms of the roles they play …, the loss of role structures means that they cannot know who they are or who anyone else is until new roles are constructed and people assigned to them". Therefore, refugees actively fashion networks[34] and foster relationships in order to create certainty, assure support and enhance social and cultural sustainability[35] (Ibid.: 94-97; Chatty, 2010: 465).

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[33] Instigators of conflict may deliberately increase internal conflicts within communities (e.g. betrayal of kin, neighbours, etc.), leading to mistrust and suspicions, and therefore prevent a unified opposition (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 91; see Chapters 2 and 3).

[34] These networks include transnational communities and diasporas, which operate across national borders (see Williams, 2006, Kalra et al, 2005). Bhutanese refugees maintain relationships across all resettlement nations and Nepal (not Bhutan, however), but due to the limited scope of this work, I do not discuss these global links.

[35] This includes the transmission of socio-cultural traditions, values and languages (see Chatty, 2010: 468).

Migration brings with it new ideas, meanings, values and lifestyles somewhere in between the past (and 'homelands') and the present (the host society) (Mines and Lamb, 2010d), and requires a negotiation and transformation of relationships and hierarchical structures (Colson, 2003: 8). These new communities are marked by heterogeneity and multiplicities of belonging. My informants form communities-in-transition, building and maintaining multiple *samaj* by means of mutuality, trust, reciprocity and social interactions (see Chapter 7), through active practices of "social incorporation…cohesion…capital formation or the building of social relationships" (Chatty, 2010: 437; also see Zetter and Pearl., 2007). This reflects Appadurai's (1996) 'community of sentiment', in which a group of people share feelings, values and imaginations, arising within a specific discourse of 'ethnic' categorisations[36] (Chapter 5). However, just because refugees have a shared language, country of birth and experience of displacement does not mean that they are one cohesive community (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 96). Thus, the term 'refugee community' is difficult to pin down to one exact, coherent and all-encompassing interpretation.

Nevertheless, UK service providers support the formation of RCOs based on shared traits, assuming that refugees would come together in order to serve the 'greater good' of all community members. The formation of RCOs is mediated by top-down policies, which manage and control refugees arriving in the UK. Communities to do not arise in a political, social and cultural void, but are embedded in the context and prevalent power structures (Shaw, 2008: 34). Bhutanese refugee communities are inevitably influenced by the policies in which refugee resettlement takes place. National governments, aid agencies and service providers set "the parameters within which refugee groups may legitimately organise to represent their interests" (Sigona et al., 2004: 8), and thus, communities are actively created and organised by policy, rather than by the refugees themselves (Shaw, 2008: 34). Therefore it is all the more important to understand the political, social and cultural context in which these

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[36] Appadurai's theories on community are (similar to Anderson's imagined community) criticised for locating belonging merely to "feelings", rather than recognising that sameness is also created through active socio-cultural practices, (internal and external) interactions and investments (of e.g. time and resources) (Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 3521).

RCOs emerge (Sigona et al., 2004: 7). My thesis thus attempts to shed light on Bhabha's (2004: 32) justified query:

> "How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable?"

Following Shaw (2008: 24), I aim to unpack the "politics of community" to shed light on both the challenging and positive character of community and community development in refugee resettlement. Migration and community development encompasses complex, continuous processes of labelling (Chapter 5), negotiations of multiple identities and boundaries (Chapters 8 and 9), the "manipulation of myth" (Chapter 9), and social power and control (Chapter 8) (Colson, 2003: 1-2). Refugees are under the authority of national and international policy and funding regimes, and subject to various administrative and political structures that require negotiations, and the adoption of both old and new practices (ibid.: 8). In the following section, I explore the complex relationship between anthropological research and policies that affect my informants, and argue that the anthropology of forced migration necessitates a critical engagement with the political structures and policies that determine refugee resettlement.

Anthropology and Policy

As Baba (2013: 3) states, an ethnography on migrants and refugees is inevitably an anthropology of policy, defining policy as a means to "codify social norms and values and articulate conceptual modes for organizing society". Policy is perceived to be the "ghost in the machine", which brings to

life legislative and bureaucratic apparatuses (such as nation states, international organisations and conventions), having tangible consequences for the subjects of policy (Shore and Wright, 2003: 4-5). Governing (national and transnational) organisations classify, shape and order people, who construct themselves according to these top-down 'labels' (Shore and Wright, 2003: 4-5[37], see Chapter 5). Moreover, policies shape relationships and activities, normalizing "certain behaviours and actions", whilst limiting others (Baba, 2013: 3). Governments control notions of citizenship, 'integration' and immigration, and create policies that determine the relationship between the individual and the state (ibid.).

Two issues emerge in this discussion: firstly, as I show in Chapter 5, policy makers and service providers in the UK apply convenient 'ethnic' classifications to migrant groups, in order to manage the diverse population of Great Britain. Secondly, this simplification leads to the assumption amongst these governmental bodies that internal differences within a migrant community are suspended in favour of community cohesion. However, as I show throughout this work, the service providers' neglect of internal antagonisms puts the assumed utility of the RCO project into question.

Although ruling bodies portray polices as "politically and ideologically neutral", anthropologists analyse policies as embedded in the culture, history and ideology from which they originate (Shore and Wright, 2003: 5). Ethnographies are able to show that migrations are not random events, but occur due to unique patterns of, for example, nation building (Chapter 2). Moreover, Malkki's work (1992 – 2002) shows that anthropology is best equipped to conceptualize and challenge accepted forms of 'humanitarianism' in which refugee and migrant policies operate (Colson, 2003: 2). Anthropological research is able to tease out the various "intersecting and conflicting power structures" (Abu-Lughod [1990] in ibid.: 10), analysing policies as "cultural texts, rhetorical devises, discursive formations [and] narratives" (ibid.: 11-12).

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[37] Following the instrumentalist view of governance and policy in anthropology (see Foucault, 1989).

Therefore, the study of forced migration is multi- and interdisciplinary (Chatty, 2010: 23), and necessities a critical engagement with policy research, governmental documents, historical sources and various literature stretching from social sciences to international development. Anthropologists study the 'policy nexus', looking at the how multiple (political) actors interact and relate to each other over time (and history), uncovering the divergences between people, cultures and contexts (Baba, 2013: 7). The aim is to examine the effects of policy on the people or 'clients' of national and transnational regulations, critically reflecting on the contexts and interactions of policies on the ground, and how refugees cope with policies (Baba, 2013: 5).

More importantly, long-term ethnographic fieldwork allows an understanding of the continuous fluctuations in policy, public and media discourses, and responses by refugees (Williams, 2006: 877). Policy research is mostly reliant on "tangible, quantifiable aspects", focusing exclusively on "structural and organisational elements of the system" (Cheung and Phillimore, 2013: 520). In contrast, anthropological studies show that all actors involved in migration have their own political agenda, bestowing refugees with the agency to challenge and resist policies (Colson, 2003: 1; 4). My study highlights how forced migrants themselves use policies to legitimize their status and residency in resettlement (Baba, 2013: 7). This is a critique of the assumption by some aid agencies that refugees – as individuals in a state of liminality – lack the ability to reflect on their situation[38]. I demonstrate that migration is not a one-way process, but that Bhutanese refugees are (to an extent) able to vocalize and actively participate in various political processes.

What distinguishes ethnographic research from, for example, quantitative surveys and questionnaires, is that anthropologists take into account both verbal *and* non-verbal behaviour (Alasuutari, 1995: 16), and present data from an *emic* perspective, which acknowledges that often each individual of a group has different perceptions and experiences of the same action or event

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[38] See Mortland's (1987) study on refugee camps in the Philippines, in which refugees' criticism of aid provision was not taken seriously and dismissed by aid workers as something "refugees do" for no other reason than "to complain" (ibid.: 399-400).

(Fetterman, 2010: 20-1) – in other words, the "voice of refugees" (Baba, 2013: 5). Anthropology has the advantage of recording these multiple perspectives of realities, which are all crucial to understand why people think, feel and act the way they do (Fetterman, 2010: 21). Anthropologists acknowledge that meanings can change over time and in various contexts, showing the impermanence of our lives (Tideman, 2009: 1). Thus, we assume that the ethnographies we produce are not ever-valid accounts of reality, but that any social science research (including quantitative surveys) only captures a community and their perceptions in a particular moment in time in a particular context.

However, anthropologists working with refugees enter a "loaded political field where they have to be very much aware of the effects their arguments may have" (Turton, 2005: 277). This is all the more relevant in the "century of the refugee", in which anthropological research gains more and more significance outside of academia, rather than being confined to academic settings (Colson, 2003: 13). Yet, we should keep in mind Turton's (2005: 277) advice that the "role of academic knowledge should be to reflect critically upon, not to confirm and legitimize, the taken for granted assumptions upon which policy making is often based", which I attempt to do in this thesis.

Methodology

As mentioned above, my research is based on a 14-month ethnographic fieldwork in Manchester[39], which combined participant observation with interviews. During my fieldwork, I also assisted my informants with the *Bhutanese Refugee Film Project*[40] (BRFP), and in course of this project,

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[39] Including research with children and young people, who are indeed "competent social actors", and provide insight into the refugees' lives (Spicer, 2008: 494).

[40] I was very closely involved in this project initiated by Takin, and I am a co-producer of the film. However, TA holds the copyright of the content, which I have permission to use in this thesis (referenced as BRFP).

conducted 23 semi-structured interviews in Nepali[41]. Informed consent was obtained from all research participants, and an ethical checklist has been completed prior to fieldwork (see Appendix 3). I have changed the names of all informants in this work[42], but use the original names of Bhutanese RCOs, as they can easily be identified by the reader through a simple Google search. Moreover, I have consciously chosen to emphasize that most of my informants live in Manchester, rather than 'inventing' a city for anonymity-purposes. This allows me to present accurate data on the demography of the city, which is important to understand my informants' experiences of resettlement[43].

Welcome to Manchester

Greater Manchester is a populous and vibrant city in the North of England (see Figure 2[44]), famous for being the centre of the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, and for their two football teams *Manchester United* and *Manchester City*[45]. According to the 2011 Census (ONS, 2011; 2012a), Greater Manchester has a population of 2.7 million[46] people divided over ten main areas[47] (see Figure 3[48]). I experienced Manchester as a lively and welcoming city, full of friendly people. During my fieldwork, there was always something "going on" (as my informants and I referred to it), especially in the city centre "triangle" between Dean Square, Piccadilly station and Victoria Square. The large shopping malls in Trafford or Arndale are magnets for people on the very common rainy days, including my informants.

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[41] Although my language skills in Nepali are limited, recording data in the respondents' native language is of significant advantage, and allowed me to understand how ideas are formed and structured. Several of my informants assisted me in the translation and elaboration of Nepali terms and concepts.

[42] Both first and surnames have been selected at random, and are not a reflection of e.g. caste.

[43] I also believe that in the age of the internet, any attempt to anonymize the location of our (Western) fieldsite (and indeed, our informants) is futile, although it is, of course, an ethical requirement of social science research to protect our informants.

[44] From http://www.ichstm2013.com/travel/ [Accessed: 23 May 2013].

[45] Both of whom have a strong fan base amongst my informants of all ages and both genders.

[46] In comparison to 64m total population in the UK (ONS, 2012a).

[47] The area of Manchester City Centre has a population of about 500k. I emphasize that when I use 'Manchester' in this work, I refer to Greater Manchester, as my informants (and myself) live across the wider area, rather than being concentrated in the city centre.

[48] From http://refurb-nw.co.uk/ [Accessed: 12 November 2013].

Figure 2: Map of the UK

Figure 3: Map of Greater Manchester

Manchester is spread over a wide geographical area, and has an extensive public transport network with buses, trains and trams. It often took me more than two hours to travel from my area (Stockport) to meet Bhutanese refugees (in e.g. Bolton or Bury), who are spread across almost all areas of Greater Manchester (see map above). They are mostly concentrated in Bolton and Rochdale – the latter due to the Christian community, which has a community venue there. Bhutanese refugees were settled depending on availability of accommodation, and about 150 of the 400 Bhutanese refugees were settled in the nearby towns of Leeds, Sheffield and Bradford. I sometimes travelled with my informants to these other locations, visiting Bhutanese refugees, and attended several events organised by these smaller, local communities. However, as I did not have extended contact with these groups, this thesis is about Bhutanese refugees in Greater Manchester, rather than in the UK in general. Yet, most Bhutanese refugees residing out of Manchester either migrated (or will migrate) to the city to seek employment and better educational facilities (see Chapter 6), or are involved with the community in the city

Manchester is a highly diverse city, with more than 15 percent non-white residents – nine percent of whom are South Asian migrants or self-identify as British South Asian[49] (ONS, 2011; 2012a). As Bromley (2000: 2-3) elucidates, instead of "passive" migrants who fully assimilate into the British host culture, immigrants have "actively transformed" the UK by creating new and diverse "cityscapes" – Manchester just being one example of these transformed urban centres. In areas of Manchester, such as Longsight (Manchester City), Salford, Bolton, Bury and Rochdale, the migrant population from across the world created a multi-cultural urban space, pulsating with culture, music and art. There are small South Asian markets and shops dotted across the city, allowing my informants to purchase familiar groceries and products. The several Hindu temples (*mandir*) in Manchester are well-attended by my older Hindu informants, whereby Takin members favour the *Gita Bhavan Hindu Temple* in Chorlton (Manchester City). Bhutanese refugees travel across the city to access schools, jobs and governmental and non-governmental facilities. All my informants expressed their happiness to live in Manchester, which they regarded as "green" (with many parks), "friendly" and "multicultural".

Namaste

My informants – as most refugee populations – come from all social, cultural, educational and economic backgrounds, showing that they are not one, homogenous community. For example, some of my older informants over the age of forty never went to school and are illiterate, whilst others have university degrees and professional work experience. Some come from a family of farmers and labourers in Bhutan, whilst others descend from high status government officials or religious leaders. Older informants were born in Bhutan, whilst almost all under the age of twenty were born in Nepalese refugee camps. Almost all of them lived in refugee camps in Nepal for nearly twenty years, and arrived in the UK in between 2010 and 2013. As they resided in various refugee camps, many of my informants did not know each

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[49] In comparison to 13 percent migrant population across the UK, 9 percent of which are (British) South Asians (ONS, 2012a).

other before arriving in the UK. I had informants from both genders, and I spent time with newborns and toddlers, children and teenagers, young adults, and middle aged individuals up to the age of eighty. Some spoke English, some only a little, and a few none at all. Most refugees lived with their extended families in terraced or semi-detached houses throughout the city (rather than in 'enclaves'), making it difficult to visit all of them at all times.

During my fieldwork, most of my informants were unemployed, and fully reliant on benefit and welfare payments (see Chapter 3). Bhutanese refugees arrived in the middle of an economic downturn[50], which had an impact on their employment prospects (together with other factors, see Chapter 4). Since autumn 2008, unemployment in the UK increased from 5.5 to 8.5 percent. During my fieldwork in April 2013 the unemployment rate was 7.9 percent, and even higher for 16 to 24 year-olds, with more than 21 percent of young people out of work (ONS, 2013a, 2013b). According to economists, the "unemployment levels across Greater Manchester remain[ed] higher than the national average" (Begum, 2013). As one of my informants complained: "There are no jobs [in Manchester], whatever you do". However, many Bhutanese refugees, engage in illegal, so-called 'cash-in-hand' work, mostly in Asian businesses, such as restaurants and shops[51].

Therefore, much of my fieldwork was spend in 'timepass' (see Chapter 7), making and eating food, sharing tea, watching television, playing cards and being part of conversations. Most are busy during the day (limiting my time with them), attending school or language classes, going to (legal and illegal)

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[50] Neither the UNHCR, nor the British BA could foresee the persistence of recession across the UK, and in this regard, the resettlement programme may not be held responsible for the high rate of unemployment and decreased service provision and funding experienced by my informants.

[51] These jobs are normally acquired through 'connections': one refugee knows a business owner, who hires one of the refugees, and in turn, through the snowball-effect, hires other refugees through these connections, showing the importance of social capital which I discuss in Chapter 8. However, it is illegal to pay employees in cash without "deducting tax and National insurance contributions" (HMRC a), and employees who commit this PAYE fraud– similar to tax fraud – risk losing benefit payments, and have to pay taxes themselves (HMRC b). Yet, cash-in-hand practices are necessary subsidies to their welfare payment, which sometimes do not cover all the necessary living-costs to support a family. Scott (2008: xvi) argues that this is an "everyday form of peasant resistance". Bhutanese refugees engage in these highly risky practices: to be caught may mean trouble in the future, but not to work for cash has real consequences in the present. Therefore, the benefit outweighs the risk, and cash-in-hand employment continues to be a common practice amongst Bhutanese refugees in the UK.

work, training or work experiences, picking their children up from school, and finishing household chores.

My role in the field was both that of a friend and of a support worker[52]. For my informants, I represented some form of advocate, who could improve their 'situation' with small "favours", such as helping with their CV and job applications, teaching them more English, and advising them on practical matters, such as applying for funding. Some of my informants jokingly introduced me as their "manager" to non-refugees. I never experienced problems due to my gender or age, and the fact that I am migrant myself improved my rapport (see Chapter 5). Throughout the following chapters, I introduce some of my informants in detail, and refer to my own experience of becoming a community member, as I moved from being a guest (*pahuna*) to become a friend (*sathi*) and ultimately a member of the family (*pariwar*) and some small, local communities (*samaj*). I make use of some Nepali (and Dzongkha) terms throughout this thesis, but mostly use English translations of conversations and interviews[53]. A full list of Nepali (and Dzongkha) terms can be found in Appendix 1[54].

Limits of research

Anthropologists are critical about the limits of their research competence, and reflect upon the limits of their studies (Colson, 2003: 13). Therefore, I

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[52] I have to mention, that my research presented here was only devised by me in my second year of my PhD. During my Masters course and first two years of my PhD, I worked on a project on *Gross National Happiness* in Bhutan, but failed to get access to this highly restrictive nation (also see Chapter 2). On the one hand, this limited my preliminary knowledge on the topic at hand and significantly impacted on both my time and financial resources (as a largely self-funded student). On the other hand, the failure to gain access to Bhutan (my 'Bhutan Odyssey', how I refer to it) was perceived as a common denominator for many of my informants. On several occasions when discussing this issue with Bhutanese refugees, they emphasized that we both have been "wronged" by Bhutan, increasing my rapport with them.

[53] Many quotes in this thesis are exactly as my informants' stated them in English, containing spelling- and grammar mistakes. In order to preserve the emic component of this work, I did not correct these mistakes.

[54] The spelling of Nepali words in this work follows dictionary spelling, rather than the spelling my informants used. As one of my Nepali migrant informants remarked, Bhutanese refugees often misspell Nepali words, as most of my informants are illiterate in Nepali (see Chapter 7). For example, my informants write the word 'friend' as *sati*, rather than *sathi*, or *bahini* (younger sister) as *bueni* – this would suggest that Bhutanese refugees write Nepali as they know it colloquially in their spoken form.

emphasize that what is absent in this thesis are, unfortunately, the voices of aid agencies, policy makers (both national and international) and UK service providers. I was not successful in engaging with these non-refugee bodies. Rather, I found these agencies to be particularly critical of my presence amongst Bhutanese refugees (see Baba, 2013 for a similar experience). Therefore, interactions between Bhutanese refugees, service providers and British institutions (e.g. Home Office) are only told through my informants' stories and by using comments by service providers from private correspondences.

Service providers who facilitate refugee resettlement (e.g. Refugee Action UK in Manchester) were merely interested in my access to refugees, and the potential quantitative data my research may produce (although I highlighted that I am conduction a qualitative study), whilst being less inclined to reflect on my critical questions on service provision. Furthermore, my repeated requests to Refugee Action UK, the British Home Office and the IOM to provide me with reliable numbers on Bhutanese refugee resettlement were met with silence, under the guise of "data protection". In addition, I was not successful in obtaining access to state facilities, such as the Job Centre, health services and schools[55], as researchers need to obtain research permission for these settings – a lengthy process that was beyond my ability whilst in the field.

In the detailed ethnography in Chapter 6, in which I describe the arrival of refugees at Manchester airport, I emphasize that we met two IOM workers who manage refugee resettlement in Manchester. One of them questioned me on who "allowed" me to conduct research with Bhutanese refugees. I retorted that I obtained consent from my informants. Without any response the man frowned, turned around and whispered with the young woman next to him, who gave me another disapproving look, and both refused to speak to me thereafter. After this meeting, my informant Bikram remarked: "You see now!

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[55] Job Centres in Manchester have security guards who prevented non-clients to enter the facilities; health services are under the data protection act and doctor-patient confidentiality, and schools in the UK require a significant bulk of paperwork and permissions (including a criminal records check) in order to enter facilities with minors.

This is what they do – they think we are stupid.... You are dangerous, because we tell you they are not good to us…You help us – you listen".

From the very start of my fieldwork, it became obvious that the reason why I gained such intimate rapport with Bhutanese refugees in the UK, was that they perceived me as an independent researcher, unaffiliated with any governmental and non-governmental body that could impact on my informants' lives. They trusted me exactly because I established relationships with them independently of service providers.

Despite lacking access to service providers, my fieldwork experience revealed the underlying problems that tinge both policy research and academic works. For example, when preparing a publication for a workshop, the reviewing peers gently steered me away from a critical analysis of social policy and service provision, cautioning not to be "too critical" of UK service providers, as to "not close the doors" for future collaborations with these official bodies. Further, they argued that as an early career researcher, I lack the leverage to have my criticism "taken seriously". My analysis of policy and services was 'removed' from the publication, and with it, a necessary critical elaboration on the practice-policy gap. Similarly, after an academic conference, during which I presented my research on RCO divisions, addressing the lack of involvement of UK service providers, I was approached by several audience members, complimenting my "courage" to talk about these issues. One researcher working with Bhutanese refugees in the USA explained that he observed similar internal problems of community divisions amongst his informants, but that his sponsors urged him not to publish on this topic, as it "undermines refugee service provision". Reliant on funding bodies, he had no choice but to disregard his data about community divisions. He expressed his discontent with this situation very strongly, and encouraged me to publish on these issues, so others would follow suit.

Moreover, as addressed above, I have been advised by a few anthropologists that I should not address policy at all, as it is not "the job of anthropology to analyse and critically reflect" upon these external factors. I fundamentally

disagree with this position, as it is exactly these policies that tinge every aspect of my informants' daily lives. My informants themselves critically reflect on immigration policies, and express their dissatisfaction with service provision. As ethnography is an endeavour to present the world from our informants' perspective, I have the duty to address these highly problematic issues. However, I emphasize that the thesis at hand is perhaps not a 'classic' ethnography focusing purely on informants, but juxtaposes policy with the real-life experience of the subjects of these policies.

I found myself surprised by the reactions described above, as my literature review suggests that there are indeed many social science researchers who critically address these issues, amongst them (but not limited to) Kelly (2003), Muggah (2005), Malkki (1997), Zetter and Pearl (2000) and Zetter (2007). In this work, I emphasize that anthropology has to become more relevant outside of academia, following Colson's (2003) call to make our research increasingly accessible for non-academic and non-anthropological audiences. As it is my interest to seek a future career outside of academia, preferably in the policy sector, I cannot stress enough that my choice of research topic, literature and critical engagement is deliberate, and – as I strongly believe – highly relevant for my informants. However, I also find myself between pleasing (future) gatekeepers and potential employers in the policy sectors, whilst remaining committed to critical, independent research.

On a final note, as will become evident throughout the chapters, I was subjected to 'othering' by Bhutanese refugees during fieldwork: since I affiliated myself with TA members (as my initial gatekeepers), rival Bhutanese RCOs were not keen to work with me, and their members did not invite me to their homes. I attempted to (and partially succeeded in) overcoming these problems, but I have to stress that most of my ethnography derives from members of a specific RCO (Takin). Therefore, it is not my intention to generalize my qualitative data to be applicable to all Bhutanese refugees in the UK, or indeed, across the world. Moreover, many of my informants requested to read and comment on my thesis and publications – a promise I have maintained, as the feedback I receive from these informants is invaluable and

opens up new avenues of exploration. Many Bhutanese refugees are highly educated individuals, who have the agency and capacity to critically reflect upon my and other scholars' research. However, as I stressed in many conversations with my informants, I may not be able to fulfil their expectations to "publicise our story", and therefore miraculously "improve" their lives.

Thesis Overview

In this work, I explore the relationship between people, communities and organisational elites such as nation states and aid agencies (Shore and Wright, 2003: 4). In the following chapters, I follow my informants' journey from Bhutan to the UK, and thereby illustrate the complexities of a community-in-transition.

Both voluntary and forced migration occur due to varying reasons and within complex contexts, and thus we have to study both the refugees' experiences *and* the historical and political circumstances of migration (Colson, 2003: 2-3). Therefore, in Chapter 2, I explore the 'othering' that occurs on the macro-level of a nation state such as Bhutan, to assure homogeneity in order to secure sovereignty during nation-building. I trace the Bhutanese Nepalese's story of settlement in Bhutan, showing that they are a diverse community-in-transition for many generations, rather than a geographically bounded, homogeneous community.

In Chapter 3, I follow Bhutanese refugees to the refugee camps in Nepal, and learn about the struggles and difficulties of living in a protracted refugee situation for almost twenty years. Here, I show the internal problems amongst refugees in the camps in search of a durable solution, leading to disunity, fights and even violence against one another. Again, I show that Bhutanese refugees are not a homogenous community, but that 'othering' is a common element of social groups.

In Chapter 4, I explore the external influences on Bhutanese refugees during their time in the refugee camps. Here I show that aid agencies maintain power over refugees by means of political ideologies in the global North, which are embedded in liberal, humanitarian principles (Chatty, 2010: 28). Through social re-engineering, refugees are made into easily resettle-able individuals by means of the community development approach, which is then adopted by resettlement agencies in the UK. Here I also reflect critically on the optimistic functions of RCOs ascribed by UK policy makers and service providers.

In Chapter 5, I highlight that the notion of community and the process of 'othering' is linked to the creation of a cultural identity. These identities are not only by refugees, but by policy makers, service providers and the public. I explore how national and international policies control migrants through the use of simplified, homogenous classifications, which make them subjects of policy, revealing the "political in the apolitical" (Zetter, 2007: 188). However, I also demonstrate that labels give legitimacy and agency to refugees, who use these categories for their own advantage. Moreover, similar to notions of community, these classifications are subject to transformation and change, and Bhutanese refugees have several hybrid identities which they adapt according to context and experience (Chatty: 2010: 54). Here, I conclude that migration is a "reciprocal process in which nation and refugee reflect back on each other" (Gemie, 2010: 30).

In Chapter 6, I outline how life is "beginning" for Bhutanese refugees on arrival in Manchester and highlight the role of *samaj* and RCOs in resettlement. I discuss how, due to marginalisation (e.g. from the labour market) and unfulfilled hopes, many refugees are disillusioned with resettlement, and have to learn to manage their expectations. It is here where community comes into play and acts as a reliable support network, fulfilling the positive functions ascribed to communities.

As mentioned throughout this work, the development and maintenance of community is based on both the creation of similarity and difference. In

Chapter 7, I explore the notion of sameness by outlining my informants' understandings of community as *samaj*, which are built on mutuality and trust. I show that rather than being merely 'imagined' (Anderson, 2006) or purely 'symbolic' (Cohen, 1985), *samaj* is embedded in social interactions. However, I demonstrate that Bhutanese refugees alter their meanings and values through aid intervention and resettlement.

In Chapter 8 I juxtapose *samaj* with community as formalized RCOs. I outline the bureaucratization of communities and hierarchies in order to comply with service providers' assumptions about the role and meaning of community. But I emphasize the agency of Bhutanese refugees, who find new opportunities as liminal experts, by accumulating various forms of capital and skills, showing that migrants and refugees find "surprising, never before imagines solutions" (Colson, 2003: 2-3) to the complex issues arising in resettlement.

In Chapter 9, I turn to the negative side of community, and show 'othering' in the microcosm of Bhutanese refugee communities in Manchester. Again, I demonstrate that Bhutanese refugees are not one homogenous community working together for the benefit of all, as service providers envision. I trace the origin of divisions in a narrative of 'othering', and illustrate the effects of internecine conflict by exploring the constant battle for members in order to comply with funding regimes. I emphasize that Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester are British, rather than Bhutanese Nepalese communities, created within resettlement policies.

I conclude the work by arguing that migration is a complex process involving (forced) migrants, nation states and transnational bodies influencing one another. It may be difficult not to fall prey to the ideal that social science research should and must challenge and improve policy. This work does not attempt to radically transform UK immigration policies, but rather serves as a response to Colson's (2003: 12) call that "[w]hat is perhaps most needed is a synthesis of what is being learned about the impact of radical transformations in human expectations as they are subject to warfare, civil unrest, economic upheavals, natural catastrophes, and resettlement among strangers"

Chapter 2 – The Making of Bhutanese Refugees

Although the history of Bhutan and the conflict leading to the expulsion of Nepalese Bhutanese, is not the main focus of this thesis, an understanding of the historical context is essential to gain an insight into Bhutanese refugees' lives in the present. As I explore in Chapter 5, refugee-ness *is* a very important classification of my informants, and is used to legitimize their place in the UK. "Being a refugee" was an outcome of "Bhutan's nationalist policy"[56], as I heard in many speeches my informants gave during events addressing non-Bhutanese refugees. The history of Bhutanese refugees was summarized in one sentence: "Bhutan adopted 'One Nation, One People' [see below], so we fled Bhutan, and lived in refugee camps in Nepal for twenty years". It is this refugee-ness that creates sameness between them (in their eyes) – a shared history of exile, life in the camps and resettlement. This was important to distinguish refugees from non-refugees – both internally *and* externally. That is, not all Nepalese Bhutanese are considered to be Bhutanese refugees by my informants; and those who are, see themselves as distinct from other refugees (e.g. sub-Saharan or Middle Eastern refugees who live in Britain) and migrants (e.g. Nepali and South Asian migrants) who came to the UK voluntarily. In turn – as I explore in this thesis – these notions of sameness and difference are of utmost importance for Bhutanese refugees in order to create a community – both as *samaj*[57] and as refugee community organisations (RCOs).

In order to understand the Bhutanese government's move to expel Nepalese Bhutanese, we have to apprehend the internal *and* external influences that had an impact on Bhutan's rulers' views of Nepalese Bhutanese. The conflict in Bhutan did not occur 'overnight', but in various stages, often with opposing policies towards the Nepalese Bhutanese, stretching from attempted

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[56] See definition of nationalism further below.
[57] See Introduction and Chapter 7, *samaj* is the term my informants use to denote community.

assimilation to forceful eviction. The history of Bhutan cannot be explored without consideration of Bhutan's unique position in the Himalayas.

The conflict between Bhutanese *drukpas* (see below) and Nepalese Bhutanese is defined as an 'ethnic conflict' by external observers (see e.g. Hutt, 2007 and Joseph, 1999). The refugee issue originated in the imagined differences between two (and more) social and ethnic groups living in Bhutan, which were used as a justification to expel the 'other' - that is, what the ruling elite (the *Ngalongs* – see below) perceived as non-Bhutanese or non-native - in order to maintain power. More importantly, ethnicity in the Bhutanese context is equated with culture, in which only one (ethnic) culture is deemed as 'authentic' and 'native' by the Bhutanese ruling elite.

Notwithstanding the importance of providing this historical background, throughout my fieldwork, my informants did not speak about Bhutan often, except when explicitly asked or presenting their "story" to external audiences during events. They place emphasis on their experience of 'being refugees' in a host country very different from both their country of origin (Bhutan) and Nepal, rather than on history. Only refugees over the age of forty remember their lives in Bhutan, whilst others are too young to recall details from their lives before living in the refugee camps in Nepal. Furthermore, most young refugees under the age of twenty were born in Nepal having no recollections of life in Bhutan, and refer to it as "the country of our parents"[58].

When asked about life in Bhutan, my older informants evoke details about how much land they owned, and how they cultivated it. Most Bhutanese refugees who were born and lived in Bhutan were agricultural labourers or land owners, planting apples, oranges, cardamom, betel nut, wheat and rice. "It was a simple life", as one of my informant's once remarked. "We worked at home, helped our family with the harvest and worked on the farm". When I asked about the conflict that lead to their expulsion from Bhutan, they recalled the

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[58] It was not common amongst my informants to talk about Bhutan, or maintain connections to the country through story-telling. This distinguishes them from other refugees in ethnographic studies, such as observed by (amongst others) Chatty (2010) and Malkki (1992), whose informants continuously recalled their lives in their native countries through shared narratives and story-telling.

police and army, requesting documents to "prove the citizenship" (outlined further below), the threats of torture and murder by Bhutanese officials, as well as the flight from Bhutan to Nepal.

There is hardly any political activism amongst my informants in Manchester, calling for repatriation to Bhutan or compensation (for e.g. property, land, etc.) from the Bhutanese government. This distinguishes my informants from, for example, many Bhutanese refugee groups in resettlement in the USA, who are actively involved in creating awareness of "their story". One of my informants, an educated man in his early twenties, explained: "Why should I care about Bhutan? It's no good to think about the past and the history, when we can't find a job here [in the UK], can't buy a car or a house, and have no money. This is more important, you know, live here in England, not think about Bhutan".

In this chapter, I outline the 'making of Bhutanese refugees' by tracing their steps from being Nepalese settlers in the Himalayan region (18th century) to becoming Nepalese Bhutanese (19th and 20th century) in Bhutan, as well as the ethnic conflict in Bhutan (1980s). Rather than presenting the history of Bhutan and Bhutanese refugees in a chronological fashion, I examine the history thematically, and focus predominantly on the reasons for the expulsion of Bhutanese Nepalese from Bhutan to Nepal, where they lived in refugee camps for almost two decades, and finally on their arrival and resettlement in Britain.

Narratives of history and conflict

The conflict in Bhutan has been widely discussed by other researchers (e.g. Hutt, 2007; Joseph, 1999; Evans, 2009; De Varennes, 2009) and has been outlined in detail in literature by the UN, Amnesty International (AI), various human rights organisations, and the popular media (e.g. international newspapers and online resources). However, there are differences between the Bhutan's government's and the refugees' views on the conflict - as Evans'

respondents (2009: 117) explained, there are "two sides to the river" - leading to inconsistent views of history.

The narration of Bhutanese history is divided amongst several lines: the Bhutanese ruling elite, the 'politically active' Nepalese Bhutanese and the 'innocent'[59] refugees. In her PhD research with Bhutanese refugees in Nepalese camps, Evans (2009: 10) concludes that refugee narratives "present refugees as the totally innocent victims of a cruel and repressive [Bhutanese] government. It leaves no space for the suggestion that refugees faced threats and violence from their own people". On the other hand, the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGB) portrays the Bhutanese refugees as *ngolops* (DZ, 'rebel' or 'mutineer', here: 'anti nationals'), portraying all Nepalese Bhutanese as guilty by (ethnic) association, who committed violent acts in order to overthrow the Bhutanese government (see Hutt, 2007). The following discussion of the history of the Bhutanese conflict only reflects narratives from specific points of views depending on the literature, which is often biased, and either entirely 'victimises' (in some refugees' accounts) or wholly blames (in RGB statements) the Nepalese Bhutanese. Although researchers attempt to impede bias in their work, many authors have a strong tendency to favour narratives of refugees, fostering the notion of victimhood.

As anthropologists, we acknowledge that history is a collective representation of a group of people (mostly the ones in power) with aims and obligations. Appadurai (1981: 201) states that the "past is a boundless canvas for contemporary embroidery". Hutt (2007: 25) follows Appadurai and maintains that "a cultural consensus must exist between which kinds of authority, continuity, time-depth and inter-dependence with other pasts are required to provide a particular version of the past with credibility". Evans (2009: 56-7)

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[59] Here, 'innocent' is not an indicator of legality, but is used in the sense of 'innocent' bystanders', which is explored in great detail by Evans (2009). During her research with Bhutanese refugees in Nepali camps, she discovered that many refugees were caught in between two sides of the conflict in two stages. Firstly, between the Bhutanese government and the Nepalese Bhutanese insurgency (during the 1980s and 90s), leading to violence, and secondly (during two decades in refugee camps) between pro- and anti-resettlement refugees in the 2000s (see Chapter 3). Many politically 'inactive' refugees, who attempted to remain 'neutral' throughout both conflicts, were either forced to participate for one side (by e.g. forcefully obtained 'donations' to insurgencies) leading to retributions by the other side, or found themselves rendered powerless in light of the conflicts, losing land-rights, property and some of them their lives.

goes further by arguing that "history can be considered a 'construction of pastness' " and the "present influences our ideas about the past and ... such imaginations of earlier times shape identity-formation and underpin political action in the here and now".

The Bhutanese conflict is important for the self-representation of refugees in resettlement, as it plays a part in the formation of both *samaj* and RCOs. My informants emphasize their "innocence", highlighting that the Bhutanese government acted without good reason, simply expelling them for their "culture". Similar to the notion of refugee-ness, victimhood[60] is an essential means to distinguish themselves from other migrants in the UK, and creates sameness to other refugees, and, in turn, fosters a sense of community amongst them, as I explore in the subsequent chapters.

The following section explores the history of Bhutan by looking at the constant flow of migration within the Himalaya region, which created a multi-ethnic Bhutan in which elite power holders were keen to cement their authority by means of nationalist policies. I also explore political activism amongst educated Nepalese Bhutanese to gain more political influence in Bhutan. Thereafter, I focus on the Bhutanese government's policy of 'One Nation, One People', which in turn transformed Nepalese Bhutanese into 'illegal immigrants' without citizenship, leading to the expulsion and emigration of approximately 100,000 Nepalese Bhutanese in the early 1990s.

From Nepalese Bhutanese to Bhutanese refugee

In order to understand this complex history of migration, I briefly explore the migration of Nepali people in the southern Himalayan region in the two centuries leading up to the ethnic conflict in Bhutan. Thereafter, I provide a

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[60] I explore the notion of the deserving vs. the undeserving refugee in Chapter 5, but it is important to note that Bhutanese refugees laid all blame on the RGB, which, in their view, stereotyped and victimized all Nepalese Bhutanese.

brief outline of Bhutan's history, its multi-ethnic composition of population, and the Bhutanese ruling elite's fear of a loss of power, resulting in the removal of citizenship of Nepalese Bhutanese.

Prabhashi Nepali

Nepali migration is defined as the migration of Nepalese people out of Nepal, who then settled all around North India and the low-lands of the Southern Himalayas. Nepali migrants are known as *Prabhashi Nepali* (NP), literally meaning 'immigrant Nepalese' (Joseph, 1999: 35). Nepali migration in the Himalaya-region occurred in three main stages (see Joseph, 1999: 45), although historians assume that due to the unique geography of the region, migrant herding, trade and migration was common long before British explorers and envoys recorded the movement of people. Some Western historical references claim that Nepalese settlers arrived in Bhutan as early as the 17th century, which is widely disputed by Bhutanese historians. Here, Hutt (2007: 25) notes that "a struggle over historical truth commonly arises when people become refugees", and that disadvantaged people often "exaggerate the long-term nature of their communities' and families' presence in that country". He goes on to argue that history is "an important part of the displaced [Nepalese Bhutanese] 'mythico-history', constructed in opposition to another version of the same past" (ibid.: 27). When my older informants talk about Bhutan, they indeed stress their long-term presence, which underscores their legitimacy of refugee-ness. As one of my informants highlighted: "My great great grand-father was born in Bhutan. We lived in Bhutan for five generations". In turn, it is Nepalese Bhutanese-ness, defined by long-term settlement in Bhutan (whilst retaining 'Nepali culture') that underpins the mutuality between Bhutanese refugees (i.e. a shared experience and history), determining legitimate membership in their communities.

The first historical records describing *Prabhashi Nepali* come from British envoys, who stated that in the 18th and 19th century internal conflicts in Nepal

lead to out-migration. After the Anglo-Nepalese War ('Ghorkha War', 1814–16) Ghorka feudal lords ruled Nepal, demanding high taxes in either cash or kind to fund their empire, and citizens were forced to supply labour services (*jhara*) to the kingdom. Many peasant farmers were enslaved by feudal lords, and land was taken away from previously land-holding and self-reliant agriculturalists. Newly developed land (i.e. 'cleared' of jungles and wild animals by the British) and paved trade-routes (built by the British) opened up new and better ways of agriculture and trade outside of Nepal, leading to out-migration in the southern Himalaya region (Hutt, 1996: 400-1; Hutt, 2007: 23-4; Joseph, 1999: 35).

With the growth of the tea industry in West Bengal in the 1840s, the British Empire and the East India Company required a vast labour force for the labour-intensive work required to plant and harvest tea. The local population of West Bengal was too sparse to provide the labour-force needed. Large numbers of migrant labourers were 'imported', primarily from Nepal. Nepalis were said to be 'hard-working' and 'strong', and coming from a similar climate, adaptation to tea hills should be unproblematic. Tens of thousands of Nepalese people are said to have emigrated to West Bengal and Sikkim (see Figure 4[61]), to work on British-led tea plantations, road- and building-construction, and the development of infrastructure (e.g. schools and health facilities) (Hutt, 1996: 401; Hutt, 2007: 24; Joseph, 1999: 36, 44). References
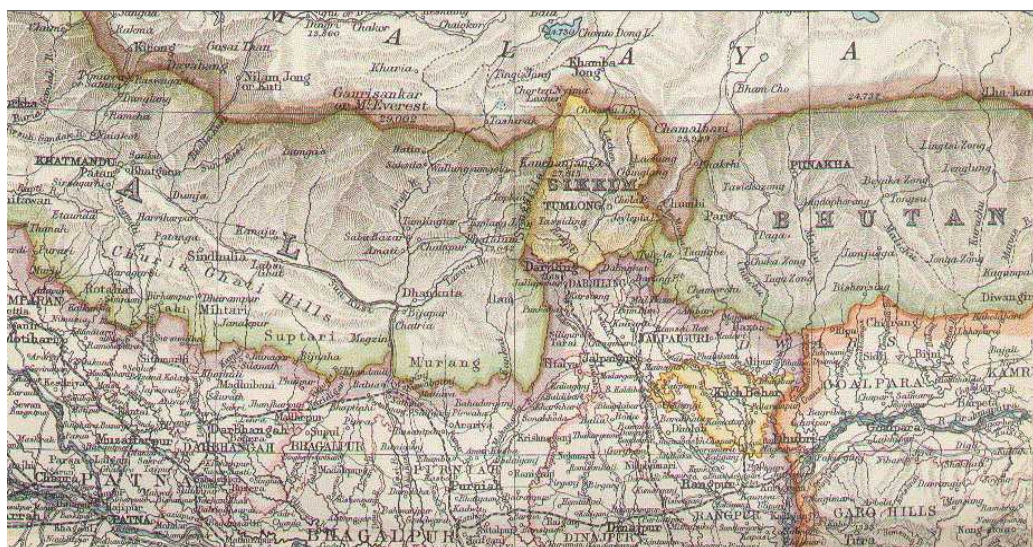
Figure 4: 1839 Map of the Southern Himalayas

[61] From: from: http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~poyntz/India/images/Bengalmap8bit(4).JPG

from ambassadors of the British Empire claim that most Nepalese settlers moved into southern Bhutan[62] after the so-called Anglo-Bhutanese War (1864-5). The south was fertile, but 'untamed', with jungles stretching over large areas, filled with 'wild beasts', being a breeding-ground for diseases, such as malaria[63] (Hutt, 2007: 34; Joseph, 1999: 44-5, 48-9).

In the early 20th century, the first king of Bhutan set out to provide modern infrastructures (e.g. schools, medical facilities, roads) to his people. However, similar to West Bengal, Bhutan lacked the manpower for these projects. As Hutt (2007: 141) states: "Bhutan is … described as the only South Asian nation which suffers from a shortage of labour". Following the British Empire's envoys' advice, Bhutanese officials recruited Nepalese migrant workers - called *tangyas* (DZ, 'contractual workers') - for development projects in Bhutan. Migrant labourers were issued with work permits, strictly regulating their stay in Bhutan. Yet, with the lack of controlling bodies, many migrant labourers brought their families and settled in Bhutan permanently (Hutt, 2007: 47, 140-1; Joseph, 1999: 46, 58, 120).

Refugees argue that it was through Nepalese settlers' labour that Bhutan's south was transformed into one of the wealthiest and fertile areas of the country[64] in the first decades of the 20th century[65]. In comparison to rural, self-reliant agriculturalists in north Bhutan, Nepalese settlers found themselves with a significant surplus profit, earned by the lively trade in salt, betel nut, tobacco,

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[62] Before the Anglo-Bhutanese war (1864-5), the Southern area of Bhutan was sparsely populated by "Indian ethnic groups" (Joseph, 1999: 44), and Bhutanese seasonal herders (Hutt, 2007: 41). Locals were unhappy with the Nepalese's arrival, as previously 'free' land they used for pastoral herding was suddenly occupied by Nepalese farmers or herders, who now settled in Bhutan permanently.

[63] This 'untamed' landscape was one of the reasons why the British Empire never invaded and took over these fertile areas for e.g. tea plantation.

[64] Due to its proximity to India, the south of Bhutan received most attention for development constructions (e.g. schools, health care facilities, roads, warehouses, hydro power stations). This led to internal conflicts amongst ethnic groups of Bhutan. The east, predominantly inhabited by the *Sharchops* (who consider themselves distinct from other ethnic groups in Bhutan, see below), has been largely neglected throughout development programmes, leading to "discontent" amongst the *Sharchops*, who felt excluded from the Bhutanese mainstream (also see below) (Hutt, 2007: 141-5; Joseph, 1999: 98).

[65] In the early 20th century, Bhutan was changing economically, politically and socially. Feudalism was largely removed, and land reforms meant that peasant farmers could obtain property. Other changes included the slow move from barter to cash economy, the introduction of modern education (and thus an increase in literacy and political participation), and finally the introduction of citizenship in the early 1950s. The latter is of specific importance for the Nepalese Bhutanese, and was followed by an unprecedented attempt to fully assimilate Nepalese Bhutanese into the *drukpa* mainstream (Aris, 2005; Hutt, 2007; Joseph, 1999).

cheap cloth (from India) and cotton, and created the main trading hubs between India and Tibet in Bhutanese border towns (to India) such as Phuntsholing. As more and more Nepalese settlers arrived in the early 20th century, the notion of 'Nepalese Bhutanese' emerged, and with it a sense of belonging and loyalty towards Bhutan. Bhutanese refugees emphasize this history as a legitimate reason why the land is 'theirs' (Hutt, 2007: 46-50). However, Nepalese Bhutanese were charged high taxes, and felt excluded from the political mainstream. Nepalese agriculturalists in the south soon organised themselves against the legal and fiscal 'discrimination' by the Bhutanese rulers[66], which in turn led to conflict between the ruling *Ngalongs* and the Nepalese Bhutanese (Hutt, 2007: 46-50), as outlined further below.

Bhutan's demography[67]

Today, the Kingdom of Bhutan is a small nation in South Asia, located south-east of the Himalayas. It shares its borders with the Indian states of Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in the South, and the Chinese province Tibet in the North (see Figure 5 and 6[68]). Bhutan currently comprises almost 700,000 inhabitants. Its capital is Thimphu, with roughly 100,000 inhabitants. Only eight percent of Bhutan is arable due to its mountainous topography (Bhattacharya, 2001). The main source of income and most of the labour market revolves around agriculture. In recent years, the private sector (and thus, white collar labour) established itself in urban areas, such as Thimphu, Paro, Ha and Tashigang.

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[66] The population reliant on agriculture traditionally paid tax in kind (livestock or grain), whilst the Nepalese settlers (now engaged in trade) paid the Bhutanese rulers in cash (Hutt, 2007: 46).

[67] Earthquakes, fires and floods have destroyed most of Bhutan's historic records, which have been housed in the *dzongs* (Buddhist fortresses, used for both defence and worship). It is important to note that this section bases on 'official' outlines of Bhutanese history, which, of course, implies the notion of a 'collective memory' and creation of a unique Bhutanese identity, in order to strengthen Bhutanese culture today, which has been significantly shaped by the *Wangchuck* dynasty's power. A lot of Bhutan's history has been 'rewritten' with the emergence of monarchy (since 1907), and due to the loss of reliable historical records, it is difficult to find 'objective' accounts of Bhutanese history (see Joseph, 1999).

[68] From: http://www.tourbhutantravel.com/bhutan_map.html and
http://www.tourbhutantravel.com/bhutan_map.html [Accessed: 13 February 2011].
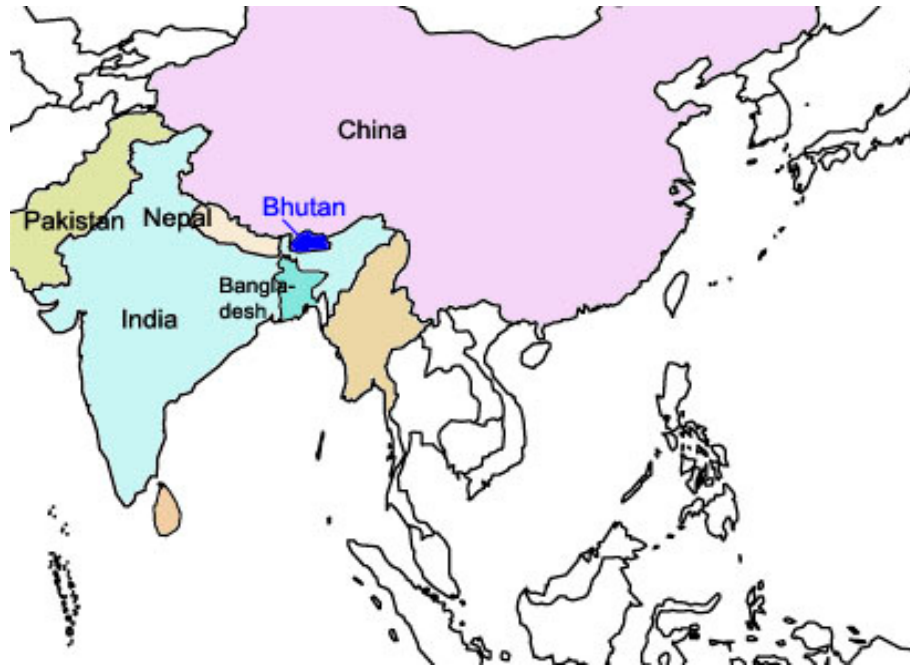
Figure 5: Bhutan's Location in Asia
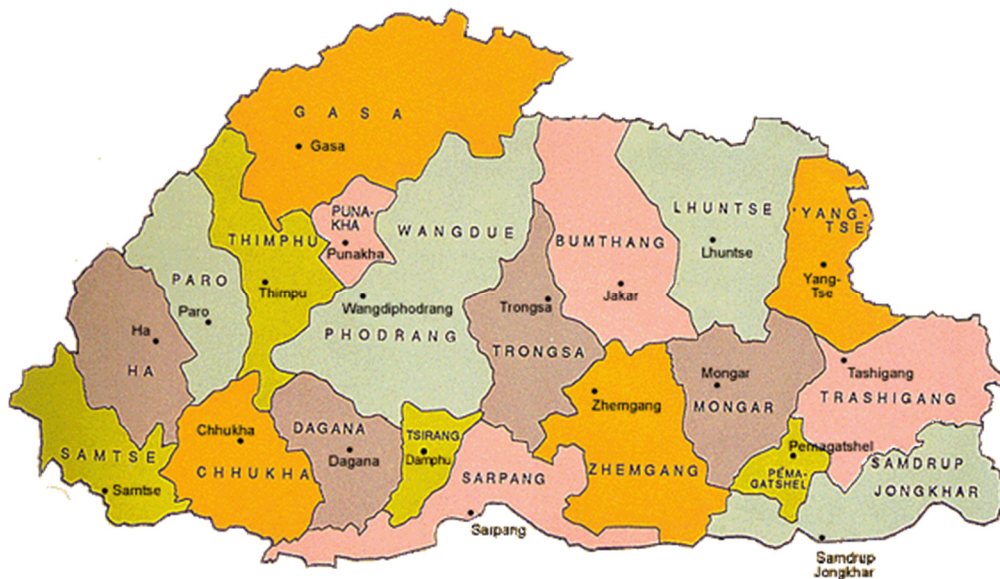
Figure 6: District Map of Bhutan

Bhutan's official language is *Dzongkha*, written in *Ucän* – both originating from Tibetan language and script. However, due to the inaccessible landscape that characterises Bhutan, more than 19 major dialects exist in remote areas of the country. In recent years, English became the lingua franca for those who enjoy formal education and live in urban centres. Until the 1980s, Nepali was taught

in most (southern) schools. Bhutan's traditional religion bases on Mahayana Buddhism, originating in Tibet. Bhutanese Buddhism is mingled with *Bon* - an ancient, animist and shamanistic religion, which is prevalent across the Himalayas (Nestroy, 2004: 339; Wangchuck, 2006: 3; 11-2).

Since the 13th century, the Bhutanese have called their country *Druk Yul,* the *Land of the Thunder Dragon.* The Bhutanese recognize the year 1616 as the founding year of Bhutan, when Ngwang Namgyal, an exile from Tibet[69], entered Bhutan (which was, until then, divided amongst rival feudal lords) and united it under a common religion: the *Durkpa* (*Drukpa Kagyuppa*) sect of Mahayana Buddhism. He founded a dual theocracy with himself as the secular ruler - *the shabdrung*[70] - and the *je khenpo* as the (Buddhist) religious leader (elected by the powerful monk body). The theocratic system, combined with feudalism, existed in Bhutan until Ugyen Wangchuck was crowned the first 'dragon king' (*druk gyalpo*) of Bhutan in 1907 (Aris, 2005; Nestroy, 2004; Wangchuck, 2006).

Since the 1950s, and with the financial and technological help of India, Bhutan began modernisation and development projects by using, in common with its larger neighbour, 'Five Year Plans'. Until that time, Bhutan has been regarded as locked in a 'medieval state'[71] and lacking any modern development. Bhutan in the 21st century is a constitutional monarchy, largely self-sustained[72], deeply interconnected with India, and still 'poor' if measured by GDP. Powerful families close to the king (called *chöje* - 'lords of religion') are still the main landholders and political participants in Bhutan, despite severe land- and political reforms. De facto, the king has no political power, but he is a potent symbol in Bhutan, and still participates indirectly via representatives. He is one

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[69] He had to flee from the Dalai Lama, the head of the rival Gelugpa sect of Mahayana Buddhism
[70] Lit. 'at whose feet one prostrates/submits'; often called *dharma raja* in Western historic sources. (i.e. 'religious/holy king')
[71] Slavery and feudalism were only abolished in the 1950s
[72] Bhutan adopted *Gross National Happiness* (GNH) as an alternative development strategy in the 1970s, which regards human and socio-cultural well-being as more important than (economic) development (see e.g. Bates, 2009). GNH is based on 'sustainable development', in which the pace of development is adapted (and if necessary slowed down) to specific socio-cultural needs.

of 'the Three'[73] that make Bhutan - the *tsawa sum*[74] - which consists of the king (the government), the country (the nation) and the people (the citizens), and is one the most important elements of the Bhutanese state, which 'has to be' protected. Researchers argue that Bhutan is divided between traditionalists and modernists, and the more globalisation stretches out its hand, the more the RGB follows a conservative path, leading to the expulsion of more than 100,000 Nepalese Bhutanese (Aris, 2005; Hutt, 2007; Nestroy, 2004; Wangchuck, 2006).

'Multi-ethnic' Bhutan and nation-building

Gellner (1983: 1) defines nationalism as a "political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent", by assuring that "ethnic boundaries do not cut across political ones". In this sense a nation state is a geographical and political territory under the authority of one distinct ethnic group, whose "ethnic markers (such as language and religion)" are "embedded in the official symbolism and legislation of the state" (Chatty, 2010: 37). That is, in this case, the Bhutanese nation under the authority of one particular ethnic group – the *drukpas* – whose language (Dzongkha) and religion (Mahayana Buddhism) are the official symbols of the Bhutanese state[75].

However, Joseph (1999: 23) emphasizes that "[l]ike other countries in South Asia, Bhutan is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious country". Until China's occupation of Tibet in the 1950s, the borders of South Asian countries in the Himalayan region were not well-defined, with a widespread commercial and socio-cultural trade and exchange between

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[73] The number three is important in Buddhism, as they mark 'The Three Jewels' (*tiratana*). The three symbolise (a) the *Buddha*, (b) the *dharma* (i.e. the Buddha's teachings) and (c) the *sangha* (i.e. Buddha's followers).

[74] When receiving citizenship, one has to take an oath, proclaiming not to commit any acts against the *tsawa sum*. Breaking this oath by "act[ing] against the King or speak[ing] against the Royal Government or associates with people involved in activities against the Royal Government" (Joseph, 1999: 219) can lead to the loss of Bhutanese citizenship even today, and severely limits the Bhutanese people's political activism across all ethnicities.

[75] In the past, anthropology defined a nation as being comprised of one uniform culture. Anderson (2006: 6), changed this assumption and argued that a state is an "imagined political community" and an ideological construction that seeks to create links between "self-defined social and cultural groups" and a nation state (Chatty, 2010: 37).

Himalayan communities. Many semi-nomadic herders moved freely between Nepal, Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan, and have been fully assimilated in a 'Himalayan' culture spanning over various kingdoms and countries. Therefore, the notion that Bhutan is comprised of one, unique socio-cultural and ethnic group is, to follow Anderson (2006), 'imagined'.

Joseph (1999: 23) identifies four 'main' ethnic groups in Bhutan: firstly, the *Ngalongs* (with Tibetan origin) have dominated western Bhutan since the 10th century, and form the "social and ruling elite" (Hutt, 1996: 398). Although only about 20 percent of the total population, the *Ngalong'* language (i.e. Dzongkha) and their culture became what is today known as 'Bhutanese' culture'[76] both internally and externally. The Wangchuck dynasty and most figures in higher political and religious positions are *Ngalongs*.

Secondly, the *Sharchops* are said to be the earliest settlers in Bhutan and their ancestry can be traced back to Burma and North India. The *Sharchops* form about 30 percent of the Bhutanese population[77], have a distinct language called *Tsangla,* and their own traditional attire, which is mainly black and white (in comparison to the multi-coloured dress of the *Ngalongs*). Thirdly, another 'early settler' group of Bhutan are the *Khengs,* a small group (about 15 percent) whose ancestry cannot be traced back to any specific origin (Joseph, 1999: 23).

Together with smaller ethnic groups[78], these three groups are classified as *'drukpa'* - the 'Bhutanese' – by the RGB, and therefore 'true Bhutanese'. Having said that, only the *Ngalong* culture is portrayed as 'authentic Bhutanese' by the Bhutanese government (Hutt, 1996: 398). Non-*Ngalong* languages and local dialects are not taught in school, and the other ethnic groups' traditional dress cannot be worn during official duties in public. In fact,

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[76] For example, the *gho* and *kira* are *Ngalong* dress, and since the 1980s it is obligatory for all people in Bhutan to wear these clothes in public.

[77] *Sharchops* insurgencies supported the Nepalese Bhutanese uprising in the 1980s as they felt oppressed by the ruling elite. Many *Sharchops* were forced to leave Bhutan during the 90s (Hutt, 2007: 141-5; Joseph, 1999: 98). However, there were no *Sharchops* amongst my Bhutanese refugee informants in the UK.

[78] Joseph (1999) mentions *Adivasis*, *Birmis*, *Brokpas*, *Doyas*, *Lepchas* and *Toktop*, which only make about 5 percent of the total population.

any other ethnic group is as 'suppressed' as the Nepalese Bhutanese, which have formed the fourth ethnic group (more than 30 percent) in Bhutan prior to the 1990s. Although mainly Hindu, Nepalese Bhutanese follow a variety of faiths, including Buddhism and Christianity, as well as including traditional *Bon* practices. Similar to *Sharchops*, Nepalese Bhutanese are bound together by a common language distinct from Dzongkha: Nepali[79] (Joseph, 1999: 23; Hutt, 1996: 400).

Until the 1980s, intermarriage between all ethnic groups was common, and indeed, encouraged by the Bhutanese state (by e.g. providing cash-incentives). The RGB assumed that this would foster socio-cultural assimilation (Hutt, 1996: 402). However, many Nepalese Bhutanese sought marriage-partners outside of Bhutan, mainly due to religious reasons. My older informants confirmed that they found marriage partners amongst the widespread Nepali diaspora in the Himalaya region.

In the second half of the 20th century, *Ngalongs* in power began to fear the Nepalese Bhutanese. Joseph (1999: 171) claims that the *Ngalongs*' anxiety stems from what he calls the '*Sikkimisation complex*'. Bhutan's *Ngalongs* maintained close relation with Sikkim's Buddhist royalty, which was further strengthened through intermarriage. However, in Sikkim, Nepalese settlers[80] surpassed the Sikkimese population in the 1970s, and ousted the Sikkim king (ibid.: 44). The Nepalese Sikkimese signed a treaty with India, and Sikkim became a state of India which bestowed political power to the Nepalese. The *Ngalongs* feared the same trend for Bhutan. In 1974, Das wrote:

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[79] Nepali is an Indo-Aryan language with Tibeto-Burman influences. In comparison to Dzongkha, which uses an ancient Tibetan script called *Ucän*, Nepali uses *Devanagari* script, which is also used in Hindi (India) and Sanskrit.

[80] Ambassadors of the British Empire advised and encouraged Sikkimese rules to 'import' Nepalese workers for development in Sikkim since the early 19th century. This was later criticised by the (then) Bhutanese Foreign Minister in a speech to Bhutan's National Assembly: "Sikkim …strongly opposed induction of Nepalese settlers. The British, however, forcible brought Nepalese settlers into Sikkim …. In no time the Nepali population increased through high birth rate and through regular immigration from Nepal and soon they formed 80 percent of the population. Today …Sikkim is governed by the Nepalese majority, and the original Sikkimese people are a small minority in their own country" (Hutt, 2007: 24, 197).

"If Sikkim … could become a Nepalese dominated state due to demographic changes, what was there to stop the southern Bhutanese to do the same in Bhutan, claiming then to be more than fifty percent of the population" (cited in Joseph, 1999: 170).

The *Ngalongs* perceived Nepalese Bhutanese as a threat to their power, justifying Bhutan's laws in the 1980s and 90s by referencing Sikkim: the sovereignty of the nation was (seen to be) in danger, and in need of protection. By claiming that *Ngalong* culture is truly 'authentic', and the only acceptable cultural representation of Bhutan, the *Ngalongs* secured their supremacy and maintained their power not only over the Nepalese Bhutanese, but over all other ethnic groups. This nationalist turn is not unusual in times of uncertainty, modernisation and globalisation, in which national borders become ever more porous (Barth [1969] in Chatty, 2010: 38, see Introduction). The construction of Bhutan as a sovereign nation-state in South Asia is closely linked to similar histories, in which nation-building is paired with the creation of a homogenised society, whereby a citizen's identity is shaped by emphasizing (imagined) nationhood and a homogenous, 'authentic' ethnicity (see e.g. Agamben, 2004; Appadurai, 1996).

Tensions between the *Ngalongs* and the Nepalese Bhutanese surfaced several times. When the first *Ngalong* king of Bhutan was crowned in the early 1900s, he stressed that in order to become a nation, "ethnic pluralities" have to be removed in order to create a "homogenised 'national community'" (Joseph, 1999: 19). The king highlighted in several speeches that albeit development, Bhutan must not forget its 'cultural heritage', and has to 'preserve its traditions' and its distinct 'Bhutanese culture', which is unique in comparison to China (and Tibet), India and Nepal. (Aris, 2005). Tambiah (1997) states:

"The time of becoming the same is also the time of claiming to be different. The time of modernising is also the time of inventing tradition, as well as traditionalising innovations; of revaluing old categories and re-categorising new values; or bureaucratic

benevolence and bureaucratic resort to force; of participatory democracy and dissident civil war" (cited in Hutt, 2007: 161).

Imagined differences are also what divide Bhutanese refugees in resettlement, albeit not based on ethnicity. This shows that 'othering' is an essential element of community building, both for nation states and small, local networks. The Bhutanese government employed 'othering' on the macro-level of the nation state, whilst my informants use it on the micro-level of both *samaj* and RCOs. Moreover, Nepalese Bhutanese-ness is used as a means to distinguish themselves from others, such as Nepalese or South Asian migrants, as my informants were always quick to remark that they are "Nepalese *Bhutanese*" or "*Bhutanese* Nepalese", rather than "Nepali". As is clear in the above discussion, ethnicity and (imagined) differences between ethnic groups lend themselves readily to conflicts during community- and nation-building. The creation of a nation as a sovereign state is an important element of this homogenisation, as I explore in the following section.

Nation-building: Bhutan's sovereignty[81]

In order to understand the reasons for the expulsion of Bhutanese Nepalese, I now return to the formation of Bhutan since the 16th century. As Weiner (1995, cited in Chatty, 2010: 33) states, forced migration often occurs due to nation states' interest to "achieve some cultural homogeneity or, at least, of asserting state dominance and control over particular social groups". Since the unification of Bhutan in 1616, the Bhutanese had a strong sense of maintaining its sovereignty as an independent kingdom and later a nation state in between India and China. Even before China occupied Bhutan's northern neighbour Tibet (with whom Bhutan had close ties) in the 1950s, China was a threat to stability within the small nation. When the British took over India in the 18th

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[81] Sovereignty is broadly defined as the authority of an independent nation state to govern itself and maintain its geographical borders, within which the nation state can operate autonomously. The scope of this thesis does not allow for a detailed, critical discussion on the problematic notion of sovereignty in a globalized world. See e.g. Agamben (2004) and Appadurai (1996 & 2004) for anthropological discussions.

century, and finally arrived at Bhutan's gates after taking over Sikkim and West Bengal, the fear of being assimilated by the British Empire was a real one. Yet, Bhutan is one of the few South Asian nations (along with Nepal and Cambodia) that has never been a colony of a Western or any other nation (Nestroy, 2004: 339).

The British' interest in Bhutan was limited to two areas: firstly, to use Bhutan - as a 'sovereign' state protected by British India - as a 'buffer' between China (and Russia) and British India, and secondly, to use trade routes through Bhutan, to maintain the valuable trade with Tibet (and thus, China). The empire attempted to gain influence in Bhutan through a diplomatic approach, rather than a military one (Aris, 2005). However, the Bhutanese rulers feared that British India would push the Bhutanese to the most northern margins of Bhutan and out of the fertile low-lands in the south. Territory in the north, which is mainly characterised by mountainous landscapes, is not cultivable, and makes even pastoral herding a challenge (see Figure 7[82]). Therefore the Bhutanese stressed their right to remain a sovereign nation, and to maintain its southern borders as secure as possible (Aris, 2005, Nestroy, 2004).
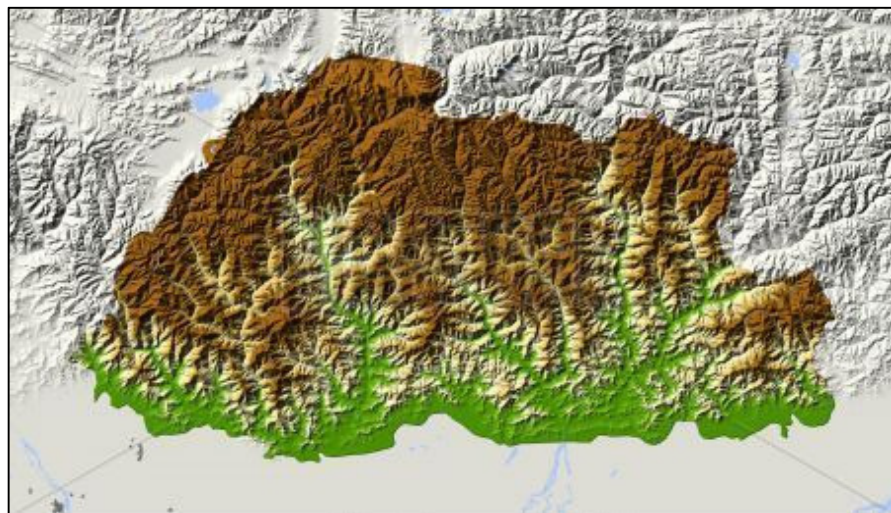
Figure 7: Map of Bhutan indicating altitude

Nevertheless, the British colonial power had a significant impact on the formation of Bhutan. Until the beginning of the 20th century, Bhutan has been divided between regional princes, and the British intended to bring the divided country under some form of British control without interfering with its autonomy. Through diplomatic interventions, the British assured that in 1907 Ugyen Wangchuk, a powerful and popular local ruler, was elected the 1st *druk gyalpo* (king) of Bhutan, whose main task was the unification of the divided country under a hereditary kingdom. Bhutan became a de facto protectorate of British India, whereby all foreign relations were handled via the British in India[83]. With British India pushing from the south, and China from the north, the move towards a hereditary monarchy provided the stability it needed to remain sovereign, and secured its position amongst smaller Himalayan nations (Nestroy, 2004: 341-3).

In order to assure the international recognition of Bhutan as a sovereign state, Bhutan became a member of the UN in 1971[84]. The UN membership provided a "gateway to the world" (Jamtsho, 2008), and more importantly, paved the way for Bhutan to receive technical and financial development aid from various UN institutions. India also increased its annual development aid, in order to secure Bhutan's steady development. From now on, Bhutan's administration could solely focus on internal issues and improvements. In order to maintain their power, the ruling elite in the capital aimed to not only declare Bhutan as an autonomous nation-state externally, but also to foster homogenisation internally, which – as we shall see further below – resulted in the expulsion of Nepalese Bhutanese (Aris, 2005, Nestroy, 2004).

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[83] India continued to handle Bhutan's foreign relations until the 1980s, and since then influences Bhutan's foreign policy its embassy in New Delhi.

[84] Other countries made use of the UN in similar ways: for example, during the collapse of communist Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, Slovenia sought membership with the UN the moment violent conflicts broke out in Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia. By securing membership in both the UN and the EU, Slovenia was thus protected from the serious clashes in former Yugoslavia, and received military protection from Germany.

Political activism amongst Nepalese Bhutanese

In the early 1920s, Nepalese Bhutanese became the 'Nepali problem' amongst the *Ngalong* elite. By then, the Bhutanese had to deal with the second and third generation of former Nepalese settlers, who now considered themselves (to a certain degree) 'Bhutanese', with rights and obligations. The latter was dutifully met: Nepalese Bhutanese paid high taxes in cash, provided labour and generated revenue, and therefore fulfilled their 'obligations' towards the state. However, their political rights (e.g. self-governance), land-ownership[85] and free movement within Bhutan[86] was limited by the ruling elite. Within the Bhutanese public and political discourse emerged a stereotype of Nepalese Bhutanese as 'land-grapping', who 'destroy' the 'native' population and the land[87] (Hutt, 2007: 75-80). Nevertheless, most former settlers and their children began to feel connected to the land they cultivated in south Bhutan, and opted to stay (rather than migrate to India or Nepal) despite the high taxes, political oppression and prevention to join the police and army. As the work and taxes of Nepalese settlers assured a constant cash-flow to the *Ngalong* leaders in the capital, they were forced to make concessions to the Nepalese Bhutanese, such as minor political representation and residential status bound to land-holding (Hutt, 2007: 86-9; 92; Evans, 2009: 112).

Political movements amongst educated Nepalese Bhutanese[88] began to stir from the early 20th century onwards. They demanded equal rights and

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[85] Land was predominately in the hands of the feudal (*Ngalong*) *drukpa* elite and in the 1920s it became illegal for Nepalese Bhutanese to buy land from *drukpas* (Hutt, 2007: 60).

[86] Nepalese Bhutanese were only permitted to settle in the south. Laws were established to fine both Nepalese Bhutanese and *drukpas* if they settled within the other's 'territory'. By using 'natural borders' (rivers and mountains), the south was (to an extent) both geographically and politically separated from the North. Leaders were elected locally, and taxes were paid to a local headman rather than a central government or institutions (Hutt, 2007: 61-2)

[87] It was argued that the 'shifting cultivation' practices by Nepalese farmers would destroy land. In 1943, B. Gould (the British Officer in Sikkim) stated that it is the "natural instinct" of the "100,000 Nepalese" in South Bhutan to "fell and burn forest, cultivate the very fertile soil, … and then move on to another area as soon as the soil shows signs of exhaustion or become over-grown with jungle" (cited in Hutt, 2007: 60). Ironically, British officers fuelled this misconception (whilst previously advising to 'import' Nepalese settlers for development projects) by warning the Bhutanese rulers that because of the Nepalese settlements, the Bhutanese are a "dying race" (Hutt, 2007: 80).

[88] Joseph (1999: 170) argues that education plays a pivotal role in political activism: as the south is close to India, wealthy Nepalese Bhutanese sent their children to be educated in British missionary schools (Hutt, 2007: 121). Due to the north's isolation, most *drukpas* were uneducated, poor and politically inactive. However, this does not mean that all *drukpas* supported the ruling Wangchuck dynasty (Rose, 1977: 109). Also see Scott's (2008: xv) work, who argues that political activity is the "preserve of the middle classes and intelligentsia".

opportunities for Nepalese Bhutanese, threatening the stability and hierarchies of the *Ngalongs*, who began to evict Nepalese Bhutanese due to the 'illegal clearing' of forests in the South in the 1940s (Evans, 2009: 112-3; Hutt, 2007: 116-7; Joseph, 1999: 119). In response, Nepalese Bhutanese formed the first political party in Bhutan in 1952: the *Bhutan State Congress* (BSC)[89] demanded "political rights and opportunities for the Bhutanese of Nepali origin on par with other Bhutanese", as well as complete democratic reform in the Bhutanese government (Joseph, 1999: 119). Soon, they organized *satyagraha* (NP) - "civil disobedience action" - against Bhutan (Hutt, 2007: 121.). However, the BSC was not able to mobilise the broad masses and engender public support in south Bhutan after the newly crowned king introduced land reforms and offered citizenship to land-owners in the late 1950s. The BSC depended on the frustration of the Nepalese Bhutanese, but as their demands were met, further "diffuse and utopian" (ibid.) aims of the BSC, such as the establishment of a democratic political system in Bhutan, were not attracting public support (Hutt, 2007: 125). Rose (1977: 112) elaborates that "since most members of the community had acquired land to cultivate, [they] were not inclined to support political activities that might endanger their rights to land". As Huntington (1968, cited in Hutt, 2007: 125) writes, revolutions occur if the people's "conditions of land ownership, tenancy, labour, taxes, and prices become … unbearable", but land reforms and thus secure food sources can "quickly turn peasants from a potential source of revolution into a fundamentally conservative force".

However, I believe this to be an over-simplification, which does not give credit to the role the BSC played in the citizenship reforms of 1958. The BSC and their civil actions did reach the capital Thimphu, and put enormous pressure on the *drukpa* elite to introduce citizenship to Nepalese Bhutanese in the 1950s. Yet, the decline of political activism can be observed for refugees in resettlement: whilst Bhutanese refugees were active to fight for repatriation to Bhutan whilst in Nepalese refugee camps (see Evans, 2009), their political movement severely declines as resettlement progresses. As mentioned above,

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[89] The BSC was formed by Nepalese Bhutanese activists in Assam rather than Bhutan, inspired by and supported by Nepalese Indian movements in North India (e.g. *Jai Gorkha)* (Hutt, 2007: 116).

almost none of my informants in the UK actively participated in political movements against the Bhutanese government or for any other political causes.

Nevertheless, in 1959, free immigration by Nepalese settlers was made illegal, to impede further migration to the area. Only Nepalese Bhutanese who could prove that they owned land prior to 1958 were allowed to stay, and in most cases, received citizenship (Hutt, 2007: 136). Therefore, Nepalese Bhutanese were subdued – for now.

"Unbecoming Citizens" [90]*: 'One Nation, One People'*

As demonstrated above, problems between *Ngalong* power holders and educated Nepalese Bhutanese existed for some time. But as the RGB enforced stricter regulations and laws limiting other ethnic groups than *Ngalong*, the tensions between the *drukpa* north and the Nepalese Bhutanese south grew, leading to the escalation of the ethnic conflict in the 1980s. It was under the rule of King Jigme Singye in the 1970s, that Bhutan "began to push for a national identity that promoted the idea of a 'united and homogeneous' Bhutanese populace" (Whitecross, 2009, cited in Evans, 2009: 114). The RGB reasoned that by creating a singular population with one 'distinct' culture - which can be differentiated from other nations, such as India, China and Nepal - Bhutan's national sovereignty would be fortified and secured, rather than "destroyed" as in Sikkim (see above). The various Bhutanese ethnic groups were inhibited by enforcing the so-called 'One Nation, One People' agenda, which made *Driglam Namzhag* (DZ, traditional *Ngalong* dress, behaviour and etiquette) the only 'authentic' Bhutanese culture and history that was allowed public representation. Moreover, Bhutanese conservatives argued that foreign workers have to be stringently restricted, whilst Nepalese Bhutanese Hindus (as well as Christians and Muslims) should be converted to Buddhism, in order to ensure a homogenised population (Joseph, 1999: 139).

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[90] This is the title of the most wide-read and influential book on Bhutanese refugees by Michael Hutt (2007), on which a lot of my literature review for this chapter is based.

In 1977, the Bhutanese government reversed the Nationality Law of 1958 by means of the Citizenship Act (BCA) of 1977, which "intended to complicate the eligibility of getting citizenship" [91] (Joseph, 1999: 136). This was followed by the Bhutan Marriage Act (BMA) in 1980, in which Bhutanese citizens marrying non-Bhutanese[92] "shall be restricted from enjoying... privileges and other benefits" (§ 2-7.; RGB, 1980: 9, OAG Bhutan) and face severe restrictions and "punitive measures" [93] (Hutt, 2007: 148). If an individual could prove land-holding and residency prior to 1958 (as stated in the BCA 1958) - by means of holding tax receipts - citizenship cards in both English and Dzongkha were issued. This physical document was meant to appease Nepalese Bhutanese to a certain extend (Hutt, 2007: 151).

In 1985, the RGB passed a new Bhutan Citizenship Act. Similar to European laws in the 1930s and '40s, people now had to prove their descent was 'pure' Bhutanese: they had to be born within Bhutanese territory to parents who are *both* Bhutanese. This BCA also introduced a new category of 'person': the *Lhotshampas* (DZ, lit. 'Southern border dweller'[94]), signifying people living in south Bhutan, who speak Nepali and are predominantly Hindus (Hutt, 1996: 400; see Chapter 5).

The first people to experience the effects of the 1985 BCA were migrant labourers. The RGB claimed that due to modernisation and provision of public

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[91] Land-owning people who could not prove that they have been born on Bhutanese soil, could apply for citizenship through naturalisation. But the minimum proof of permanent residence was raised from ten to twenty years, required a test in Dzongkha literacy and the history of Bhutan. Moreover they had to "observe the customs and traditions of the people of Bhutan" which was a Buddhist *Ngalong* culture (Joseph, 1999: 216-9; Hutt, 2007: 147).

[92] For example, if a Bhutanese woman had a non-Bhutanese spouse, both her husband and children are not Bhutanese, and non-Bhutanese women marrying Bhutanese men were not automatically qualified to receive citizenship (Joseph, 1999: 217-8). For many Nepalese Bhutanese this must have appeared as a direct assault on their marriage practices, and these restrictions play a part in who had to flee in the 1980s and 90s.

[93] These measures include: government employees are denied promotions, and if working for the Defence and Foreign Department of the RGB are "discharged from said department" (§ 2-6.; RGB, 1980: 9). They are not entitled to receive government support, such as loans or land-allocations, have to repay all loans and subsidies received from the government prior and after the marriage, and when studying abroad, the RGB "shall send an intimation to the country sponsoring the student to withdraw" provided expenses, such as student loans (§ 2-8.; RGB, 1980: 10). Human rights lawyers and activists across the world criticise Bhutan for breaching the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which Bhutan signed when becoming a member of the UN (see De Varennes, 2009).

[94] From Dzongkha: *lho* (South); *tsham* (border); *pa* (adjective) (in Evans, 2010: 40).

services (such as healthcare and education), there was a vast influx of 'illegal immigrants' from India and Nepal. Numerous 'imported' unskilled labourers employed for development projects were expelled. The skilled labour force from India, including engineers, scientific advisors and other highly qualified workers, were 'gently' pushed to leave Bhutan, by either demoting or retiring them, or limiting their residential rights (Joseph, 1999: 138-40). The RGB hired trucks, rounded up migrant labourers and their families, and transported them to the Indian border, where they were told to leave Bhutan permanently. However, many of these labourers now felt that they were Bhutanese, as one of Hutt's (2007: 152) informants recalled: "We do not know Nepal [….]. We were born in Bhutan, and we have no land in Nepal" – a comment mirrored by many of my older informants, who emphasize that as Bhutanese Nepalese they have right to be in Bhutan.

In order to assess the population of Bhutan, the RGB commissioned a census to be carried out in 1988[95]. Thereafter, new citizenship cards and IDs were developed. But whilst people in the north of Bhutan simply received their new citizenship cards (without certificates), people living in the south had to provide documentation. Any person entering Bhutan after 1958 was automatically considered an 'illegal immigrant', and their older (state-issued) citizenship cards were rendered invalid and were confiscated. Now, Nepalese Bhutanese had to produce tax receipts from before 1958, as well as a 'Certificate of Origin' which had to be collected from the place of birth. However, 1958 tax receipts were in the name of grandfathers and fathers, and in the absence of official records of birth, many individuals were unable to prove their (kin) relationship with the person named on the 1958 tax receipt. Moreover, the 'Certificate of Origin' was not easily obtained (due to lack of record-keeping or being born abroad), and those who could not produce this document were thus considered 'illegal immigrants' and expelled from Bhutan (Hutt, 2007: 152-4).

From 1988 until 1992, Southern Bhutanese were classified in seven different categories by repeated censuses (Hutt, 1996: 155-4, 403; Joseph, 1999: 141):

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[95] The census was carried out by *Ngalong* civil servants from the Bhutanese Home Ministry in Thimphu (Hutt, 2007: 153).

F1   Genuine Bhutanese citizen

F2   Returned migrants (people who left Bhutan but returned)

F3   'Drop-outs' (people who were not present during the census)

F4   Non-Bhutanese woman married to Bhutanese man

F5   Non-Bhutanese married to a Bhutanese woman

F6   Adoption cases (legally adopted children)

F7   Non-nationals (migrants, illegal immigrants, illegal settlers)

Bhutanese refugees later reported that if complaints were voiced or brought to the census officials' attention, individuals would suddenly find themselves being classified as F7, despite documentation. In 1991, the RGB stated that the 1988 census revealed that south Bhutan hosted approximately 100,000 "illegal immigrants" and, in 1993, the RGB argued that "the silent invasion" of illegal Nepalese immigrants was due to the local population, who actively supported the influx of more Nepalese settlers (cited in Hutt, 2007: 157-8). Most Nepalese Bhutanese were declared *ngolops* (DZ: 'anti-nationals') – that is, one was 'guilty by association' (ibid.: 225).

The army and civil militias (comprised of *drukpas*) were deployed to the south to oversee the departure of all 'non-nationals'. Schools, shops and hospitals were closed, and officials knocked on the doors of each house in south Bhutan, demanding documentation. Public congregations were made illegal, Hindu temples and Christian churches were vandalised, and people were threatened with torture, imprisonment and rape on a daily basis[96] (Joseph, 1999: 148). Most Nepalese Bhutanese in the south (including most of my informants) - despite being able to produce documentation of residence and land-ownership – were classified as F7, and made to sign so-called "voluntary migration forms"[97] declaring that they leave Bhutan on their own accord and that they are "not being expelled. [Their] land has not been confiscated. [They]

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[96] The Bhutanese government encouraged Bhutanese Nepalese to "spy" on each other, resulting in widespread misgivings even in resettlement, in which my informants refer to those Nepali Bhutanese who stayed in Bhutan as "traitors". Consequently, Bhutanese refugees create rigid boundaries between themselves and those who remained in Bhutan, despite being from the Nepali minority (see Chapter 9).

[97] Also see Rizal's *Torture: Killing me softly* (2009a) and *From Palace to Prison* (2009b).

had not been threatened or coerced. The government…. wants him to stay: indeed, it has tempted him with money" (Hutt, 2007: 222). These forms were in Dzongkha, which most Nepalese Bhutanese could not read, and some of my informants claim that they were forced to sign these forms at gun-point without being allowed (or able) to read them, whilst the army raided their houses and burned down their fields. One of my oldest informants recalled:

> "In 1992 the government of Bhutan told us that we will not be allowed to live in Bhutan anymore and we are not the people of Bhutan. The government deployed the army to evict us. Some people were paid compensation of land, and government officials came. They brought video cameras, and forced us to smile and took photos" (BRFP).

In the Bhutanese media and the public discourse, their departure was "something incomprehensible", as Nepalese Bhutanese had "no reason to leave the country as they have not been mistreated by the local authorities, the government or the security personnel. The real reason is that they have no love or loyalty for the country" (in Hutt, 2007: 222). One of my informants old enough to remember Bhutan emphasized:

> "We have vivid memory of our country because the Bhutanese soil is not our enemy but the Bhutanese government turned out to be our enemy. I was asked by the Bhutanese government to produce 1958 receipts or proof of resident in Bhutan to enable me to remain in Bhutan. When I handed in 1958 proof, the government official said that this certificate of origin is issued by a Nepalese official and it cannot be valid. We fled at night with our small siblings through the thick forest and risked our life…. We let loose our livestock; didn't bother to harvest maize when we fled from Bhutan…. If we think about it, we feel like crying".

Others, such as my informant Unnayak[98], who worked for the RGB Agriculture Ministry, voluntarily left his government position and fled from Bhutan with his family - all of whom had been classified as F7 despite providing documentation. He explained that he felt discriminated against, as he missed out on promotions and job-training abroad, which he believed was due to the fact that he is a Nepalese Bhutanese.

Every informant (who remembers Bhutan) has similar stories to tell, and emphasises that they are Nepalese Bhutanese, and that their rights, properties and livelihoods have been forcibly taken away due to ethnic discrimination by the *drukpa* elite. They are, as one of my informants remarked, "the lost generation", who spent most of their adult life confined in refugee camps in Nepal, and who have no hope for their lives in resettlement. One of my informants remarked with a sad sigh: "we always keep remembering Bhutan. Sometimes, we even dream about Bhutan". When I asked one of my older informants if he would like to visit Bhutan in the future, for example for a 'holiday', he replied in a sad voice:

> "We don't go to our own country on *holiday* [informant's emphasis], but I would like to. But whatever we had in Bhutan – our property, our land - is not there anymore. There is nothing like a native land, where we were born, where we grew up, where we went to school and where despite of hardship we lived well. Who wouldn't like to go to such a native land? …. It is not that we didn't want to go. We fought in vain to go back from Nepal. But we did not succeed. There are many factors, and the politics in Bhutan, which is quite beyond our control" (BRFP).

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[98] Unnayak is in his mid-40s, and was one of the earliest arrivals in the UK (August 2010). Almost all of his extended family lives in the UK now, and he serves as TA's chair (see Chapter 8). He will feature again in later chapters.

Conclusion

The RGB's (and *Ngalongs*) project to homogenise the country, and to silence and ultimately remove everyone who may threaten their power, led to the expulsion of almost 110,000 people between the 1980s and 1990s, who fled to Nepal via India, where the Nepalese government (together with the UNHCR) founded seven refugee camps. Most remained in these camps for almost twenty years until resettlement was initiated in 2006 – an experience I address in the following chapters. No Bhutanese refugee has been allowed to return to Bhutan. Bhutanese officials, and most Bhutanese people believe and emphasize that these refugees do not exist, but that they were illegal migrants from Nepal and India. Non-Bhutanese researchers, journalists and human rights activists who publish and talk publicly about Bhutanese refugees face being put on a blacklist in Bhutan (such as Hutt, or myself), and are not allowed to enter the country (even as a tourist). By controlling the media, education sector, private and public infrastructures and ultimately the government, the *Ngalongs* secured their power in Bhutan – politically, economically and culturally.

It is these historic circumstances and personal experiences that create mutuality amongst my informants, and thus a sense of community, as I explore in the subsequent chapters. Regardless of whether or not this history is narrated in resettlement or shared with the younger generations, it is *the* common denominator that defines them as Bhutanese refugees. As I explore in chapter 9, those who do not share this history are not considered Bhutanese refugees, and are therefore not automatically a member of *samaj*. However, the experience in the refugee camps, as well as organized resettlement is also an important factor to create similarity (and difference) amongst my informants.

Chapter 3 – Camp Life and Refugee Resettlement

"In the early 1990s, nationalist policies led to a political crisis in our homeland Bhutan, and many of us Southern Bhutanese of Nepali origin were forced to leave Bhutan and flee to Nepal, where, with the help of local Nepali citizens, we settled on the banks of the river Mai. Due to a lack of health services, proper food and clean water, many … died from diseases there. By 1992/93, the UNHCR began to construct camps for the refugees in the Jhapa and Morang districts of East Nepal. In the almost 20 years of our settlement in Nepal, we became used to living in the seven different UNHCR-administered refugee camps. There have been many different agencies, such as the as LWF[99], AMDA[100], WFP[101] and Caritas, which have helped with camp maintenance, food distribution, health, education and other programmes and facilities. In 2007, the UNHCR and the IOM … initiated third-country resettlement" (Thapa and Ghimirey, 2013: 193).

Ajay Thapa, a teenage Bhutanese refugee, summarized the Nepalese Bhutanese's history since the 1990s for a special edition of the EBHR (2013) on Bhutanese refugee resettlement, following a conference at SOAS (London). During the workshop a handful of my informants were invited to speak about their experience of resettlement to a group of academics, researchers and service providers. Ajay, born in one of the *Baldangi* refugee camps (see below), was barely 14 years old when he arrived in the UK in 2010, and lives in Bolton with his parents and younger siblings. He took the exercise to present a written piece in front of a professional audience very seriously, and consulted me in the exact wording of his essay, the above being only an excerpt from it. He acquired the content by researching online,

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[99] Lutheran World Federation
[100] Association of Medical Doctors of Asia
[101] World Food Program

and asking his older family and community members about details, and the above is a reflection of a shared narrative of life in the camps.

As researchers, such as Chatty (2010) and Malkki (1997, 2002) describe, a shared narrative is an important element of the creation of a communal identity amongst refugees[102]. Bhutanese refugees are no exception, as the collective memory of history creates their Bhutanese refugee-ness, and therefore establishes mutuality[103] between them, and is decidedly relevant for my informants' conception of refugee-ness (Chapter 5). The account above is just one example of the creation of a shared narrative that serves Bhutanese refugees in resettlement. However, this is not a reflection of a unified refugee community in the camps who shared the same views - especially on resettlement. As I explore in this chapter, the Bhutanese refugee community was diverse, with strong divisions evident amongst them in the camps: they may have shared refugee-ness, but not the same views on how to resolve it.

The notion that all Bhutanese refugees "are the same", then, is a narrative my informants construct in resettlement, in order to exhibit unity to UK funding bodies. In reality, life in the camps was a struggle creating a divide between Bhutanese refugees that resulted in violent protest and internal displacement. Although I do not argue that these issues were imported to the UK, the factionalism in the camps is an indicator of a community that may share certain traits (e.g. a language and ethnic background), but may be internally divided to a point of violent conflict.

By drawing on predominantly Evans' (2010), Hutt's (2007), and Muggah's (2005) work[104], as well as my informants' recollections from their time in the camp, I address everyday camp life, before exploring the search for a so-called "durable solution" that would resolve the refugee crisis in Nepal. I utilize Evans' (2010) ethnography on the internecine fights between pro- and anti-

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[102] However, as mentioned above, Bhutanese refugees do not engage in story-telling about their 'imagined homeland' Bhutan, and thus do not reproduce and re-establish "continuity with the place of origin" (Turton, 2005: 275-6). I explore the notion of shared narratives of 'othering' in Chapter 9.
[103] Mutuality is one of four important elements for the creation of community (*samaj*) (see Chapter 7).
[104] There are not many ethnographies (and research) on Bhutanese refugees in the camps, and I therefore have to utilize the very limited resources available.

resettlement groups in the camps, to demonstrate that within the camp, there was no Bhutanese refugee community that shared values, norms and traits entirely. Lastly, I briefly address the Gateway Protection Programme which facilitates refugee resettlement in the UK.

I also draw on several theoretical discussions addressed in the Introduction, and foreshadow some of the analytical topics discussed in the subsequent chapters, in which I explore, for example, the impact of aid intervention in the camps *and* in the UK. Both within the camp and in resettlement, aid agencies and service providers assume that refugees who share a narrative of refugee-ness (that is, Bhutanese refugee-ness) would create a cohesive, all-encompassing community. As we see in this chapter, this is far from reality, and indeed impacts negatively on the *Community Development Approach* (Chapter 4) in resettlement.

Bhutanese Refugee Camps in Nepal

Following on from the previous chapter, Nepalese Bhutanese who were expelled from Bhutan fled across the border to India, where the Indian army ushered them on to Nepal. As Ajay summarized above, when the influx of refugees from Bhutan reached almost 100,000 people in Nepal - who settled in temporary huts near rivers - Nepal petitioned the UNHCR for support, due to increased malnourishment, diseases and crime. Together with international organisations, Nepal established seven refugee camps (see Figure 8[105] with population) in the east of the country: *Beldangi* I (20 percent of the total refugee population in Nepal); *Beldangi* II and *Beldangi III* (35 percent); *Sanischare* (20 percent); *Khudunabari* (10 percent); *Timai* (8 percent) and *Goldhap* (5 percent).

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[105] Image from http://rcamp.yolasite.com/master-plan.php
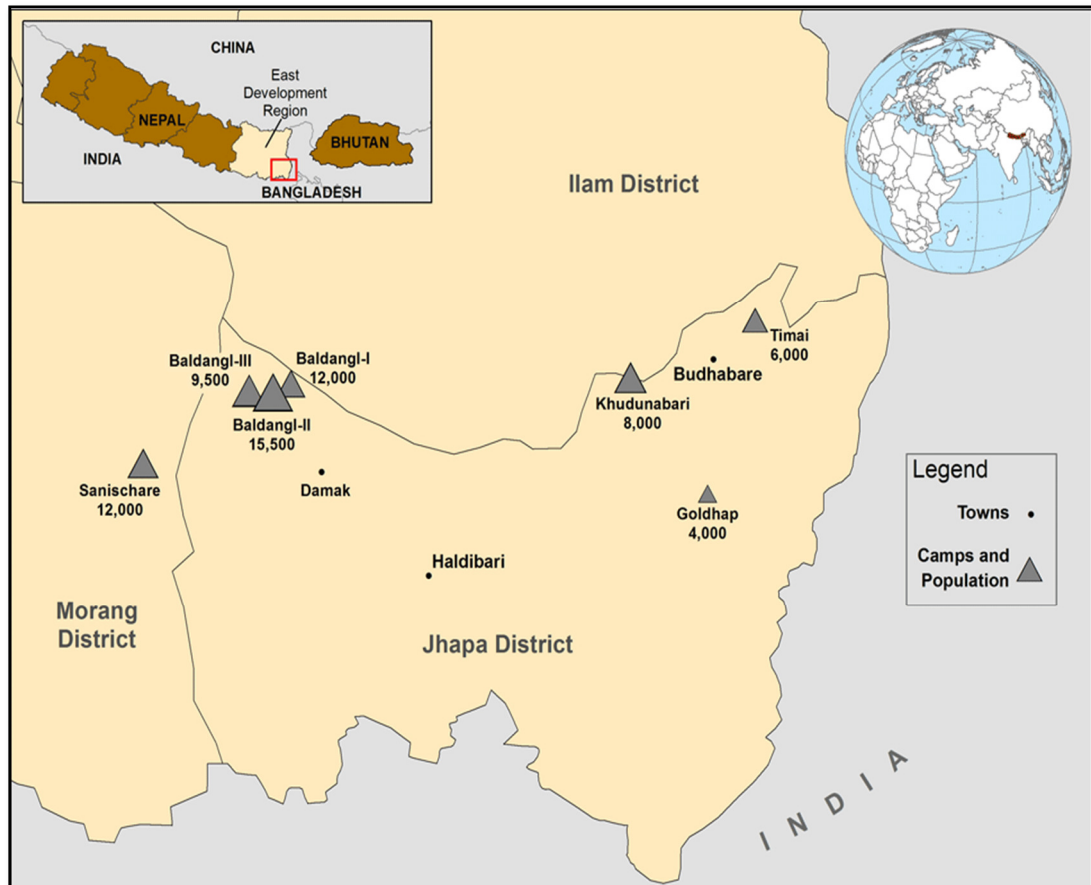
Figure 8: Bhutanese Refugee Camps in Nepal

The number of people in the camps posed a challenge to Bhutanese refugees, who generally came from rural areas in Bhutan, where scattered communities lived in small villages with no more than a couple of hundred inhabitants. For example, camps such as *Beldangi* II – the most populous camp over the years – housed more than 15,000 Bhutanese refugees in a small area. All three *Beldangi* camps hosted more than 35,000 Bhutanese refugees in comparison to the closest Nepali town Damak (around 40k in the mid-90s[106]), which led to tensions between the refugees and the local population (Gautam, 2013). Bhutanese refugee camps with rows and rows of huts closely packed together, became city-like spaces (see Figure 9[107]), with

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[106] Damak is a growing city in Nepal: in the 1990s, Damak had about 40,000 inhabitants, and was steadily growing with the latest numbers from 2011 indicating that the population almost doubled to about 75,000 (From: https://www.quandl.com/data/CITYPOP/CITY_DAMAKMECNEPAL-Population-of-Damak-MEC-Nepal)

[107] Image by TB Chhetri – Available at: http://tbchhetri.com/2012/02/02/photos-for-reference/#jp-carousel-688 [Accessed: 17 October 2015].

72

infrastructures growing within and around it[108], such as roads, shops, schools, or health facilities (Mortland, 1987: 375; Malkki, 2002: 354). This created new forms of hierarchies and communities, as I explore in the following Chapter 4 when outlining aid-intervention.

Figure 9: Beldangi II Refugee Camp

Some refugees settled either in Nepal or India, if they had family-ties and enough financial means to cover visas and other costs. Many highly educated refugees (e.g. doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc.) with sufficient financial means[109], fled to Western countries, such as the UK, where they applied for asylum. A few Nepalese Bhutanese were allowed to remain in Bhutan. The Bhutanese government either regarded them as valuable assets (e.g. highly educated) or Nepalese Bhutanese lived in inaccessible areas (which could not be reached easily by the police and army). My informants in the UK were highly suspicious of those who remained in Bhutan, and often referred to them as "traitors". Not all Nepalese Bhutanese are Bhutanese refugees, and

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[108] Agier (1996, in Malkki, 2002: 354-5) argues that refugee camps are "spaces of 'urban sociability'", but remain merely a "potential", in which "nothing develops", because the camp is "socially and juridical…a space of exception" (ibid.: 353). Similarly, referring to Palestinian refugee camps, Petti (2013) states that the camp is an "anti-city" devoid of democracy, whose residents are denied their "political rights" – also see Chapter 4.

[109] This is referred to as "brain drain" (Zeus, 2011: 260), whereby those who are educated, skilled and wealthy leave camps, leading to "adverse effects on the pool of human resources" (ibid.) in refugee camps. That is, educated refugees are more prone to leave refugee camps to seek asylum in Western nations, rather than organising themselves politically in order to achieve durable solutions, such as repatriation

my informants emphasize this distinction (see Chapter 9). Moreover, those who did not reside in the camps but left for India or Western countries are not considered to be Bhutanese refugees by some of my informants in Manchester. They argue that these individuals did not share the same "experience of camp life" (which I outline in the following section) and organized resettlement, which is an important characteristic in the creation of Bhutanese refugee-ness for some of my informants. In turn, this lack of experience of camp life was one of the major factors leading to RCO divisions in Manchester (see Chapter 9).

Everyday camp life recalled in resettlement

My informants always remark that conditions in the refugee camps were largely "miserable"[110]. Diseases (such as cholera and tuberculosis) were rife, which Bhutanese refugees blamed on the lack of sanitary facilities and clean drinking water, as well as malnutrition. Access to facilities outside of the camps was severely limited, because, in theory, refugees were not allowed to leave the camps, although many did (illegally) for work and study. Some of my informants worked throughout Nepal or India, and used the funds to send them to the camps. My informant Janak[111], for instance, worked as a servant for a "rich family" in the Kathmandu valley, sending most of his salary to his family in the camps, which he only visited once or twice a year. The same applied to Pravati[112], who worked as a stone-cutter outside of the camp to support her family, merely returning to the camp during monsoon. Similarly, some refugees moved to India to seek employment in the emerging service industry. For example, my informant Raja[113] worked in an office in Gurgaon (near New Delhi). One of my older informants remarked that "we did what we

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[110] Terminology in English (such as the word "miserable") and a shared narrative about camp life are part of "social re-engineering" of refugees in refugee camps (see Chapter 4)

[111] An educated man in his mid-50s, Janak arrived in the UK in early 2013 together with his wife and two daughters.

[112] Pravati is in her late 30s, and the wife of Kavi, TA's chairperson (see Chapter 8), with whom she has two sons, one of which was born in Manchester in early 2013.

[113] Raja is in his mid-30s and arrived (with his family) in 2013, and will feature again in later chapters.

had to do", in order to overcome hardship, lack of funds and resources, and to support families in the camps[114].

In the camps, refugees lived in bamboo huts, thatched with palm leaves, without electricity or running water. Families (often with more than ten individuals) shared one hut, which was comprised of one big room with a fireplace (for cooking and heating). Each section of the camp had outhouses and one water pump serving as both drinking water and washing facility. If one survived disease and malnutrition, fire was a constant hazard: due to the unsafe fire places, fires were common, and once started, could engulf whole sections of a camp.

According to my informants, life in the camps was a time of "waiting", of "sitting around" and "doing nothing"[115]. This is contrasted with life in Bhutan, as recalled by my older informants. Being predominantly agricultural labourers, land owners or professionals, their free time in Bhutan was limited. There was no time for anything, as Daya recollected when discussing her early childhood in Bhutan. Agricultural labour was demanding, and for those working the land, 'timepass' – Bhutanese refugees' expression of free time (also see Jeffrey, 2010) – was spent with local family and friends chatting or 'hanging out', sharing food, tea (*chai*) and betel nut (*paan*)[116], playing cards, watching football on the village's single television, or engaging in collective crafts such as cloth- and basket-weaving, crocheting and sewing. There was hardly any time for travelling, and visits to distant relatives were limited to religious festivals.

In the camps, on the other hand, with only limited access to the labour market or land (to continue agricultural practices), previously busy workers suddenly

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[114] My informants categorize individuals as "refugees" or "non-refugees" depending on actions in- and outside of the camp, as I will discuss in further detail in Chapters 8 and 9

[115] See Jeffrey's (2010: 80) work on 'timepass' and times of 'waiting' and 'doing nothing' in India. Similar to Jeffrey's student informants, 'waiting' for Bhutanese refugees was not a "pleasurable distraction", but due to a lack of "leisure activities" and employment opportunities (see Chapter 7).

[116] *Paan* is commonly used amongst my male informants and chewed on a daily basis. *Paan* has an important communal element when men come together: some bring the nuts, others cut them up and distribute them within a group. Amongst young people *paan* is less popular and is replaced with alcohol, tobacco and cannabis (*ganja*).

had "nothing to do". Hari, who came to the UK as an asylum seeker long before resettlement began[117], once confided to me that life in the camps made the refugees "lazy" and "dependent", expecting "someone else to do it for them" as they are "capable, but lack direction". Hari saw this as a direct result of "doing nothing" in the camps. Chatty (2010) describes similar "despair and apathy" amongst Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, who live in camps for more than fifty years. Malkki's (1995) Hutu refugees in Tanzania were "warehoused" in camps without solutions in sight, creating long-term dependency on aid agencies, allowing little control over their future, creating wide-spread frustration resulting in violence and substance abuse (in Colson, 2003: 9-10).

In the same way, having "nothing to do", and the resulting boredom[118], frustration and powerlessness amongst refugees in the Nepalese camps, were cited as the main factors behind increased domestic abuse and alcoholism, especially amongst men (see Evans, 2010: 24; Chase et al., 2013a). Aid agencies not only provided all basic necessities of life (food, housing, basic education and health care), but also initiated programmes and workshops to create awareness of what they called "harmful social practices" (Evans, 2010: 222; Chatty, 2010: 459), including gender or caste discrimination, as well as substance abuse and domestic violence. As I address in the following Chapter 4, this was part of the Western agencies' aim to "re-engineer" (Muggah, 2005) refugees in order to create one cohesive, educated community, which could be controlled and thus prepared for durable solutions.

Nevertheless, from what I gathered from some of my informants, life in the camps was a vibrant social environment. Many of them recalled that the close proximity to one another lead to new relations being established and fostered on a daily basis. The bamboo or plastic huts in the camps were built so close together that sometimes a mere plastic sheet served as a wall between

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[117] Hari is in his early 40s, and arrived in the UK in the early 2000s together with his wife Anusha, living in Sheffield with their five-year-old son. Both are highly educated and work in white collar jobs (Hari as a college teacher, and Anusha as a social worker for Doncaster City Council). We will meet both of them in later chapters, as their arrival in the UK before resettlement was a divisive factor for the Bhutanese RCOs.

[118] See Mortland (1987: 396-7) for a study on how refugees perceive time in the camps.

different families' huts, leading to very close interactions between neighbours (also see Evans, 2010). Within the camps, one family – spanning over three generations (grandparents, parents and children) would share one bamboo hut. Families spent most of their free time together, hanging out with their neighbours and other camp residents. This created a *samaj* (see Chapter 7) which was not quite the same as in Bhutan. New hierarchical structures and social practices emerged, largely influenced by Western relief agencies, as I explore in the subsequent Chapter 4.

Furthermore, the schools in the camps allowed for children and young people to establish close relations with one another, spending most of their extra-curricular time with closely knit cliques (see Figure 10[119]). Children engaged in various activities, such as essay and poetry writing, painting, publishing a camp newsletter, and playing sports such as football, cricket, volleyball and badminton (see Evans, 2010). Those who were teenagers in the camp recalled how they "sneaked out" of the camps to smoke and drink secretly. Some young couples used to 'date' in the camp, although these "sweethearts" (my informants' term) were chaperoned by other peers or older community members.

Figure 10: Young people in Bhutanese refugee camps in Nepal

Men of all ages would hang out, drink alcohol, share *paan*, and play their favourite card game for the little cash they had. Women, on the other hand, would share their daily household-chores, such a washing clothes and

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[119] These images from a camp are the property of my informants in Manchester, and used here with their permission.

cooking, as well as cooperate in the small allotments within the refugee camps. Some of my female informants spoke fondly of the shared time with their (female) friends and relatives, being engaged in crafts learnt in Bhutan. These skills were passed on to the next generation, and included learning to sing and dance. Nacha, for example, recalled the many hours her mother taught her traditional Nepali and Bhutanese dances, which she now performs at events in Manchester.

As access to televisions was limited, many people listened to small radios, especially to stay informed about international football, as well as cricket. When Western service providers offered facilities to screen Bollywood or Nepali movies, people from across the camp would flock to it, gathering in large crowds. When the weather permitted it, many refugees went swimming in the adjacent rivers (such as the Teli river), or gathered mushrooms, herbs and fruits from the nearby forests. The latter resulted in story-telling about encounters with dangerous animals such as wild elephants or tigers, often embellished and acted out to the amusement of the gathered community in the UK.

Many young refugees (under 25) recalled this time in camps fondly, especially the relationships and bonds forged during this time. Sameer summarised (also see Figure 11[120]):

> "In the camp, it used to be fun. Life was miserable, but there were lots of friends and relatives, and we lived together. We were free! .... We had friends, we used to go to school. During holidays we used to go to work outside" (BRFP).

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[120] These images from Beldangi II camp are the property of my informants in Manchester, and used here with their permission.

Figure 11: Young people in Bhutanese refugee camps in Nepal 2

Some of my older informants dismissed the young refugees' nostalgic memory of the camp, and argued that the young ones do not remember the "struggle" and "suffering" like adults do. The long years of waiting, the inability to work, and being under the constant watchful eye of Western relief and aid agencies took its toll on many Bhutanese refugees. Raja summed up the experience of many of my older informants:

"Our condition in the refugee camp was miserable and pathetic. We always lived in a thatched hut … We were scared about different disasters such as storm and heavy rain. We spent our life always in sadness … We have been … deprived of many things in the camp in Nepal though we had the same language like people in Nepal. … We could not grab any opportunity, although we were eligible and capable. We were undermined … and prevented from applying for jobs. We had to hide our refugee identity while looking for jobs. I work as a simple teacher. The school where I have worked, Nepalese citizen were paid more than the refugee teacher even though they have less ability. What to do? We were compelled to work in low wages" (BRFP).

The refugees' experiences in Bhutan as well as the life in the camp – and thus the segregation from the Nepali people around the camp – embittered many to a point of complete lethargy (and substance abuse), whilst others initiated and joined political movements both within the camps, as well as within Nepal, resulting in conflict within the camp, as I explore in the following section.

The Search for Durable Solutions

Throughout the refugees' time in the camp, the UNHCR aimed to find a so-called 'durable solution' for Bhutanese refugees, which they considered a "major protracted refugee situation" (UNHCR, 2006: 107; 117; henceforth PRS). In PRS refugees are said to:

> "find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee in this situation is often unable to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance" (UNHCR, 2004: 1-2).

Once this situation exceeds a population of 25,000 and refugees live in "exile" for more than five years without a "prospect of a solution", it becomes a "major" PRS, such as that of Palestinian refugees in the Near and Middle East since the late 1940s (UNHCR, 2006: 106-8). They may not be driven by immediate dangers (to e.g. their lives, properties, etc.) or emergencies, but their present and near future is described by the UN and researchers as a "limbo". Refugee camps are "liminal zones", a space of waiting for a resolution that may never come (see Chatty, 2010; Harrell-Bond, 1996; Harrell-Bond et al., 1996; Malkki, 1995; Mortland, 1987; Williams, 2006).

"In limbo"

Refugee camps and their inhabitants are in-between, neither part of the nation state (Nepal) in which they are situated, nor subject to ordinary legal definitions and rules, as Malkki compellingly argues throughout her work over the last twenty years (also see Chapter 5). Williams (2006: 876) goes further and claims that refugees have no control of their lives, or, in Mortland's (1987: 378; 380) words "[t]his is the limbo where you are nobody", submitting oneself to the

"general authority" (Turner, 2000: 360) of service providers and camp administrators, such as the UNHCR. Refugees' liminality is "institutionalised", and produces dependency on aid and relief agencies as well as donors (Geertz, 1983; in Mortland, 1987: 384-5). These institutions, however, are not 'neutral' bodies, but also intend to change their refugee 'clients' from their previous 'primitive' state into a 'civilized' person that can be resettled to Western nations (ibid., see Chapter 4).

Moreover, within the liminal environment of the camps, refugees begin to question and restructure the status quo and social hierarchies, and new affiliations, networks and cultures emerge (see Chatty, 2010; Mortland, 1987). This is a dual process engendered by *both,* the refugees themselves *and* the institutions who operate within the camps. Amongst refugees, political, legal and economic differentiations (such as caste[121]) are eroded. However, this liminality does not result in a *communitas* of equal persons (contrary to Turner, 2000: 360, see Chapter 7), but rather creates and maintains new systems of social stratifications. Although the caste system may have lost importance through intervention by Western agencies (see Evans, 2010; Muggah, 2005), and status may no longer depend on gender or property, other traits become emphasized and elevate some individuals above others. As I explore in Chapter 8, this restructuring of hierarchies is still taking place in the UK, in which social and educational capital (e.g. language skills) become the new signifiers of status and authority, impacting on the development of community amongst Bhutanese refugees in Manchester.

The refugee camp was not a space devoid of socio-cultural meaning. Their location in Nepal – a country and culture with which Bhutanese refugees share many traits, such as religion and language – was beneficial for my informants, as they often recalled in resettlement. Yet, Bhutanese refugees were subject to

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[121] Most Bhutanese refugees are Hindus, and would thus follow the strict rules attached to caste ranking, and this was something I expected to find before entering the field. However, due to the experience of exile and resettlement and the social re-engineering by Western agencies, the caste system is not visible amongst my informants in the UK. Rules that differentiate between castes lost importance and are not upheld in the UK. Caste as a determining factor for marriage also lost relevance, although acceptable marriage-partners are still exclusively sought within the refugee or Nepali community. Because caste is not talked about or relevant for my informants (according to them), I do not discuss this system of hierarchy in this thesis.

the politics of Bhutan, Nepal and Western nations, which was, as Hari states in Chapter 2, "beyond their control". The UNHCR (2006: 106, 107) writes:

> "The nature of a protracted situation will be the result of conditions in the refugees' country of origin, the responses of and conditions in the host countries and the level of engagement by the international community".

Bilateral talks between Nepal and Bhutan

From 1992 onwards, the UNHCR mediated bilateral talks between Bhutan and Nepal in order to resolve the PRS and find a durable solution. Some of these meetings included representatives from the Bhutanese refugee community[122]. But as the RGB considered the political parties Nepalese Bhutanese have founded (e.g. the Bhutan People's Party) as "anti-national" (see Chapter 2), the RGB did not welcome affiliates of these groups during the talks, and the meetings often ended without consensus (Hutt, 2007).

The most-welcome durable solution (by both the UN and refugees) is repatriation to the refugees' country of origin (Wright et al., 2004: 6) – in this case Bhutan. Whilst the Nepalese government supported this resolution, the RGB rejected it, arguing that Bhutanese refugees are *not* refugees from Bhutan, but citizens of Nepal, who entered Bhutan as illegal migrants. Therefore the RGB saw no obligations to offer repatriation or compensation to the camp residents. Inspired by the Maoist movement in Nepal politically active refugees participated in "peace marches" and protests in the mid-90s (Hutt, 2007: 261). The Bhutanese government understood these activities as 'evidence' of the Nepalese Bhutanese's aggression against the RGB. Bhutan responded with further changes to their laws to silence and control those Nepalese Bhutanese who remained in Bhutan, and rejected all proposals to repatriate Bhutanese refugees (ibid.). The UNHCR (2008b: 2) regards repatriation as

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[122] For detailed research on the political movements within the camp in Nepal, refer to Evans (2010) and Hutt (2007).

"a process which involves the progressive establishment of conditions which enable returnees and their communities to exercise their social, economic, civil, political and cultural rights, and on that basis to enjoy peaceful, productive and dignified lives. Sustainable reintegration is crucially linked to the willingness and capacity of the state to reassume responsibility for the rights and well-being of its citizens".

As the RGB was not willing to offer these rights and re-integrate Bhutanese refugees in Bhutan, the UNHCR's hands were tied. They could not forcefully implement this strategy, although most of my informants agree that repatriation would have been their preferred solution whilst in the camp.

Conscious of the socio-cultural and linguistic similarities Bhutanese refugees share with the Nepali population, the UNHCR proposed the second durable solution: local assimilation in the country of first asylum (Wright et al., 2004: 6) – in this case, Nepal. This durable solution is built on three foundations (Fielden, 2008: 1), the first of which – adaptation and assimilation of local "social and cultural processes" (ibid.) was already fulfilled. Now, the UNHCR attempted to ensure the other two dimensions of this durable solutions could be provided by the Nepalese government. Firstly, the attainment of legal rights for refugees (ibid.), for example permanent residency-rights within Nepal; and secondly, economic sustainability for refugees in the host community (ibid.) by, for instance, allowing refugees to work legally within the country. The UNHCR, together with other international aid and relief agencies would assist the Nepalese government legally and financially, if the solution could be implemented. Local assimilation was welcomed by Bhutanese refugees, and many informants stated that they would have preferred to stay in Nepal, rather than resettle "to the other side of the world", as one of them remarked. However, due to internal political unrest in Nepal at the time[123], in which the government and Maoists engaged in the 'People's War', the Nepalese

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[123] I do not discuss these internal political issues in Nepal in this thesis. Refer to Evans (2010) and Hutt (2007) for detailed references on the issue.

government had neither time nor resources to allow for local integration of more than 100,000 people (Evans, 2010: 8).

The following 15 years were marked by political unrest and protest by Bhutanese refugees[124] within a politically unstable country, including several attempts to return to Bhutan. The frustration led to outbreaks of violence in the camps, and in May 2007 Bhutanese refugees attempted the so-called "Long March Home" [125] (Evans, 2010: 178; 304). More than 70,000 Bhutanese refugees congregated near Mechi Bridge (Kakaribhitta, East Nepal), attempting to cross the Nepali-Indian border in order to walk back to Bhutan via India. The Indian army awaited them on the other side of the bridge, and when violence broke out, two Bhutanese refugees (both young men) were killed by Indian soldiers, and many hundreds were injured (ibid.).

These events created solidarity amongst Bhutanese refugees, who began to self-identify as one unified group since they were targeted by the Bhutanese government in the 1980s and 90s. As I explore in the following Chapter 4, camp life created the notion of membership to a community that has been "mistreated by an oppressive political regime" and exiled, and therefore all Bhutanese refugees share a "collective history of suffering" (Evans, 2010: 229; 232), which becomes all the more relevant in resettlement to create refugee-ness. This commonality and agreement between Bhutanese refugees – that is, the collective urge to "go back home" – was used to put pressure on the Bhutanese government. But as I explore further below, not all refugees agreed with the violent tactics of some factions within the camps (ibid.).

In the early to mid-2000s, it became increasingly obvious that no solution could be found between Bhutan and Nepal, and the UNHCR proposed to initiate

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[124] Within just a few years in the camps in Nepal, educated Bhutanese refugees formed more than ten political parties, operating from within Nepal to fight for repatriation, compensation and political change in Bhutan. Often, these parties were affiliated with Maoist movements in Nepal (see Evans, 2010).

[125] People arrested during the march or found guilty of supporting (and harbouring) Maoists, faced severe repercussions in resettlement later on. Some of my informants who applied for countries such as Australia and New Zealand were turned down – some ascribed that to their "political activity", such as Ram, whose father was very active in the efforts to be repatriated to Nepal, and therefore (so Ram believes) their family's application for Australia was rejected by the Australian government.

third-country resettlement for Bhutanese refugees – the third durable solution for PRS, which I explore in the following section.

The long road to resettlement

The refusal of both the Bhutanese and the Nepalese government to support either of these two solutions lead the UNHCR to consider third country resettlement, which is defined as the

> "selection and transfer of refugees from a state in which they have sought protection to a third state which has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status. The status provided ensures protection against refoulement and provides a resettled refugee and his/her family or dependants with access to rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. Resettlement also carries with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen of the resettlement country" (UNHCR, 2011a: 3).

The UNHCR together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) proposed to initiate resettlement to a "third county for permanent settlement" (Wright et al., 2004: 6), such as the USA, Australia or the UK. Evans (2010: 182) argues that growing tensions in Nepal led to a "sense of urgency for long-term solution" amongst refugees, the Nepalese government and the UNHCR. The UN urged Western countries to "share the burden" by offering resettlement places (UNHCR, 2013b). Third-country resettlement is presented as "tangible expression of international solidarity and a responsibility sharing mechanism, allowing states to help share responsibility for refugee protection, and reduce problems impacting the country of asylum[126]" (UNHCR, 2011: 3-4; UNHCR, 2013b).

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[126] The impact of refugee camps on the countries in which they are located is said to be immense, such as pressure on the economy, the environment, resources, the labour market, housing and safety concerns (Gautam, 2013: 8-9; Evans, 2010: 182).

In 2005, the USA made an official offer to resettle refugees, and information about resettlement began to flood the refugee camps (Evans, 2010: 13). However, relief agencies could not have foreseen the consequences of this proposal, as the Bhutanese refugee community within the camps became divided between pro- and anti-resettlement, leading to an outbreak of severe violence, as I outline below.

Repatriation versus resettlement

Community divisions were common in Bhutanese refugee camps, and never more so than when third-country resettlement was suggested. The conflict that emerged between pro- and anti-resettlement factions within the camp lead to widespread outbreaks of violence, as Evans' (2010) work demonstrates. This underpins my argument that rather than viewing a refugee group, such as Bhutanese refugees, as one coherent, all-encompassing and homogenous community, with a shared set of traits, values and practices, these networks are operating by creating sameness and difference.

In this section, I make use of Evans' (2010) ethnographic study of political conflicts inside the *Beldangi* refugee camps, as well as my informants' recollections of that time. Evans arrived in the camps shortly after resettlement was first proposed to refugees, and she closely observed the tensions arising in the camp. When news of the US-offer to take Bhutanese refugees spread in the camps, two factions emerged: the ones who were welcoming this durable solution, seeing it as an opportunity to move on; and those who regarded resettlement as a defeat, leaving no option to be repatriated to Bhutan (ibid.: 8; 168). Evans argues that members of the Community Party of Bhutan (CBP) – comprised of disenfranchised and frustrated youth and young adults - were most vocal and outspoken against resettlement (ibid.: 10-1). Inspired by the Maoist movement in Nepal[127], they intended to return to Bhutan to introduce "radical political change" by transforming Bhutan into a "communist nation" led

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[127] Evans claims that members of CPB received military training, financial support and "ideological guidance" from the wide-spread communist parties and movements across South Asia (ibid.: 169).

by a working class party (ibid.: 234; 251-2). Pro-resettlement refugees, on the other hand, argued that anti-resettlement proponents offered "false hope" of repatriation, and that refugees must give up their "impossible dreams to return" to Bhutan. For them, only resettlement could offer the possibility to acquire citizenship in "democratic, capitalist states" (ibid.: 11).

Anti-resettlement groups resorted to wide-spread violence and intimidation of refugees who expressed their wish to resettle. Evans witnessed several arson-attacks, beatings and even assassinations by the CPB during her fieldwork, and had to disguise her own views on durable solutions in order to prevent attacks directed at herself. The assaults by anti-resettlement groups were a "warning" against all pro-resettlement supporters, including dignitaries from resettlement nations, who were perceived as *bideshī dalāl* (foreign agents) of the "US/Bhutanese conspiracy" who aimed to protect the *Ngalong* regime in Bhutan (ibid.: 15; 169; 173; 176). Moreover, CPB claimed that Bhutanese officials infiltrated the camp and paid refugees to promote resettlement. This sowed pervasive mistrust within the camps, leading to further violent incidences between the two factions.

In order to amplify this distrust and discourage applications for resettlement, CPB began to spread terrifying rumours that "refugee women will be forced to perform public sex acts with American men; older people will be ejected from planes en route to America[128]; [and] refugees will be sent to fight in Iraq alongside American soldiers" (ibid.: 300). Many of my informants confirmed this gossip in the camps, deriding and dismissing it in hindsight, although some admitted that they feared that some of these stories about resettlement nations may be true. Nina Dawadi, a young, outspoken Christian woman living in Rochdale with her husband and two children remembered:

> "Before we [were] processed and came here, some people used to say that it is not good in foreign countries, people will scold and beat

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[128] This was a favourite story of some of my younger informants in Manchester, who mocked this rumour with ferocity. However, some of my older informants over 50 admitted that they were scared throughout their whole flight to the UK that they would be "thrown off the plane" as they "heard in the camps". This shows the weight these rumours carried before resettlement.

us … I was scared before arriving here. … People in Nepal used to say that our women are discriminated against in foreign countries, which isn't true" (BRFP).

When the USA offered 60,000 places[129] for Bhutanese refugees (and other Western nations followed suit), and the UNHCR established the Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Co-ordinating Committee (BRRCC) in early 2007, anti-resettlement groups intensified their activities (for example attacking an IOM bus), leading to many pro-resettlement refugees fleeing the camp to protect themselves from assaults, which left them without UNHCR support (ibid.: 171; 180). When resettlement began in 2008, pro-resettlement refugees under threat by rival factions were the first to apply and leave to third countries.

Within a few months, almost half of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal applied for resettlement due to success stories from resettled refuges in the West (ibid.: 15; 182). Again, Nina summarized the experience of many of my informants, explaining the rationale for their resettlement application:

> "It was all around dusty and unhygienic surrounding [in the camp]. It was difficult to go for work. … The supply of ration in the camp was reduced. While we continued to live, my brothers got resettled in Norway. They told me it is better in the foreign countries and a good opportunity for the future of our children. It was difficult and insecure to live in the camp because there used to be killing of people. … [When] we thought it was impossible to live in the camp, we started the process for resettlement" (BRFP).

Many informants stated similar reasons for agreeing to resettle. For example, my informant Dhilip[130] disclosed that he was active in the CPB in the late 90s,

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[129] Evans (ibid.: 171) quotes a UNHCR staff member who claimed that the USA used 60k as a base-number, whilst having no official limit on how many refugees they would take. The informant told Evans that "this is partly so that the Nepal government cannot accuse the US government of cherry picking refugees and so that no one can ask what will happen to the refugees who do not fall into this number".

[130] Dhilip is in his early 40s, and arrived in the UK with his wife and three children in early 2011. He is very active in Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester, and at the time of fieldwork sought higher education, which he could not access during his time in Nepal.

and shared their conviction that repatriation was the only "fair solution" for Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. However, when resettlement was proposed, he distanced himself from CPB, and supported resettlement. By that time, many refugees were disappointed and frustrated, and as 'donor fatigue'[131] set in, and rations and infrastructures in the camps were reduced (Evans, 2010: 153), many refugees abandoned political ideologies in favour of pragmatic solutions. Dhilip revealed that he was "tired of living in the camps", and if repatriation was not possible, other solutions have to be found. He explained:

> "[M]any people took [resettlement] negatively in the beginning. But I took it positively. It would be fine if we were in Bhutan, but we had to leave Bhutan. If there had been programmes for repatriation to Bhutan from the refugee camp, then we would be happy to accept it as our first priority. … But this is impossible, so I applied for resettlement" (BRFP).

Evans confirms that when she returned to the camps in early January 2009, CPB had lost much of their support, and most refugees now applied for resettlement. Violent attacks against pro-resettlement individuals became sporadic, and even anti-resettlement refugees began their application process for resettlement.

Other countries than the USA began to offer places for Bhutanese refugees, such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as Denmark, Norway and The Netherlands. In November 2015, the UNHCR celebrated the successful resettlement of exactly 100,000 Bhutanese refugees. Craig Sanders, the UNHCR spokesperson for Bhutanese refugee resettlement stated that "this is one of the largest and most successful programme of its kind" in the history of the IOM and UNHCR (Himalayan Times, 2015; UNHCR, 2013).

Observers argue that the success of this programme is due to the concise administration of Bhutanese refugee camps since their establishment in the

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[131] Donor fatigue is a common feature of PRS, in which donors who previously supported groups or charities become desensitized and lose interest in providing further funds and resources.

90s, and therefore the availability of reliable data, allowing the resettlement to progress with limited logistical problems (IRIN, 2013; Himalayan Times, 2015). Moreover, the unique cooperation by international aid and relief agencies, local service providers in resettlement countries and the government of Nepal, allowed for the resettlement project to run efficiently (ibid.). In late 2015, the UNHCR and IOM extended their gratitude to resettlement nations, who took in Bhutanese refugees, emphasizing that the 'success' of Bhutanese refugee resettlement is due to the collective 'sharing of burdens' (also see above), and the "strong humanitarian cooperation between eight resettlement countries, Nepal, UNHCR and IOM" (Himalayan Times, 2015).

The table shows the current estimates of refugees across the resettlement nations[134], and the graphic below shows the distribution of Bhutanese refugees across the world[135]. The UK only began to offer places in 2010, and as the data below shows, only took a small number of Bhutanese refugees, which I discuss in further detail in the following section.

Resettlement Country	2013[132]	2015[133]
USA	66,134	84,819
Canada	5,376	6,500
Australia	4,190	5,554
New Zealand	747	1002
Denmark	746	874
Norway	326	566
The Netherlands	326	327
UK	317	358
TOTAL	**78,182**	**100,000**

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[132] From Himalayan Times (2013), which draws on UNHCR data.

[133] From Himalayan Times (2015), drawing on UNHCR data in celebration of the resettlement programme. It is assumed that approximately 10,000 – 15,000 Bhutanese refugees remain in the camps in Nepal, and at the time of completing this thesis, the Nepalese government, the IOM and UNHCR are holding talks to decide the fate of these remaining refugees, who are now grouped together in only two (of seven) refugee camps in east Nepal (the other camps have been closed down).

[134] Note that the number of refugees is debatable, because refugee children born in the UK are still categorised as Bhutanese refugees (rather than UK citizens), and are often included in resettlement numbers in official publications.

[135] Data on world map from Himalayan Times (2015), graph by Yamen Albadin, commissioned by the author of this thesis.
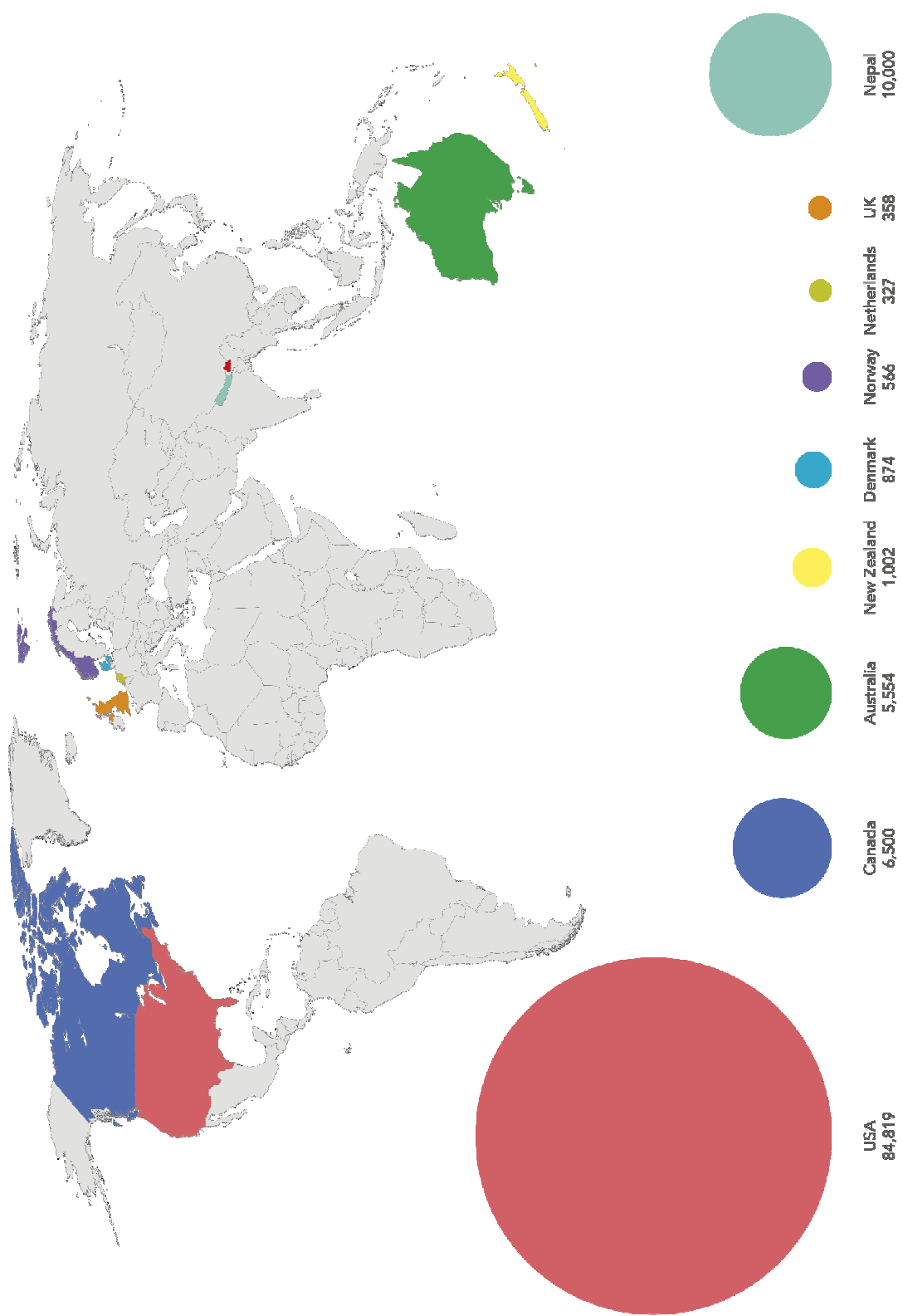
Figure 12: Global distribution of Bhutanese refugees in Resettlement Nations

Nepal
10,000

UK
358

Netherlands
327

Norway
566

Denmark
874

New Zealand
1,002

Australia
5,554

Canada
6,500

USA
84,819

The Gateway Protection Programme

According to Bhutanese refugees in the UK, most aimed to resettle in the US, where to date about 70,000 refugees resettled in. However, the process and documentation to come to the UK was popular, because it was reasonably fast: within three to six months from the application date, many of my informants found themselves in a plane from Kathmandu (Nepal's capital) to Manchester.

In 2004, the UK initiated the *Gateway Protection Programme* (GPP), which facilities refugee resettlement from across the world to Great Britain. The GPP is funded by the British Home Office, and operated by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) in cooperation with various organisations, such as the UNHCR, the IOM, Refugee Action (RAUK), Refugee Council (RCUK), and other governmental and voluntary organisations. Each financial year, British ministers set a quota, depending on international resettlement needs and available national resources, which at the time of my fieldwork was 750 per year (Hoellerer, 2013; Platts-Fowler and Robinson, 2011: 4; RC, 2004; UNHCR, 2001: 2-3, Wright, 2004: 13-4). Similar to other resettlement nations, the UK conducts interviews, as well as security and health screenings prior to offering places to refugees[136]. Most of my informants described this time of waiting as "tense", as they "sat in refugee camps and waited for the decision". This process can take months, and in some cases even years, in which refugees are watching family members and friends depart from the camps.

Once the assessment was complete, and applications approved, leaving-dates were discussed and approved, and Bhutanese refugees were prepared for their departure. Firstly, they embarked from Damak to Nepal's capital Kathmandu, where refugees received Cultural Orientation and English

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[136] In addition to being a 'recognized refugee' according to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol, the individual may not (a) be in a polygamous marriage and/or (b) committed political or non-political crimes (UNHCR, 2001: 8; Wright, 2004: 14-5).

Language Training classes (henceforth COELT - see Chapter 4) preparing them for their new lives in the West. These should provide refugees with background information on the UK and its systems of employment, finance, health care and education (Wright, 2004: 8, 37; RAUK et al., 2008: 10; UNHCR, 2001: 8). Moreover, local service providers and the general public in areas of resettlement in the UK should have been informed about the arrival of refugees. After three to seven days in IOM camps in the capital (which they were not allowed to leave), Bhutanese refugees embarked on their final journey to their resettlement nations. IOM caseworkers escorted applicants from Nepal to the UK with special travel documents (EU UFF) outside the regular UK Immigration Rules[137].

On arrival, resettled refugees receive the Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), which allows them to stay in the UK indefinitely. The ILR status means that resettled refugees enjoy the same rights to live, work and study in the UK as any other resident, as well as claim benefits and welfare payments[138]. Moreover, the ILR allows individuals to apply for citizenship after five years of permanent residence in the UK (UNHCR, 2001: 8-9; Wright et al., 2004: 15).

Once in the UK, refugees are welcomed by IOM and RAUK support workers, who transport new arrivals to their new accommodation – either governmental (council) housing or privately rented - and ensure that their primary basic needs (e.g. food, clothing, toiletries) are met with, for example, food and toiletries 'care packages' (containing essentials). I outline this arrival and the role community plays in Chapter 6, by offering a detailed ethnography of an arrival scene at Manchester Airport. In the first few weeks Bhutanese refugees have a full programme, including opening a bank account, signing tenancy

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[137] Refugees arriving in the UK under the GPP travel on a one-way *European Union Uniform Format Form*, approved by local British diplomatic posts prior to resettlement (UNHCR, 2001: 8-9), and which is a completely separate procedure than the standard application for asylum (or immigration) in the UK. This differentiation is important, as it allows resettled refuges to access more facilities than for example asylum seekers or voluntary (economic) migrants (see Chapter 5).

[138] Most Bhutanese refugees in the UK are entitled to claim Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), a state-benefit for people who are out of work (but able to work), which in 2013 was a minimum of £56 per week. Working-age (18 to 64) British residents have the right to apply for JSA, but must demonstrate an active interest in looking for employment. If they miss a 'signing on' session at the Job Centre, refuse to take part in work programmes and trainings and do not apply for the minimum number of jobs per week, they lose their benefits and are prevented to re-apply for benefits in between three months and three years (HM Department of Work and Pensions, 2013: 4; 8-9).

agreements, going to the Job Centre, registering at medical facilities and attending orientation courses – all with the help of case workers from RAUK or RCUK.

The first period of intensive support is followed by a second, forward-looking period of support, in order to address long-term needs. After approximately six months, Refugee Action and Refugee Council (who manage resettlement) adopt an exit strategy, in which support is gradually withdrawn and support is outsourced to mainstream (public) services. The UK adopts a *Front-End Loading* (FEL) approach, which aims to provide support and resources only during the first stages of resettlement, "in the expectation that less support … would be needed in later stages as (economic) self-sufficiency is attained" (Duke et al., 1999: 166). The underlying principle of FEL is that refugees avoid dependency and obtain self-sufficiency shortly after arrival, in order to successfully 'integrate' into the mainstream society (Wright et al., 2004: 25). It is expected that after approximately six months, resettled refuges have obtained sufficient language- and socio-cultural skills in order to operate independently, seek employment or further education, and communicate with mainstream (public) services. One strategy of FEL is the implementation of the *Community Development Approach* (CDA). That is, the formation of RCOs from within the refugee community, to which support can be outsourced once service providers exit.

As I show in the following chapters, this optimistic vision was not realized for Bhutanese refugees in Manchester, and my informants strongly criticise both the GPP and FEL, as they feel abandoned by the very agencies that brought them to the UK. Left to their own devices, fissions within the community have become exaggerated and ultimately led to the division of Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester. In turn, this has adverse effects on the aims of GPP – that rather than being a durable solution to overcome liminality and uncertainty, new ambiguities are created. Ultimately, the search for a *durable* solution for Bhutanese refugees is not at an end yet.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that even whilst in the refugee camps, Bhutanese refugees were a diverse, heterogeneous group of people, with different political understandings and views. They were forced together by political circumstances, and they may otherwise have nothing in common but a shared narrative of exile and refugee-ness

As I show in the chapters that follow, both in the camps and in the UK, service providers make use of a "one shoe fits all" approach, in which refugees from across the world are treated exactly the same, without paying attention to socio-cultural differences, and, more importantly, internal divisions. The UNHCR assumes that a durable solution implies that their "clients'" lives will run smoothly from the moment the strategy is realized. After all, refugees are no longer in "limbo" as in the camps. And yet, uncertainty persists in resettlement, and the communal factions experienced in Nepal are recreated in third countries, albeit being based not on anti- and pro-resettlement, but other, more immediate and pragmatic issues, such as funding for projects.

In the following chapter, I outline how aid and relief agencies actively promoted "social re-engineering" in the refugee camps, in order to prepare refugees for durable solutions, and ensure a smooth transition, and ultimately the full 'integration' of refugees into the host community – be it in Bhutan (through repatriation), Nepal (through assimilation) or in third countries (through resettlement). However, this deliberate restructuring of people's ideas, values and practices has a significant impact on how my informants perceive the world in resettlement, how the establish communities (*samaj*) and RCOs, and whether or not they 'integrate'.

Chapter 4 – The Community Development Approach

On an icy Sunday morning in February, I made my way to Longsight to visit the Gadal household, in whose house the Takin Association UK[139] Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held. When I arrived, there were already plenty of visitors crammed on the sofas in the Gadal's lounge. A huge white board leaned on the wall, and Takin's chairperson Unnayak meticulously wrote down the agenda of the meeting, copying from a scribbled on piece of paper. His father, Buddhi, sat on the sofa next to him, listening to the lively conversation amongst the 15 or so men that have assembled (see Figure 13[140]). Even Hari and Ved were present: these two Nepalese Bhutanese in their forties, who arrived in the UK as asylum seekers long before resettlement, lived with their families in Doncaster, and supported Bhutanese refugees across the UK (see Chapter 9). The kids were upstairs playing video games and watching films on the internet. The women were in the kitchen, chatting and sharing *chai*, although some young women popped in once in a while.

Figure 13: Takin UK meeting in Longsight

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[139] As mentioned in the introduction, Takin is one of three Bhutanese RCOs operating in Manchester, with Unnayak (see below) as Takin's chair, Kavi as his secretary, and Ram as their treasurer (see Chapter 8 for a detailed outline of RCO organisational structures).

[140] These images are my own and included here with permission of my informants.

There is – originating from Nepal and Bhutan – the strong conviction amongst my informants that political decision-making is in the hands of adult men. Women told me that they find these meetings "boring", but I believe Evans (2010: 161-2) provides us with a clue, when she argues that girls are prevented from speaking in public, by means of gentle coercion, such as the fact that men "tease" them when they do speak in meetings[141].

Unnayak knew that today was an important meeting. But he was always well prepared and organized, keeping detailed records in his leather briefcase he carried most of the time. Today, Takin members had to decide if they would become an official refugee community organization (RCO), with all its advantages, limitations and dreaded bureaucracy. The decision was important: only highly formalized RCOs are able to apply for certain funding – such as the National Lottery community grants – and money was needed to organize events for the Bhutanese refugee community to come together.

Two hours went past, chatting with one another – especially as some of the refugees have not seen each other for a while[142] – whilst we waited for more Takin members to arrive. People popped in and out of the living room, *chai* was brought in and the men shared *paan*. Unnayak then gathered the visitors, and everyone sat down in the lounge. Unnayak was standing in front of the white board, whilst I sat next to Hari who was taking the minutes of the meeting. After a welcome, Unnayak informed the congregation about updates on the Takin website and with the organisation logo design. He then moved on to share news about personal events in the community, such as Kavi's wife having given birth to a baby boy. Unnayak also mentioned the SOAS workshop, which he, Ved, Hari, and three refugee youths would attend together with me in May (see Chapters 3 and 5). Then, the agenda moved towards the serious business of accounts, with Unnayak meticulously

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[141] As previously mentioned, due to the limitations of this work, I am unable to discuss gender in decision making in detail. See Evans (2010) for further discussions on Bhutanese Nepalese women's involvement in decision making.

[142] I mentioned in the Introduction, that Bhutanese refugees live across Greater Manchester, which is a large geographical area. Dependent on public transport, and busy with appointments and (illegal) employment, it was often difficult for Bhutanese refugees to meet on a regular basis (and complicated my fieldwork).

explaining what the Takin funds (from a bank account) have been used for, how much has been collected, and how much the membership fee should be for the following year.

Thereafter, Unnayak posed the very serious question of whether to become a formalized RCO – this entails advantages, such as being able to apply for funding from official governmental and NGO funding bodies. The formalization requires a certain level of bureaucratization, such as a formal constitution, and an elected board comprised of chair, secretary and treasurer (Takin already had these positions filled with Unnayak, Kavi and Ram – see Chapter 8). However, RCOs are required to prove all expenses made from the organisation's bank account. This meant that Takin would not be able to assist individual members of the community in case of an emergency, such as covering costs of a funeral, as this would not count as an official RCO expense allowed by official bodies who offer funding. As Unnayak posed the question, discussions began amongst the men, until finally, Buddhi spoke, and everyone fell silent to listen. Buddhi – the oldest member present – explained that whilst it is good to support one another in times of hardship - such as helping out with the costs for funeral - it is also important to become "official". Buddhi argued that *if* there is an emergency, all Takin members can collect funds personally, and give it as a personal favour from everyone, rather than paying it out of the RCO bank account. However, it was Buddhi's last point, which won the vote: he explained that Bhutanese refugees *have to* maintain a community that works together, and preserves their social network – and RCOs can obtain the funding to hold events and projects that would benefit all. He argued that this is also positive for children, so they would not lose touch with one another. Everyone agreed by raising their hand, and it was voted that the Takin board should ensure that all necessary documents are created, and the accounts brought in order, so the RCO can apply for funding.

This was a pivotal moment for Takin, and resulted in a successful application for National Lottery funding, as well as other small grants, which they used for projects (such as the BRFP), community events (e.g. on Nepali New Year), and day excursions, such as a trip to Scotland, Scarborough or the Lake

District. The bureaucratic formalization of the community thus represents a means to create spaces for Bhutanese refugees to come together with their *samaj* (Chapter 7), rather than following the functions service providers ascribe to RCOs, as I explore in this chapter.

Policy intervention

As discussed in the previous chapters, Bhutanese refugees have been a community-in-transition for the past two centuries, and their relationships and networks have been subject to many alterations in space, hierarchies, values, norms and practices. Bhutanese refugee communities in Manchester are not reflections of 'traditional' social networks established in Bhutan, but are a continuation of aid-intervention in Nepalese refugee camps and refugee resettlement policies in the UK (see below). Therefore Bhutanese refugee communities in the UK are not Bhutanese or Nepali social groups, but are unique social networks created through what Muggah (2005: 158) calls "social re-engineering" of refugees who reside in UNHCR-led refugee camps. In turn, this re-engineering serves the durable solution of resettlement, because it makes refugees more easily 'integrate-able' in Euro-American resettlement nations. As I discuss in this chapter, relief agencies have power over their refugee "clients" to transform them into 'new persons' (Mortland, 1987: 375-6). However, these aims are "unattainable projections of the ideals of another society" (ibid.) – in this case, Euro-American norms and values imposed on Bhutanese refugees in Nepalese refugee camps. Moreover, my study questions the assumption that once refugees have been resettled in a third country, they could be seamlessly assimilated, and achieve emancipation from the control of aid agencies and service providers.

Communities to do not arise in a political, social and cultural void, but are embedded in the context and prevalent power structures (Shaw, 2008: 34). The formation of RCOs is mediated by top-down policies[143], which manage

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[143] As discussed in the Introduction, anthropology views policies as "classificatory devices with contextually-encoded meanings; as narratives that justify certain courses of action while disabling

and control refugees in the UK. National governments, aid agencies and service providers set "the parameters within which refugee groups may legitimately organise to represent their interests" (Sigona et al., 2004: 8), and thus, communities are actively created and organised by policy, rather than by the refugees themselves (Shaw, 2008: 34). Hence it is all the more important to understand the political, social and cultural context in which these RCOs emerge (Sigona et al., 2004: 7).

Relief agencies in the refugee camps and resettlement organisations in the UK adopt a *Community Development Approach* (CDA) as a means to assure 'social re-engineering'. In the camps, CDA aims to give refugees the possibility *and* ability to manage the camps themselves (Muggah, 2005), whilst CDA in the UK calls on refugees to found refugee community organisations (RCOs) in order to outsource governmental support. Based on particular social science approaches (such as Rex, 1996), service providers across the global North regard community development as "integral" for refugees and asylum seekers, "in order [for refugees] to feel supported, develop a meaningful sense of social life and identity … and satisfy basic needs" (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 91; 94). According to these studies, service providers argue that participation and membership in a community organisation improves the refugees' "wellbeing" (ibid.: 95), which in turn eases resettlement, and therefore the burden on governmental and non-governmental services. Moreover, the British Home Office, which manages immigration and refugee resettlement, emphasizes the importance of formalized RCOs in promoting 'integration' from *within* a refugee community (Williams, 2006: 877)

In this chapter, I explore aspects of this policy of intervention on Bhutanese refugees, starting from the refugee camps to refugee resettlement. I address the idea of refugee-ness as a 'rite of passage' by making use of the concept of liminality. I also discuss the highly problematic notion of 'integration' – both

others; and as discursive formations that empower some voices, while silencing others" (Baba, 2013: 3). That is, the laws and regulations governing refugees and their formalized organisations are not neutral tools functioning in the interests of migrants and their communities (Shaw, 2008: 31).

from the perspective of UK policy makers and the experience of refugees themselves. I illustrate the UK service providers' approach to RCO development vis-à-vis my informants' rationales for creating them. For Bhutanese refugees, RCOs are mostly a means to maintain *samaj*. In Chapters 7 and 8 I juxtapose the value bestowed on *samaj* and the functions of RCOs in maintaining *samaj*. This is necessary in order to understand the impact RCO rivalries have on Bhutanese refugees, as explored in Chapters 8 and 9.

Social Re-engineering in Bhutanese Refugee Camps

Both Evans (2010) and Muggah (2005) show that Bhutanese refugee camps are highly regulated spaces, controlling their inhabitants by external Nepalese law, internal 'camp rules', socio-cultural norms imported from Bhutan (e.g. caste system and gender segregation), as well as Western norms and values imported by aid and relief agencies (such as the UNHCR) and their personnel who were present in the camps. Although agencies working with refugees across the world are, in principle, politically neutral, they do employ strategies to impart "a set of values, norms and principles associated with human rights, gender equality and democratisation[144]" (Muggah 2005: 161). The aim of aid-intervention and social re-engineering, as Muggah (2005) and others (e.g. Evans, 2010: 62) argue, serves to make refugees more 'Western', and therefore more easily controllable and manageable by relief agencies. Evans' (2010) research in the Bhutanese refugee camps demonstrated that relief agencies actively controlled the residents' socio-cultural practices, by for example strongly discouraging gender and caste discrimination. This served the aid agencies' aim to reshape refugees and their norms, values and practices.

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[144] Based on ideas of the Euro-American Enlightenment - the 1951 UN Refugee Convention (see Chapter 5) is one example of this. See Crewe and Axelby's (2012) and Mosse's (2005) work on development aid for a detailed discussion.

Malkki (1992: 34) goes further and argues that the refugee camp symbolizes "a technology of 'care and control'" of space, people and movement[145]. Here, we are reminded of Foucault's (1991) disciplined body[146] that is made "docile" by regulating space and activities over time, in order to create bodies imbued with a sense that submission to authority is 'natural'. Here, we should be reminded of Bourdieu's (1977) notion of hidden processes of power, whereby institutional practices – such as humanitarian relief and aid intervention – may seem "benign, progressive, … disconnected from … central apparatuses of [nation] state power, but may nevertheless be covert forms of control and domination" (Barfield, 1997: 374). Humanitarian agencies such as the UNHCR have the "hegemonic monopoly of power" within the camps (Colson, 2003: 6), and the control and standardization of routines and behaviours are tools to effectively manage the large numbers of refugees in the various camps (Chatty, 2010: 459). The camp is therefore not simply a space of refuge for displaced people who are in between citizenship and nation states (see Malkki, 1992). Rather, Western humanitarian intervention reinforces the refugees' dependency and powerlessness by exercising control over space, time, mobility, and possessions (Mortland, 1987: 375). Consequently, refugees are prevented from personal and communal development both within and outside of the camps (Zeus, 2011: 257), leading to wide-spread frustration, as observed by Evans (2010: 201-2), who quotes one of her Bhutanese refugee informants: "We have no right to demand the actual needs. Instead, we have to depend on the helping agencies. A refugee is like a beggar enjoying no choice".

One way to avert frustration resulting from this intervention and dependency, is the UNHCR's adoption of a participatory approach, which replaces top-down service provision with self-sufficiency and self-management by treating refugees as "agents rather than subjects" (Muggah, 2005: 153). In Bhutanese

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[145] This also corresponds to Arendt's (1968) claim that refugee camps create residents that can be made into citizens by means of coercion and control of space, dominated by Western liberal ideas (see Petti, 2013).

[146] The limited scope of this work does not allow for a detailed elaboration on Foucault. I do not argue that the refugee camp is a *panopticon*. Rather, I contend that similar to a prison, refugees are controlled and made into disciplined bodies through aid intervention. For further discussion see Foucault (1992), Arendt (1968) and Agamben (1998).

refugee camps, the UNHCR employed the *Community Development Approach*[147] (CDA) to reach this aim, as I discuss below. However, I illustrate in this chapter that this project also served other purposes: to make refugees into liberal, democratic citizens, who are self-reliant, and in turn, relieve aid agencies and donors of their (financial and logistic) burdens, especially in resettlement.

What the UNHCR does not fully consider is what community means for their 'clients'. Community for Bhutanese refugees is based on mutuality, trust and reciprocity, and is reinforced through social interaction, rather than being focused on group management and self-sufficiency. I discuss these emic understandings of community (*samaj*) in Chapter 7, but it is important to highlight the discrepancy between aid agencies' conceptualizations and uses of the notion of community and the refugees' perspectives. CDA is not focused on strengthening community ties, but rather on the creation of manageable, top-down organisations modelled on Western associations. This is all the more visible in resettlement in the UK, as I demonstrate in Chapters 8 and 9 when shedding light on RCO development in Manchester.

Community Development Approach in the refugee camps

The UNHCR is not a development agency as such, but a Western humanitarian organization safeguarding vulnerable people and their 'enshrined' human rights (Muggah, 2005: 154; 158). The UNHCR operates within a specific agenda, with two main objectives. Firstly, they encourage their 'clients' to promote and express their political views, with particular emphasis on the contribution of previously disregarded groups, such as women and children, which were largely absent in the political discourse in Bhutan[148].

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[147] This approach was adopted by the UNHCR in 1994, after which they moved from a top-down management and care system to inclusive and progressive forms of refugee camp administration (Muggah, 2005: 153).

[148] To an extent, women are still marginalised form decision-making in resettlement, as I briefly addressed in the initial ethnographic example. See Evans (2010) for a detailed discussion on Bhutanese women.

Secondly, the agency endorses "self-reliance through democratic decision-making structures" (ibid.: 161), which is based on participatory tactics.

As Muggah (2005: 153-5) demonstrates in his study on aid intervention in Bhutanese refugee camps in Nepal, the UNHCR employed CDA as a tool to achieve these aims. The overarching principle of CDA is "ownership" – that is, the refugees' right to self-improve, enhance their skills, and manage themselves. The CDA has four targets: "(a) [s]trengthening refugee's initiative and partnership, resulting in ownership of all phases of programme implementation; (b) [r]einforcing dignity, self-esteem of refugees … (c) [a]chieving a higher degree of self-reliance; and (d) [i]ncreasing cost effectiveness and sustainability[149] of UNHCR's programmes" (UNHCR, 2001: 2).

Muggah's (2005: 159) research illustrates that the CDA was largely successful, insofar as Bhutanese refugees were running basic services (health centres, schools, markets, etc.), managed conflict-resolution by establishing mock courts (for minor offences and disputes), and were closely involved with the camp administration. The daily coordination of the camps was in the hands of "camp management committees" run by an elected refugee body[150] with complex hierarchical structures[151] (ibid.: 157). Muggah stresses that the "management of the camps by the refugees is exemplary", and praises the "cleanliness and order of the camps" (ibid.: 158). The efficient adoption of the "donor language" allowed the Bhutanese camp administration to efficaciously obtain financial support from international donors once the UNHCR decreased its funding (ibid.).

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[149] The reduction of costs for agencies in both the camps and in resettlement in the UK is a major factor behind community development.

[150] In 2001, the total number of elected committee members was 636 (Muggah, 2005: 157), the vast majority of which were male (as highlighted by Evans, 2010: 161).

[151] The CMCs are elected annually in each camp, consisting of camp secretary and deputy, sector heads and sub-sector heads, whereby at least half of CMC-members must be female (although as Evans [2010: 161] showed, women are less vocal in meetings). Bhutanese refugees also established a *Bhutanese Refugee Women Forum* as well as a *Bhutanese Refugee Children Forum*, concerned with issues pertaining women and children (Evans, 2010: 153).

For the UNHCR and donors, Bhutanese refugee camps may be exemplary – a textbook model of self-administrating refugee camps. However, my informants (and many of Evans' [2010] respondents) often recall their dissatisfaction with the UNHCR service provision, such as lack of access to medical and educational facilities. Moreover, a few refugees in Manchester claim that the camp committees were not unbiased representatives, but nepotistic and opportunistic cliques, who used their positions to gain enormous power over camp residents. This was all the more problematic, as these elected bodies represented "their community vis-à-vis the international agencies and to resolve intra-community problems" (Evans, 2010: 243). The question of who claims to 'speak for' Bhutanese refugees, and represent them to funding bodies is of continued relevance in resettlement, as RCO board members are elected to 'speak on behalf' of the Bhutanese refugee community (Chapter 8).

As Evans (2010: 234) shows, many Bhutanese refugees pursued a different form of empowerment, not focused on camp life and its management, but on the continued "struggle" for repatriation. As stated in the previous chapter, the Communist Party of Bhutan (CPB) argued that Bhutanese refugees can only be empowered socially and politically by being allowed to return to Bhutan with full citizenship and assurance that they can live free from persecution by the *drukpas* (ibid.: 235). For them, the camp, funding, and the organisation of daily activities should always be focused on the ultimate aim of repatriation. The political parties that formed in the camps actively participated in camp committees, using their position to spread (these and other) party politics.

For example, Shaan Mali – the chair of Welfare Association, one Bhutanese RCO in Manchester (see Chapter 8) - was one of these elected committee members in the camps, who, according to some of my informants, collected "donations" from refugees. Shaan was a key member of a Nepali political party in Bhutan, the *Bhutan Peoples Party* (BPP), which was involved in the uprising of Nepalese Bhutanese in the late 1980s, when Bhutan introduced the 'One

Nation, One People' policy[152]. According to my informants, he gained fame in Bhutanese refugee camps, especially in the *Beldangi* camps, where he and his extended family lived. As one of my informants recalled:

> "[Shaan Mali] flees to Nepal and makes politics there. He started to collect money from the poor people in the camps, and says 'we will build a big house in Kalimpong [India]'. But then he takes the money and runs to Germany. He takes all the money. Where is the money?"[153]

In 2005, Muggah warned of the possible negative consequences of the CDA on durable solutions, arguing that it may impede repatriation to Bhutan (rather than resettlement). The RGB may not be keen to allow "more democratically inclined" (ibid.: 162) Nepalese Bhutanese to return. In addition to the Maoist movements within the camps, liberal and emancipated returnees may attempt to overthrow the government.

It is, of course, difficult - if not impossible - to assess the theoretical impact of CDA on repatriation. However, I argue that CDA in the camps and in resettlement benefits the relief agencies and (UK) service providers, rather than being exclusively focused on the benefits for refugees. CDA in Nepal fostered the creation of "new persons", which can be easily integrated in Western countries (if resettlement occurs), whilst significantly reducing the costs of running the camps for the UNHCR. In the same way, the development of RCOs in the UK does not only serve the 'wellbeing' of refugees, but also allows the British government to outsource services to RCOs under the pretence of ensuring self-sufficiency, whilst saving money and resources on refugee resettlement. CDA is therefore, I contend, a tool to maintain control over refugees (as well as funds and resources) both in the camps and in

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[152] Shaan's role in the BPP can only be deducted from my informants, as I could not find official documentation. But as per my informants if he was closely involved in the political protests in Nepal, once the refugee camps were established. The BPP was affiliated with the socialist and Maoist movements in Nepal, and worked in union with the Maoist rebels operating throughout Nepal in the early 1990s (see Hutt, 2007).
[153] This particular story will play a big part in the division of RCOs in Manchester, as outlined in Chapter 9.

resettlement, rather than a humanitarian intervention leading to empowerment, as often asserted by service providers.

To understand the discrepancy between policy intention and real-life effect, I explore the 'social re-engineering' of refugees, and outline the rationale of community development for service providers.

Liminality

As we have seen above, the CDA should empower Bhutanese refugees to live self-sufficiently within the confines of the camp, under the general authority of aid and relief agencies, subject to ever dwindling donations. With the offer of resettlement in 2005, the focus shifted towards making the 'docile' camp dweller into an immigrant, who can easily integrate in the host society to which s/he is sent. The dominant idea perpetuated by resettlement agencies is that refugees can be transformed before leaving for third countries, and that this process of transformation "will allow them to be successful in the promised land" (Mortland, 1987: 400).

As I explored in the Introduction of this thesis, some researchers use Turner's (and Van Gennep's) conceptions of *rite de passage* – especially the notion of liminality - to describe the refugee experience as 'neither here nor there'. Although the rite of passage-correlation may not fully apply to Bhutanese refugees, some elements of separation, liminality and assimilation ring true when considering the preparation of refugees for resettlement. Mortland (1987: 385) extensively references Turner to describe the transformation of the camp resident into a "viable migrant" – or, as he calls it, the "ideal refugee which should exist 'after' the time of transformation".

The three phases of *rite de passage* appear obvious: firstly, the *separation* from the camps by sending Bhutanese refugees to processing centres in Kathmandu (see Chapter 3); secondly the phase of *liminality* in which refugees

are re-made into 'migrants', which I discuss below, resulting in the last phase of *'integration'* in the Western host country. The process of re-making the liminal 'migrant' requires from the refugee to disengage from what s/he has known, accumulate knowledge and skills (through e.g. language classes) and adapt to new values, norms and practices of resettlement nations (Mortland, 1985: 385). This reminds us of Turner's elaboration (1977: 95) of neophytes during the liminal stages of rites of passage, in which individuals are remodelled:

> "It is as though they are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life".

COELTs

In order to transform the refugee into what "they need to be" in resettlement, aid and migration agencies make use of a "deliberate methodology and a specific product" (Mortland, 1987: 380; 385). In the Bhutanese refugees' case, this method and product were the Cultural Orientation and English Language Training (COELT) classes offered to refugees in the IOM processing centre in Kathmandu. Mortland (1985: 379) – who studied processing centres for Philippine refugees in Indonesia and Thailand in the late 1970s – argued that these orientation classes

> "begin what will be a lifelong process of confronting the differences between their own traditional explanations of life and the world around them with those of the new society they are about to enter"

In 2011, a UNHCR report stressed the relevance of COELTs for Bhutanese refugees:

"In Nepal's camps, UNHCR continues to provide information to refugees about resettlement. ... The agency organizes regular information sessions, focus groups and individual counselling. ... Refugees are also offered English language classes and vocational and skills training to help prepare for the lives in a new country" (UNHCR, 2011).

A captivating documentary ('Bhutan's forgotten people', 2014) about Bhutanese refugee resettlement shows COELTs in Kathmandu, teaching the refugees what happens during air travel (for their journey to resettlement countries) and that the USA is a country with liberal laws and a democratic system (also see Stadler, 2013). This is contrary to the experience my informants recall, perceiving these orientation programmes as inadequate. Some Bhutanese refugees in the UK compare COELTs to a "lottery" – classes depended on which refugee camp they resided, how many IOM volunteers were present, and how much these officials knew about the resettlement nations. Some refugees only received a two-hour presentation about the UK, whilst others had intensive orientation and language classes for two full weeks. Yumi – a Nepalese Bhutanese who moved to the UK some twenty years ago with her British husband, and who served as a support worker during the initial stages of resettlement (see Chapter 8), was adamant about the lack of preparation:

"[The UN] are lying to you and everybody. The UN is doing nothing…. They don't help [the refugees], they don't prepare them … they arrive not speaking a word of English".

My own fieldwork confirmed that whilst most young refugees under the age of 25 had an intermediate command of English on arrival, due to camp education, most older refugees only spoke basic or no English, and hardly received language training in Nepal. Mortland (1987: 375; 387) also addresses these inadequacies, arguing that COELTs do not serve independence from relief agencies, service providers and governmental support. Rather, they perpetuate the refugees' state of liminality and emphasise the remodelling of the person,

rather than the acquisition of practical skills. Refugees are not yet 'Western' and have to be taught to become so. Relief agencies depict the 'ideal' Euro-American as economically self-sufficient and independent of government aid, who strongly believes in democracy based on mutual equality, and freedom of choice and speech[154] (ibid.: 375; 401). Thus, in order to transform refugees into "well-adjusted" members of Western countries, refugees have to learn to live as independent individuals, obtain financial security through entering the labour market (rather than relying on governmental welfare payments), be punctual (submit to the authorities' time-regimes), hard-working and "happy". Resettlement agencies assert that if refugees adopt these characteristics, they will be fully assimilated, achieve economic stability, and fulfil for themselves the 'American dream' (ibid.: 375; 384; 400-1).

The reality of resettlement, however, is often very different. For example, in Manchester, the high rate of unemployment and the lack of unskilled jobs meant that even if Bhutanese refugees want to become financially independent, they are unable to enter the labour market, and thus continue to be dependent on governmental aid in the form of welfare and benefit payments. Even if refugees find employment, inflated property prices make it impossible to buy their own houses or other goods, such as cars. Contrary to the assumption of equality and the value of education, Bhutanese refugees who benefited from higher education in Bhutan, Nepal or India find that their qualifications are not accredited in the UK, and that access to schools and universities is increasingly unaffordable. Access to free English language classes in Manchester is limited, and contrary to reassurances made by agencies in the camps, older refugees are not offered literacy classes in the UK. In Chapter 6 I address how the community has to help their members to manage expectations on arrival.

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[154] Here, Mortland (1987: 401) is particularly critical of resettlement programmes portraying all members of Euro-American societies as having strong views on equality, whilst refugees who arrive in for example the US quickly learn that within the host community they are perceived as having a lower status, rather than being treated as equals. This is reflected in my own fieldwork, whereby my informants often remark that British people do not live "by their own rules", and understand that inequality and marginalisation from the mainstream society and services are common features of everyday life for thousands of British residents.

Evidently, the attempt to make refugees into "new beings" is at odds with relief agencies' declarations to treat refugees as 'agents' rather than 'subjects'. Social re-engineering of refugees implies that they are not fully 'complete' persons, who would not 'survive' in Western nations. But my (and Mortland's) respondents are adamant that they are *not* in need of changing as persons in order to succeed in resettlement. The time in the refugee camp did not make them fully reliant on "values, norms and technologies, which lie beyond their own means of production and control", as Turton (2005: 260) argues. They rather make use of these newly acquired norms and systems in order to gain advantages. This is contrary to the view that refugees are victims (Turton, 2005: 278; see Malkki, 1995, and Introduction and Chapter 5). Refugees "already see themselves as competent, rational and adaptable; in need of new skills rather than reformation" (ibid.: 402). My informant Krishna complained:

"They teach me about history in England in Nepal. ... Why I need this? I want English lessons … and learn to get job. I don't care about English kings, ... this is not important."

As Mortland (1987: 401) states "refugees have not been 'transformed' into viable self-sufficient [Westerners]; rather their liminality [and] dependent status will remain with them certainly through the first, and likely into the second, generation". I observed the same for Bhutanese refugees in resettlement in the UK, and the RCO approach adopted by British service providers accentuates these issues even further, as I explore in the following section. Rather than addressing the root causes for problems such as unemployment, and providing solutions, CDA in resettlement (similar to COELTs) reinforces the refugees' liminality. There is a discrepancy between service providers' views of what a community is and what its functions are, and my informants' understandings of community development and maintenance. This leads to widespread problems within the social network refugees create and rely upon, undermining the rationale for the CDA, which I discuss in the next segment focused on RCO development in the UK.

Community Development in Resettlement

Humanitarian agencies such as the UNHCR propose that refugee resettlement is characterised by a transition from small, rural and traditional societies (such as Bhutan or Nepal) to comparatively large, complex and industrial societies, such as the UK or the US (Mortland, 1987: 375). This shift is accompanied by a transition of the refugee him/herself – from a passive, dependent subject to a self-sufficient agent (Muggah, 2005: 153). Once resettled in host countries such as the UK, service providers continue with the agenda of social re-engineering by adopting community development programmes based on Euro-American organisational structures and democratic decision-making. The rationale for this approach is the doctrine that social networks and community participation improve refugees' wellbeing, foster social inclusion, and provide practical assistance and support from *within* the community, rather than relying on service providers (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 95; Spicer, 2008: 493). CDA in resettlement is essential for service providers, especially during a time in which governmental and NGO services are reduced due to lack of funds, because support can be outsourced to RCOs (Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 682).

In this section I provide a detailed outline of this rational for the adoption of CDA in resettlement, and outline its hypothetical functions as defined by service providers and policy makers in the UK. I juxtapose these assumptions with Bhutanese refugees' experiences in reality to highlight the ever-widening practice-policy gap.

CDA in the UK

Refugee resettlement in the UK is organised by several service providers. In Manchester, these organisations are Refugee Action UK (RA) and Refugee Council UK (RC), which are mostly funded by the government. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the *Front End Loading* approach adopted by these service

providers only offers support for the first six months after arrival. Thereafter, assistance is outsourced to smaller NGOs such as Manchester Refugee Support Network (MRSN) and Refugee Youth UK (RYUK) and local charitable services such as Salford Forum and Northmoor Community Centre (NCC)

As outlined in further detail in Chapter 8, governmental services encourage the formation of RCOs with the help of professional community development workers, who advise refugees how to create an organisation. Policy makers in the UK define RCOs as the "ties to [the refugees'] ethnic social network" which serves as a "social buffer and informational translator", bridging "ethnic communities' public and private spheres by providing culturally tailored services" (Wright et al., 2004: 28). The overarching aim of the CDA approach in resettlement[155] is to "develop a more cohesive community, where differences are accepted and there is respect, trust, cooperation and compassion between people in their daily interactions" [156] (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 97-8). More importantly, service providers argue that RCOs run for and by refugees themselves have a better understanding of the refugees' needs, and are therefore able to provide more adequate support (Sales, 2002: 470; Griffiths et al., 2006: 884). In turn, this self-support may engender empowerment (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 104) – one of the aims of resettlement – reminding one of the old proverb "give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime".

Once officially established, these RCOs could provide free-of-charge support for refugees that is tailored to their specific socio-cultural needs, values and norms. Service providers have the conviction that RCOs - by integrating

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[155] RCOs are enshrined in the UK's Immigration Act of 1999 by giving them a major role in the support network provided for refugees (Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 676). In the 1990s, the British Home Office placed emphasis on the development of social networks within a "co-ethnic" group in order to assure support, dissemination of information and finally, 'integration' (Cheung and Phillimore, 2013: 520). However, in the 2000s, the political and public discourse shifted from a multicultural to an assimilationist approach in favour of networks between refugees, migrants and local and host populations, reflecting critically on CDA as "anti-integrative" (detrimental to 'integration', increasing segregation and extremism, and limits access to employment) (ibid.: 521; Zetter and Pearl, 2000). Successful 'integration' is now measured by the social connections migrants have with their own community, other communities (both migrant and host), and "institutions of power and influence" (Cheung and Phillimore, 2013: 520), such as the Home Office, Refugee Action or the Job Centre.

[156] This reflects some kind of understanding on the side of service providers –, mutuality, trust and reciprocity are the most important factors for the formation of *samaj* amongst my informants (see Chapter 7).

formalised, bureaucratic organisational structures with informal networks (Sigona et al., 2004: 4) – are the most important tool

> "providing advice and information for new arrivals, provide a safe meeting place where people can speak their own language and celebrate their own culture, provide formal or informal support to members seeking employment in local ethnic business and in gaining access to housing" (Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 684).

For the refugees themselves, RCOs' main function is to obtain funding from donors, in order to sustain and foster their *samaj*. This community is highly diverse, and the formalization of organisations resulted in the exasperation of personal animosities within the Bhutanese refugee community, as I show in the subsequent chapters. In the following section I outline these functions of RCOs and the optimistic assumptions of service providers, and the reality of implementation in the refugees' daily lives.

Functions of RCOs

The UK think tank *Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees* (ICAR) who advises UK policy makers and service providers, draws on various social science studies – first and foremost Rex's[157] work on community development amongst ethnic minorities in the UK - to outline the importance of CDA and RCOs for migrants (Wright et al., 2004: 28).

RCOs as a support network

Service providers (ICAR; RA and RC, 2008; Spicer, 2008: 493) acknowledge that refugees arriving in the UK suffer from various problems, such as a language gap and a lack of access to education, the labour market, housing,

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[157] John Rex – a well-known South African sociologist – wrote extensively on ethnicity and migrants in the UK, and explored the problem of 'race' in sociological theory. His most well-known and cited work is *Key Problems of Sociological Theory* (1961).

child and elderly care, legal representation and facilities[158]. According to ICAR (Wright et al., 2004), RCOs can prevent and overcome the refugees' "social isolation" and "social problems", as they ensure that members of a refugee network are included in a formalized network of support. For service providers, this is a dual process: refugees arriving in a new country (such as the UK) should first and foremost be tied in to their 'own' community, following the assumption that refugees from a specific locality (e.g. all Bhutanese refugees) establish mutuality and solidarity with one another (Spicer, 2008: 493; 502). Therefore, these communities are the perfect support network to overcome issues, as the "come together and solve problems in an organised way with goals for the future … to make changes in their lives" (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 97-8). Community is "where you go to get support, learn new ideas and share with others' (ibid.: 96). In turn, engagement in and with RCOs further increases trust and social bonds with others[159], impeding marginalisation, and therefore amplifying the refugees' sense of certainty, safety, confidence and self-sufficiency (ibid.: 94; 105).

This is further enhanced by networks established with local residents (both refugees and non-refugees). Neighbourhoods are important centres for creating social bonds, especially with immediate neighbours, with whom my informants often shared a chat across the fence. When arriving in Salford, the Piya family received significant support from their British neighbours, such as household items and clothes, free rides to shops and facilities, and free-of-charge English language tuition. John – the Piya's next-door neighbour, once remarked: "[Bhutanese refugees] are in our neighbourhood now…they are part of our community, we have to help each other". Most of my informants remarked that they felt welcome and supported in their local community, both by refugees and non-refugees. Due to the language gap, interactions with British people is limited, although I observed a steady increase in these

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[158] Including "acculturation stress", defined as "the reduction in mental health and wellness that occurs among ethnic minorities during the process of adaptation to a new host culture" (Lueck and Wilson, 2010 cited in Benson et al, 2011: 540).

[159] Social bonds are defined as "a sense of belonging to a particular group or community" by service providers (RA et al, 2008: 1).

relationships as my fieldwork progressed, especially amongst young refugees who attend school.

Furthermore, Spicer (2008: 502-3) argues that migrants often form social bonds with other "minority-ethnic communities" with whom they share socio-cultural similarities as well as the experience of (forced and voluntary) migration. This is certainly accurate for Bhutanese refugees in Manchester, all of whom formed close relations with the South Asian and British Asian communities, first and foremost the Nepali and Indian communities. Similarly, Laksamba (2012) noted that Nepalese (voluntary) migrants engage predominantly with the already existing Nepalese (or Gurkha) community in the UK[160]. British Asians are long-established in the UK[161], and this allows my informants to access facilities such as local Hindu temples (*mandir*) and South Asian supermarkets (to purchase familiar goods). The British Asian community is also the main employer of Bhutanese refugees, offering positions in their various businesses (restaurants, shops, warehouses, etc.), and serves as one of the main external support networks in everyday life.

Most of my informants remark positively on their relationship to other migrant groups, and they felt "at home" in ethnic neighbourhoods. Those Bhutanese refugees who have language skills and young people and children in formal education, established close relationships with non-refugees (British and other migrant networks), and actively participated in their local community. Nacha, for example, is a member of an Afro-Caribbean dance group in Salford, and teenage boys in Bolton and Rochdale are members of local football clubs. In this regard, it is the local and ethnic communities that provide Bhutanese refugees with a sense of inclusion, which may indeed prevent marginalisation (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010:105). However, all of these networks are informal, rather than formalized social networks, which arise through personal, and often spontaneous social interactions.

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[160] For example, *Namaste UK*, a community support group which hosts several events for Nepali people in the UK.

[161] Never more so than in Longsight – a predominantly South Asian neighbourhood in central Manchester, with more than 50% of residents self-identifying as (South) Asians (ONS, 2011). The nearby area of Rusholm hosts the well-known 'Curry Mile' of Manchester, with numerous South Asian restaurants, some of which happily employ Bhutanese refugees (both legally and illegally).

Communities are often defined as being "characterised by a high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion and continuity in time" (Nisbet, 1967, cited in Kelly, 2003: 40), and UK service providers happily adopt this definition for formalized RCOs. However, although Bhutanese refugees are personally and emotionally invested in their social networks, there was hardly any commitment to maintain a consistent community or reliable RCOs. Nevertheless, as I illustrate in detail in Chapter 6, *samaj* remains a constant and reliable support network for Bhutanese refugees. Again, it is informal social networks, rather than formalized organisations that provide assistance within the community.

Integration

ICAR expects RCOs to serve as a "group interest protector (similar to a trade union)" (Wright et al., 2004), serving two purposes: firstly, as mentioned above, to assure that services are provided to individuals within the refugee community, and secondly to assure 'integration' and prevent discrimination and marginalisation from the (British) host community and service providers. The latter assume that the UK government's aim of 'integration' can only be achieved via acculturation, whereby migrants gradually come to terms with the host society's values, beliefs and behaviours, and assimilate some of them into their own 'native culture' (Benson et al., 2011: 540). These notions are based on the idea of multiculturalism, popularized in the UK since the 1960s[162], which emphasises that "individuals can maintain their individual identity and their membership of a minority group, whilst at the same time becoming part of the wider society" (Kelly, 2003: 38). RCOs are seen as the bridge between the two: the (British) host society and the (refugee) migrant community (Griffiths et al., 2006: 883). Consequently, by fostering this kind of 'integration', refugees

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[162] In recent years, the public discourse in the UK evolved around the notion that migrants are 'unwilling' to integrate' and therefore, multiculturalism is portrayed as a "threat to 'western core values or democracy' itself" (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 93). Baba (2013: 2-4) and Sigona et al (2004: 8) argue that the decline of the multiculturalism-idea is (in part) a result of the public angst about the corruption and loss of imagined 'native' cultures and identities due to increased immigration from non-Western no Western nations, and the tabloid-media's perpetuation of 'undeserving' migrants 'abusing' the asylum and welfare and benefit system (also see Chapter 5).

are said to gain a sense of security and belonging, increasing their self-worth and wellbeing (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 94). However, what does acculturation and 'integration' mean and how can it be achieved?

When conducting research with refugees or migrants, a whole thesis could be written on the concept of 'integration'[163]. The UK Home Office defines integration as (a) individuals obtaining employment, housing and education; (b) individuals being "socially connected" of their own and other communities, services and the state; and (c) individuals having satisfactory competence in the local language and culture[164], including "shared notions of nationhood and citizenship" (Ager and Strang, 2004). It is "a long-term, two-way process between refugees and the receiving society … in a number of different social, economic and political arenas" (Griffiths et al., 2006: 894).

In reality, RCOs often do not have the resources to assure and foster 'integration' of its members through for example education or training (Griffiths et al., 2006: 894). Some researchers assert that the RCOs positive contribution to 'integration' is "more often asserted than fully demonstrated" amongst policy makers and service providers (Sigona et al., 2004: 5).

For instance, Western policy makers assume that employment is one of the main factors leading to 'successful integration', as it allows migrants to gain economic independence and establish relations with members of other communities (Cheung and Phillimore, 2013: 521). Especially after residing in Nepalese refugee camps for twenty years, prevented from entering the labour market, gaining employment is the highest priority for all my informants of working age. English language skills play an important role, as fluency and literacy are often a pre-condition to gaining work and communicating effectively with service providers and the host community (ibid.: 523). Yet, Bhutanese refugees arrived in the UK in the midst of an economic downturn

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[163] 'Integration' has to be distinguished from *assimilation* – that is, the refusal to maintain relationships with one's original ethnic group in favour of seeking networks exclusively with the host population – and *marginalisation*, which refers to a migrant having no social networks at all – neither with their ethnic group nor with the host society (Berry, 1997, in Cheung and Phillimore, 2013: 519).

[164] That is, gaining a shared understanding of 'British culture', history, values, rules and laws (Mitchell and Correa-Velez,2010: 97-8)

with high unemployment within the British population, and a lack of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs (see Introduction).

Migration often leads to downward mobility, as refugees' qualifications are not accredited, and work experiences in refugee camps are limited (Cheung and Phillimore, 2013: 521-2). For example, my informant Unnayak, is a qualified veterinary doctor with a decade of experience in horse-breeding (in Bhutan). However, his university degree – which he obtained in Bhutan and India – is not accredited in the UK. The accreditation course he would require is not funded by the British government, and therefore Unnayak is unable to use his qualifications to seek employment. Unnayak's story is just one amongst many – professionals with qualifications and experience are marginalised from their area of expertise through lack of accreditation, and therefore only find un- or semi-skilled employment, leading to a loss of social and economic status. Due to their lack of funds and facilities, Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester are not able to provide organised training or support to gain employment, and are therefore completely powerless to prevent the marginalisation of Bhutanese refugees from the labour market. Similarly, although RCOs did attempt to provide language training to their members to improve English language skills and literacy amongst those who have no access to formal education in the UK, the lack of funds and resources prevent any organized projects.

As researchers (Cheung and Phillimore, 2013; Sigona et al., 2004, etc.) have pointed out, there is a "lack of precision" over what the term 'integration' means, and how it can be realized (Griffiths et al., 2006: 893). 'Integration' is portrayed as a linear process – a path on which the migrant can steadily progress towards 'full integration'. But as Stuart Hall (amongst others) has repeatedly demonstrated throughout his work (e.g. 1992; 1996), 'integration' is everything but a unidirectional process. Rather, it is an "on-going negotiation between past and present … wherein social networks are developed or maintained and identity is contested and shifting" (Bhatia and Ram, 2009; cited in Cheung and Phillimore, 2013: 520). More importantly, what is this 'host society' that one can integrate into? Is there such a thing as a uniform 'British culture', to which everyone in the UK complies?

Service providers and policy makers create assumptions with asserted meanings, rather than offering precise definitions or theoretical explorations of the terminology and concepts they are using. But if notions such as 'integration', 'community', 'wellbeing' or ethnicity' are not clearly defined, how can RCOs aim to incorporate or achieve them?

Migrants are not passive receivers and assimilators of new ideas and values, but actively "negotiate the intersection" between themselves and others (ibid.: 895). Bhutanese refugees perceive 'integration' in their own way, each 'adapting' to their new lives and environments. In theory, they follow the rhetoric of service providers. When I attended a workshop for teenagers hosted by Welfare, the speaker Dr. Sharma (a Nepalese Bhutanese doctor working in Sheffield, see Chapter 9) said:

> "From a refugee's perspective, integration requires the preparedness to adopt to the lifestyle of the host society, without having to lose one's own cultural identity".

RCOs are encouraged to represent their community members' interests, but service providers caution RCOs not to demand 'special treatment' (Zeus, 2011: 258). For example, when attending a refugee information event hosted by *Salford Forum* at Salford University in June 2013, service providers advised refugees of their right to express their socio-cultural traditions and the freedom to worship their respective religions. At the same time, however, refugees were warned that the UK is following secular laws and regulations, limiting certain socio-cultural practices. In a private conversation with a social worker after the presentation, he explained that some RCOs attempted to exclude women from positions in the board (e.g. chair, etc.), citing "tradition" as a rationale, which was quickly dismissed by the respective community development worker. This demonstrates how social re-engineering and the prevention of "harmful social

practices" are continued in resettlement, fostering a "new being" that is following liberal Euro-American ideals and laws[165].

Most Bhutanese refugees believe that they are 'integrated' by having an intermediate command of English, by being employed, by having a few British friends, and, as one young Bhutanese man remarked, by being able to "follow the rules and laws". Whether their perception of 'integration' corresponds with service providers as well as the British public is difficult to determine exactly because of the elusiveness of the term in public and political discourses. In Chapter 5 I return to this problem by exploring Bhutanese refugees' sense of identity.

Within political and public discourses, 'integration' is perceived as a dual process of assimilation (of values in the host community) and continuity (of 'culture'). Here, it is assumed that a group of refugees from a specific geographic location (such as Bhutan/Nepal) are a coherent, all-encompassing group that shares values, norms and practices – that is, an 'ethnicity', discussed in detail in Chapter 5. In the following section, I elaborate on the diversity and contradictions of these ever-changing networks Bhutanese refugees create, and show that the service providers' notion of continuity (of 'culture') is imagined.

Continuity

UK policy makers claim that RCOs can assure continuity (and thus an 'escape' from liminality) by affirming "cultural beliefs and values" (Wright et al., 2004: 28; Sigona et al., 2004: 4). This is based on the assumption that individuals who experienced forced migration create "new roots in imagined places in order to maintain and sustain social coherence" (Chatty, 2010: 55). That is, refugees are said to reproduce "the old life they have lost" (Williams, 2006: 870), and maintain their roots through engaging in formalized (RCOs) and informal communities (Chatty, 2010: 468).

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[165] However, at the same time it shows how 'culture' (glossed as 'tradition') may be used (amongst refugees) to sidestep questions of oppression, gender inequality or racism.

Critics of this view, such as Mitchell and Correa-Velez (2010: 96), caution that although refugees may have common experiences, a shared language and country of birth, they may not perceive themselves to be part of one, all-encompassing community and culture, that is replicated in resettlement. Baumann (1996: 17-8), for example, criticises the assumption that all those who share certain traits can be broadly defined as one 'community' with shared interests, who 'naturally' come together in one community organisation, promoting the same social, cultural (what ICAR terms) "beliefs and values" (see Chapter 5). He is also critical of the generalisation that individuals with a South Asian background share one, uniform 'Asian culture', or, that despite the various national and cultural backgrounds there is a 'Muslim culture' to which all Muslims in the UK conform to (ibid.: 23). Similarly, Kelly (2003: 38) outlines in her work on Bosnian refugees in the UK, that service providers assume that migrants from a particular geographical area "will be members of a community that is culturally defined and has clear boundaries". She goes on to argue that official bodies follow an entirely optimistic approach of communities as expressions of collective 'interconnectedness' and 'commonality' sharing the same values, beliefs and goals (ibid.: 40).

Nevertheless, service providers aim to maintain the idea of 'multiculturalism', urging refugees to maintain their 'tradition and culture' to assure continuity, and thus wellbeing (Wright et al., 2004: 25). For example, Bhutanese refugees are encouraged (by community development workers) to include the "preservation of heritage" in their RCO constitution. As stated in the TA constitution[166]:

> "TAUK aims to preserve and promote culture, heritage and language, and to generate awareness of the Bhutanese and Nepalese culture amongst the host population. TAUK commits

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[166] From: http://www.takinassociation.com/2013/01/about-us.html (also see Appendix 2) - similar quotes can be found in the constitutions of both BWA and HNC.

- To safeguard the mother tongue and bilingualism, and to take steps to impart it to the younger generation through direct teaching and other possible methods
- To foster cultural heritage such as music, dance, dress, etc.; and to create awareness of our traditions amongst the host population"

These 'commitments' are used in order to comply with the requirements of service providers and funding bodies. In reality, when re-drafting the TA constitution at the beginning of my fieldwork, the RCO leaders forgot to include this section until the designated community development worker from RAUK pointed out that 'cultural maintenance' was missing. The section quoted above is taken word-by-word from the draft constitution provided to RCO leaders by RAUK. Takin's chairperson and members did not regard this point as relevant for their RCO, arguing that *samaj* is the main arena for socio-cultural continuity.

The emphasis on "culture and tradition" in these RCOs is a means to be competitive for funding bodies (see Chapters 8 and 9). Similar to what Baumann (1996) and Kelly (2003) observe, Bhutanese RCOs mostly serve one purpose: to obtain benefits and gain favours from governmental and non-governmental bodies only available to formalized associations. Kelly (2003: 41) suggests that her refugee informants formed what she termed 'contingent communities', defined as a "group of people, who will … conform to the expectations of the host society in order to gain the advantages of a formal community association". Rather than serving 'abstract' interested of an 'ethnic group', these communities are formalized in order to access benefits only available to RCOs (ibid.: 41-2).

In Kelly's case, personal relationships between her informants were limited and not regarded as relevant for everyday interactions. In contrast, amongst my respondents personal affiliations with other Bhutanese refugees are of utmost importance. I would not go as far as Kelly arguing that RCOs serve no purpose

in everyday life; but I do find the definition of 'contingent communities' useful to describe key characteristics of Bhutanese RCOs. Similar to Kelly's informants, Bhutanese refugees formed official RCOs mainly to obtain funding. Funding means that RCOs can host events, and thus bring together friends and families scattered across Manchester and other cities nearby (see Chapter 7).

Bhutanese refugee communities – both as *samaj* and RCOs - establish a sense of belonging and identity (Chapter 9). Yet, they are not continuations of '"traditional notions of community" (Kelly, 2003: 38) and hierarchies established in both Bhutan and Nepal. The very structure, hierarchy, decision-making process and aims of RCOs (Chapter 8) are more in line with British bureaucratic requirements, rather than reflecting Bhutanese or Nepalese communities. Official government bodies (see e.g. Wright et al., 2004: 29) acknowledge that the "formation of constitutional organisations for social mobilisation is a particular Western, if not British concept, which has been imposed on refugee communities in efforts to integrate them into the organisational structures of British civil societies". Therefore, in the following section I highlight that rather than benefiting the refugee community, RCOs mostly serve official bodies, in order to outsource their support, and thus, save funds and infrastructures.

Critique of CDA

RCOs and local social networks are the main arenas in which 'integration' is encouraged, whilst at the same time allowing migrant communities to maintain their socio-cultural idiosyncrasies. RCOs are thus somewhere in between service providers, the host population and refugees, bridging the RCO/NGO nexus by linking informal and formal refugee groups with local communities, whilst establishing and maintaining relations with service providers and NGOs (Sigona et al., 2004: 4).

For example, RCOs are the main point of reference for service providers when attempting to enter a dialogue with a group of migrants. Rather than contacting individuals within the Bhutanese refugee community, it is more convenient to contact the RCOs' chairpersons, who then relay information to the rest of the community. For example, when RA initiated a health campaign highlighting the dangers of using betel nut, flyers were sent to Unnayak, who then distributed them amongst TA members. When the BBC filmed a diversity event in Manchester, they contacted the board members of TAUK and BWA to recommend performers in the community, who would be filmed dancing, singing or speaking on stage.

RCO leaders do not only serve as an authority in "dialogue with the state" (Kelly, 2003: 39), but their role also strengthens their authority within the community. Community leaders have the power over the dissemination of information, and to whom and how this information is presented (Chapter 8). This "personal status and respectability" of leaders arises not only due to their RCO membership, but due to their claim to speak for the whole community, as well as a liaison between community members and official bodies (Baumann, 1996: 64). But as I show in the following chapters, the resulting struggle for authority in RCOs exasperates internal divisions in the community.

Moreover, RCOs are not only created to maintain one's culture and serve as a support network, but are formed "through the inadequacy of existing services to meet potential and material needs" (Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 681). In a time in which service providers and NGOs had up to 80 percent of their government funding cut[167], services are stretched to the absolute limit, and RCOs must take over the role of official support. RCOs have become "essentially 'defensive' - gap-filling and meeting essential needs - rather than being actively engaged in the development of individual and community resources" (Griffiths et al., 2006: 894).

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[167] Due to the economic downturn since 2008, resulting in a cut in government spending (private correspondence with NGOs and RAUK).

Within this context of reduced service provision, Bhutanese RCOs are unable to deliver support to refugees, as they lack both funding and know-how. For example, one of the main issues Bhutanese refugees experience is access to affordable housing, further limited by the introduction of the UK government's spending cuts. RCOs and their board members have neither the knowledge nor resources to provide adequate assistance or information on the bedroom-tax[168], the 'right-to-buy' scheme, and how to access council housing. Furthermore, the investment of time in RCOs steadily decreased during my fieldwork, as more pragmatic issues took centre-stage: unemployment, lack of access to infrastructures and education, health problems and financial hardship were far more pressing concerns for my informants, that required solutions on an individual, rather than on a communal level. As RCO board members entered the labour market or full time education, involvement in RCO matters declined, reducing the available support network on an RCO level.

Moreover, the NGO and RCO sector is unbalanced: larger organisations are better mobilized than small RCOs and attract more funding (Sigona et al., 2004: 3; also see Chapters 8 and 9). As Zetter and Pearl (2000: 675-6) state, due to these external factors on which refugees have no influence, "RCOs, like the communities they serve, will remain on the margins" of official structures and networks, and thus are unable to serve their 'clients' as intended by policy makers (ibid.: 682). Griffiths et al. (2006: 895) criticise that "far from promoting the integration of refugees, this [RCO] framework may rather perpetuate a condition of institutionalised marginality for refugee groups", and put into question the utility of RCOs in the mobilisation and 'integration' of migrant communities.

'Social problems' cannot be resolved with the help of RCOs, contrary to the service providers' mission to outsource support to RCOs. Therefore, Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester do not provide the functions policy makers and service provider envision. Rather, it is *samaj* and informal social networks

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[168] According to the Welfare Reform Act 2012, residents receive less housing benefits if they have spare (that is, unoccupied) bedrooms. The aim is to assure that receivers of benefits move to smaller properties, reducing the costs of housing benefits for the British government. From: https://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit/what-youll-get

between refugees with varying economic, social and educational capital, who served as a support network addressing these issues, regardless of their position within the RCOs (Chapter 8). Moreover, localized social networks irrespective of RCO affiliation provided childcare for women, and access to the labour market. Aadit, for example, a Nepali student living in Manchester, who is not a refugee and had no significant role in any RCO, was the number one contact person for many refugees across the various RCOs to gain employment. Aadit had a large network of contacts in the catering industry throughout Manchester and Liverpool, having worked in several Indian and Nepali restaurants. His recommendations with employers, support with CVs and references allowed many Bhutanese refugees to find both legal and illegal employment in the industry. In turn, this increased the status of internal and external individuals (myself included), shifting authority and influence away from RCOs and their leaders (also see Chapters 8 and 9).

The latter point is of particular importance, as it puts into question the internal and external hierarchies, exercising force on the RCO in how it is lead and run. In Chapters 7 and 8, I explore my informants' understanding of community, as well as the structure of Bhutanese RCOs, and show how the policies and functions discussed above are played out on the ground.

Conclusion

In the public discourse in the UK, 'multiculturalism' and immigration policies are largely perceived as a failure (Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 680). Similarly, the community development approach, which shifts responsibilities, support and political representation to (refugee) community organisations, has been criticised as insufficient to deal with the vast numbers of both voluntary and forced migrants (Griffiths et al., 2006: 884-6).

Moreover, in the context of a financial downturn in the UK, and reduced public spending since 2008, the British government and service providers seek efficient and cheap service delivery (Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 688). Projects fostering 'integration' are severely limited, localized in urban centres (rather than accessible across the country), and largely reduced to the voluntary sector (Sales, 20002: 456). Zetter (2007: 185) claims that the UK's immigration policies (which includes CDA) have become means to "mediate the interests of the state". As public spending is reduced, service provision for forced migrants in the UK "becomes more an instrument of marginalisation than reception, of community fragmentation than consolidation, of short-term dependency rather than long-term self-sufficiency" (Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 680).

RCOs operate in between the state, service providers, charities, funding bodies and their own community members, rather than allowing migrants to "define their own needs" (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 104). In Chapter 9, for instance, I demonstrate that Bhutanese RCOs adapt and define their community aims to fit the funding bodies' agendas.

The CDA in both the refugee camps and in resettlement mostly serves service providers and aid and relief agencies, rather than providing immediate advantages to their refugee 'clients'. As I demonstrated in this chapter, social re-engineering is a tool of Western agencies to create 'integrate-able' persons for third country resettlement, which can be easily managed and controlled. Thereafter, governmental support can be conveniently (and cost-effectively) outsourced to RCOs, under the cover of 'cultural continuity' and the 'advance of wellbeing', assuming that refugees from a specific geographical background would overcome difference in order to form one cohesive organisation for the 'good of all'. However, my study confirms Zetter and Pearl's (2000: 686) findings that RCOs across the UK do not effectively cooperate and network, but rather prevent the realization of projects through internal fights. As I show throughout this work, the importance of RCOs in the literature is overemphasized (Sigona et al., 2004: 6), whilst ignoring internal conflicts preventing communities to achieve their aims. The problems are often silenced – even within academic works (see Introduction).

In the following chapter, I address the notion of 'Bhutanese refugee-ness'. I argue that similar to CDA, this form of cultural identity and labelling is based on political and public discourses, rather than originating from Bhutanese refugees themselves, and are used to define, and thus to manage and control migrants within a nation state.

Chapter 5 – Bhutanese Refugee-ness

In the introduction to this thesis, I state that I use the terms *Nepalese Bhutanese* or *Bhutanese refugees* to denote my informants, rather than using the Dzongkha term *Lhotshampa* ('Southern border dweller') which is often used in academic (e.g. Evans, 2010; Hutt, 2007), humanitarian (e.g. see Davis, 2013) and journalistic works (e.g. see Mishra, 2013). My informants never refer to themselves as *Lhotshampas*, and similar to Hutt's (2007: 6-7; 400) observations in the refugee camps, use the term 'Bhutanese Nepalese' (*bhuṭani nepaliharu*).

As discussed in Chapter 2, the term *Lhotshampa* was created by the *drukpa* government as a category for the 1985 Bhutan Citizenship Act (Hutt, 1996: 400), to signify Bhutan's "acceptance of the [Nepalese] as a distinct cultural and linguistic unit" (Thinley, 1993 cited in Joseph, 1999: 139), and *Lhotshampa* still stands for "the legal and loyal Nepali-speaking community" resident in Bhutan today (Hutt, 1996: 400). Thus, the classification *Lhotshampa* is a politically loaded term, which serves as a tool of 'othering' for Bhutan's government.

During my second visit to Manchester, for example, Unnayak, the chairperson of TA whom we have met in previous chapters, complained about academic works and the international media referring to Bhutanese refugees as *Lhotshampas*. He explained: "*Lhotshampa* can be everybody living in the South of Bhutan, even Chinese, Indian, Tibetan, *drukpa*, Nepali". My informants' rejection of the term led to a discussion during the SOAS workshop on Bhutanese refugee resettlement in May 2013, which I attended together with Unnayak, Ved and other Bhutanese refugee representatives in the UK. In a speech to the (academic) audience, both Unnayak and Ved emphasized that researchers, journalists, governments and service providers should refrain from using the term *Lhotshampa*, and instead adopt other, more accepted

terms to refer to Bhutanese refugees. One researcher, who conducted fieldwork, from a legal perspective both in Bhutan and in Nepal, dismissed the refugees' demand as a "petty issue", and argued that the rejection of the word is "impractical", as the term offers a "useful" and "simple" categorisation, allowing easy identification. Audience members with a social science background found these comments highly problematic, and a long debate ensued about whether or not the term *Lhotshampa* could, and more importantly, *should* be applied to refer to Bhutanese refugees. Unnayak and Ved were vocal in repeating their demand, and it was concluded that regardless of the expediency of the term *Lhotshampa*, researchers present at the workshop would refrain from using the word in the future.

The comment from the researcher in the example above highlighted the importance of simple classifications in political, public *as well as* in academic discourses. But, clearly, this simplification is not unproblematic: as I attempt to demonstrate throughout this thesis, policy makers and service providers make use of these 'practical' generalisations, and thereby group diverse, incongruous and multifaceted people in one easily identifiable category. For example, as highlighted in Chapter 2, in Bhutan, *all* Nepalese Bhutanese were classified as 'anti nationals' and 'illegal immigrants' by the *drukpa* government, regardless of their background and political involvement. In the UK, service providers believe that Bhutanese refugees overcome differences and form a *single* RCO with the intention to serve the 'good of all'. But as I show throughout this thesis, Bhutanese refugees are a diverse and fragmented social group, comprised of individuals, who may have nothing in common except the shared experience of refugee-ness.

Categorisations such as *Lhotshampa* (or 'refugee', see further below) are important tools for the creation of similarity and difference. By inventing the term *Lhotshampa*, the *Ngalong* rulers of Bhutan amplified 'ethnic' distinctions between Nepalese Bhutanese and the *drukpas*, and made it into a bureaucratic category that can be used to classify, manage and control the 'other' (Joseph, 1999: 139). More importantly, it fostered the idea that all Nepalese Bhutanese are one all-encompassing group that can be easily

identified. However, as my informants confirmed, Nepalese Bhutanese in Bhutan did not perceive themselves as a coherent, homogenous group that is significantly distinct from other *drukpas*[169]. My informant Prabesh recalled that in Bhutan "we were all different, but we were all Bhutanese. Suddenly, they call us *Lhotshampa*, and say we are not the people of Bhutan". The term *Lhotshampa* does not originate from the categorised people themselves, but was invented and imposed from above (the state), similar to the creation and adoption of the category 'refugee' in Western political and public discourses (see further below).

However, although the term may have been used for the creation of difference by the Bhutanese government, it also engendered an (imagined) commonality of Bhutanese Nepalese people, nurtured through their shared experience of refugee-ness (see below). A highly diverse group of people from all social, economic and education backgrounds suddenly found themselves gathered together in refugee camps in Nepal against their will. This shared experience of forced displacement from Bhutan certainly fostered solidarity and a sense of mutuality and sameness between them, but did not (as demonstrated in Chapter 3) result in a *communitas* (Turner, 2000: 360) of equal individuals who share the same views. These divergences surfaced when durable solutions, such as resettlement, were proposed, resulting in conflicts and violence within the camps.

Moreover, my informants' shared experience of organized resettlement and life in the UK produces both similarity and difference: on the one hand, they portray themselves as a homogenous group towards non-refugees (for examples, in speeches to non-refugee audiences) with a collective history of refugee-ness (see below). On the other hand, the subsequent chapters show that Bhutanese refugees actively use 'othering' within their own community. Similar to the term *Lhotshampa,* the categories determining 'us' versus 'them' (for example, RCO affiliations) within *samaj* are imagined (Anderson, 2006),

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[169] With the exception of language: Nepalese Bhutanese retained their Nepali language, although it became a mixed with Dzongkha, Hindi and English.

and embedded in historical, political and, most importantly, institutionalized discourses and contexts (Hall, 1996: 3-4).

However, the creation of difference necessarily requires an understanding of sameness, or an 'us', because, as discussed in the Introduction, social relationships also depend on notions of mutuality, especially within *samaj* (Grossberg, 1996: 93-4; also see Chapter 7). Here, I evoke the notion of belonging and identity. For example, on our return to Manchester after the SOAS workshop mentioned above, I discussed the *Lhotshampa* debate with some of my informants. Unnayak remarked: "This is about *respect*, you know. It's a question of *what I am*". Here, Unnayak emphasizes the notion of identity – of *who* (or *what*) he *is*. For him, the *Lhotshampa* debate was not about the terms' utility as a simplified classification in political and academic discourses. For him, it was about personal identity.

As I explore in this chapter, identity is not a fixed and distinctive "sense of self". Rather it is embedded in social relationships, interactions and discourses, and is subject to various factors that lie *outside* rather than within the individual (Hall, 1996: 2-4). As discussed below, who Bhutanese refugees are, is determined not only by my informants, but also by historical, political and relational factors. This, what I call 'Bhutanese refugee-ness', is not the identity of a singular ego, but one that is constructed through relations and discourses with others and their 'culture', and is therefore a cultural identity (Voiscu, 2013: 162-8).

Cultural identity is a matter of political significance, and is reworked in political, public and media discourses (Zetter, 2007: 173). It is therefore subject to representation – that is, how they represent themselves and how others categorize them (Hall, 1996: 4). On the one hand, Bhutanese refugee-ness is "subjects of policy" - in which bureaucratic processes, such as aid intervention and resettlement, transform cultural identities (ibid.). On the other hand, as I show further below, my informants use the 'refugee label', representing themselves as 'victims' of nationalist *drukpa* policies in order to legitimize their refugee status and stay in the UK.

In this chapter I demonstrate that Bhutanese refugee identity is, in Hall's (1996: 4) words, "multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions". As it is influenced by internal dynamics of change, as well as by the experience of migration, policy and bureaucratic intervention, Bhutanese refugee-ness is a "hybridized" identity that is adapted to the context in which they find themselves in. But Bhutanese refugee-ness is a contested category, and, in common with the notion of community, this cultural identity is subject to 'othering'. As there are disagreements over what this Bhutanese refugee-ness is, identity became one focal point of the community divisions I discuss in Chapter 9.

Therefore, rather than focusing on a permanent sense of self, I explore identity as created out of contextual discourses (also see Foucault, 1989; Grossberg, 1996: 90) by utilizing various anthropological and social science resources. I focus on how Bhutanese refugee-ness emerges out of particular discourses both within and outside the refugee community, influenced by social re-engineering, policy and individual preferences. I argue that Bhutanese refugees create (rather than *re*-create) identity based on these discourses, which they then use to legitimize their residency in the UK, as well as to differentiate themselves from other refugees and non-refugees. I conclude that these multiple cultural identities are an important factor of community membership. What binds my informants together in both *samaj* and RCOs is their specific definition of refugee-ness, which is based on a shared history of exile from Bhutan, life in refugee camps in Nepal, and the collective experience of resettlement within the resettlement programme.

Bhutanese Refugee Identity

In postmodern anthropological discourses, identity is divorced from its subjective meaning, in which the individual is the "centre of a

phenomenological field" (Grossberg, 1996: 98), rejecting the general understanding of identity as a "fact of being who or what a person or thing is" and a "distinct personality" (Voiscu, 2013: 161). Rather than addressing identity as a "unique sense of self" (ibid.) that is permanent over time and bound to the individual, social scientists perceive identity as a process of becoming (Bromley, 2000: 9; Frith, 1996: 109-10), shaped by various, often contradictory contexts, cultural meanings and social settings (Grossberg, 1996: 99; Hall, 2010: 449-50).

However, discourses in the social sciences, as well as amongst policy makers and the public, ascribe fixed nationalities, identities and cultures to people, "into which they are born", and are "rooted" (Malkki, 1992: 29). Forced migrants are often perceived as "uprooted", making them into a social, political and moral problem that has to be resolved through aid intervention and 'integration' (in resettlement) (ibid.: 32). In the same way, some argue that refugees 'lose' their identities, as Zygmunt Bauman (2003: 347) asserts:

> "Having abandoned or been forced out of their former milieu, refugees tend to be stripped of the identities that milieu defined, sustained and reproduced. Socially, they are 'zombies': their old identities survive mostly as ghosts – haunting the nights all the more painfully for being all but invisible in the camp's daylight."

As 'zombies' who fall outside of clear national borders and categories, refugees are portrayed as being a danger to "national security", symbolizing polluting "matter out of place", and in need of "therapeutic intervention" (Harrell-Bond et al., 1996: 1077; Malkki, 1992: 34; also see Douglas, 1966). Social re-engineering in refugee camps and in resettlement serves as the 'transplanting' of these roots (see Chapters 3 and 4), to manage these 'zombies' and transform them into 'rooted' individuals, who can be controlled within the confines of a nation state such as the UK (ibid.). Thus, aid intervention and refugee policies not only serve to make refugees more 'integrate-able', but also to bestow the "nationless and cultureless" (ibid.) with

new identities and a strong sense of belonging – in this case, belonging to British society.

I argue that the notion of rootedness presumes that before becoming refugees, these groups were coherent communities with a single social, cultural and national identity. Rather, as I maintain throughout this thesis, Bhutanese Nepalese have *always* been a community-in-transition, with various, multi-dimensional, multi-cultural and multi-national identities (also see Chapter 2). Their expulsion from Nepal and resettlement did not "destroy" their identity and sense of belonging, but added new dimensions to their already hybridized selves. Although experienced in different levels of intensity, Bhutanese Nepalese have always been part of what Bhabha (2004: 12) calls "global cosmopolitanism"[170], locating the self in a "world of plural cultures and peoples". As I explore in the following section, identity is not conceived as a single root that is bound to a specific location, culture or nation, but as a "root moving toward and encountering other roots" (Glissant, 2005, cited in Voiscu, 2013: 165).

This exploration of identity accentuates one of the main points of this thesis (also see Introduction): there is no all-encompassing Bhutanese Nepali-ness or Bhutanese-refugee-ness as a culture, identity or community that has remained unchanged since Bhutan and Nepal. Their identities and communities are "no museum piece sitting stock-still in a display case, but rather consists of the endlessly astonishing synthesis of the contradictions of everyday life" (Boddy, 1995: 17). As discussed in the Introduction, similar to identity and community affiliations, culture is highly adaptable and continuously changing. It becomes a "deterritorialized culture" (Bromley, 2000: 14), which "displaces itself, loses itself in, resists to, and mixes with, the receptive [British] culture" (Voiscu, 2013: 173). Individuals can be members of various communities and cultures, and thus employ several, so-called 'hybrid' identities (Anzaldúa, 1999; Baumann, 1996: 23; Grossberg, 1996: 91). Thus, cultures, identities and communities of forced migrants, such as Bhutanese refugees,

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[170] Appiah (cited in Bromley, 2000: 16) refers to this as "rooted cosmopolitanism": individuals may feel they have roots in specific geographic, cultural and national locations, but "dwell in the world at large".

become an infinitely malleable "mosaic with porous boundaries" (Lavie and Swedenburg, 2001: 3).

Hybrid identities

One of the most striking quotes from my fieldwork came from Arun, a sixteen-year-old, who arrived in the UK with his mother and younger brother in early 2013. Within a few months of living in Salford, Arun shifted from a shy, devout Christian to an outspoken, highly critical young man, who abandoned religion[171] in favour of intensive education in the natural sciences. In one conversation, Arun stated:

> "I'm really proud to be English. I finally feel like I've found my own identity".

I was curious what he meant with 'being English', to which he replied that it is about being educated, and holding secular, democratic values. He found it more difficult to define what he means with 'identity':

> "I am Bhutanese because my fathers are born there…. I am Nepali, because this is my culture, my language….and now, I am British[172] too, you know, because I live here now and integrate, and study and learn, not follow religion."

Arun's comment was mirrored by other Bhutanese refugees throughout my fieldwork. One refugee woman in her thirties once explained: "I am not Bhutanese, I am Nepali. I am born in Bhutan, but I am Nepali". Others are more uncertain:

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[171] Gellner et al (2012) and Laksamba (2012) describe the socio-cultural changes amongst the Nepali community in the UK, noting a significant generation-gap in the practice of (any) religion in the Nepali diaspora. There is a strong tendency to become more 'secular' amongst the second generation of Nepalese in the UK (ibid.), and these processes are also at work amongst the Bhutanese refugees who resettled to the UK, especially children and young adults.

[172] Many of my informants do not distinguish between England and Britain in everyday language, and use it interchangeably, although they are aware that England is only a part of Britain. This is not a reflection of their political understanding, but merely a simplistic use of words.

"My great-grandfather came to Bhutan and the family lived there for generations. But we kept our Nepali culture, religion and language. I am not Bhutanese, but I am also not Nepali".

Niraj summed up the wide-spread confusion over national and cultural belonging:

"Who am I? I really don't know. I'm not Bhutanese, cause I'm no *drukpa*. The government in Nepal says we are no Nepali people, but I speak this language. Here in England, I'm different, no? I'm not English, I'm a refugee …. maybe I'm everything, maybe I'm nothing, I don't know."

These comments demonstrate that for my informants, identity is not an innate and unique sense of permanent and individual self, but rather that Bhutanese refugees fashion multiple cultural identities (Chatty, 2010: 55; Malkki, 1992: 36-7, also see Hall, 1996 and below). Contrary to assumptions of some social theorists, who argued that migrants suffer from an "identity crisis" (Erikson, 1968), Bhutanese refugees occupy what Hall (2010: 449) calls a "third space", bridging cultural and social boundaries. This is not, however, a "linear progression" from one culture to another, but a complex interplay of multiple identities and cultures, which change over time (Clifford, 1997, in Voiscu, 2013: 174; Mohan, 2002: 98). For example, my informants' insistence on referring to themselves as Bhutanese Nepalese signifies a biculturalism – a dual national and cultural identity (Bromley, 2000:4). By the time I began fieldwork in 2012, those who arrived in the UK in 2010 were already conceiving themselves as "British Bhutanese Nepalese refugees", who created social networks within and outside of the Bhutanese refugee community, which shaped their perceptions and representations of cultural identity.

As I exemplify in detail below, these hybrid identities are fluid, highly dynamic and sometimes even contradictory (Voiscu, 2012: 165), and "may be stressed and asserted, or subordinated and played down, according to the political and

economic circumstances within which they live" (in Hutt, 2007: 5). Bhutanese refugees negotiate and perform identity by a "transculturalisation of cultural translation", in which they actively pick-and-choose from various local, national and transnational cultures and identities, 'translating' and mingling it cultures, identities and practices acquired in Bhutan, Nepal and the UK (Bromley, 2002: 2; 10). As Zetter (2007: 187) summarises:

> "Simultaneously cohering to different social worlds and communities is part and parcel of the contemporary social life for refugees and other migrant groups in an increasingly globalised world."

Hybrid identities and social networks

Hybrid identities are created not only through the interplay of various cultures and (political, historical) practices, but also through the relationships that people establish. Robins (1996: 79) clearly articulates the question at hand: "isn't it through the others that we become aware of who we are and what we stand for?" Thus, identities are closely entwined with the social networks to which individuals feel (or do *not* feel) they belong. These networks can be comprised of Bhutanese refugees, which I discuss in detail in the subsequent chapters, and of non-Bhutanese refugees, such as the British host population (see below).

However, in social relationships with non-Bhutanese refugees, my informants become – in Goffmann's (1990) sense – performers of their culture (in Frith, 1996: 125). Bhutanese refugees 'perform' for their own community (*samaj*, see Chapter 7) by acting out culture literally, such as during religious festivals, traditional Nepali dances and songs, language and fashion. But my informants' performances are also directed *outwards* (towards non-refugees), especially by means of the refugee label (see further below), and by proclaiming that they are Nepali, South Asian, migrants, refugees, and, as shown with Arun's statements above, 'British'.

For example, when interacting with Nepali migrants in the UK, my informants place emphasis on their Nepali-ness, characterised by shared values, language and social practices. The affiliation goes both ways, as one of the Nepali migrant friends of a Bhutanese refugee family remarked: "we are only friends, but actually, we are family – we are the same people" (also see Chapter 7). These relationships are further fostered through intermarriage – in the absence of Bhutanese refugee marriage partners, Nepali migrants are popular choices. Some of my young (male) informants even flew to Nepal after receiving (refugee) travel documents, to marry Nepali girls.

This territorial affiliation is expanded when they fashion social networks with the South Asian community resident in Britain, accentuating a wider 'South Asian identity', sharing practices such as religion or commensality of food (also see Chapter 7), South Asian popular culture (e.g. Bollywood) and shared values. "We are the same - Indian people and us – we all come from the same place, we look the same, pray the same, eat the same food", as Kavi once explained whilst shopping in Longsight. The owner of the shop, a Pakistani migrant, laughed when he heard Kavi, and jokingly remarked "we are the same brown people", showing that South Asian migrants welcome Bhutanese refugees in their communities, as I have observed time and again during my fieldwork. Bhutanese refugees often work in Asian businesses (also see Chapter 8), and have reliable social networks and close friendships in the British Asian community.

When communicating with other (non-South Asian) migrants, my informants stress their 'migrant-identity', characterised by unfamiliarity and ambiguity towards the host society, and latent criticism of British policy makers. For example, on my first visit to Manchester, my key gatekeepers discovered that I am not British, and therefore an "immigrant like us", as Bikram put it. They ascribed me with a 'migrant-identity' based on shared experiences of immigration: "You are not English, you understand us". Migrants – regardless if voluntary or forced – are perceived by my informants to share the same difficulties arising due to migration. This is something that (in their eyes) British

people lack, and therefore they feel closer connections to migrants than to the British host population.

Refugee-ness, on the other hand, is adopted when communicating with other forcibly displaced people, such as the Somali, Congolese (DRC) or Iraqi refugee community in Manchester. Bhutanese refugees assume that they share a common experience of refugee-ness (see below), albeit significant cultural, historical and political differences. This was also expressed in the wide-spread sympathy with Syrian refugees during my fieldwork. Some informants asked me to show them (on a map) where Syria is, and how the conflict came about. After exhausting my limited knowledge on the issue, one of them exclaimed, outraged: "Why nobody help the people in Syria? The king [sic – referring to president Assad] kill people, like the *drukpa* kill us, and nobody helps, like in Bhutan, people don't care! We should help them, you know". Indeed, HNC collected some funds for Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon, and displayed solidarity on social media.

At the same time, most refugees under the age of 40 forge social networks with British people in schools and workplaces. In resettlement in the UK, Bhutanese refugees attempt to adopt 'British-ness'[173]. My informants argue that 'being British' is about 'rational', secular values, education, employment, economic self-sufficiency and being an active member of the community by attending national celebration, waving the Union Jack. I often experienced how some of my informants in the UK distinguish themselves from Bhutanese refugees in other resettlement nations, such as the US or Australia, emphasizing how "proud" they are to be in Britain rather than in other nations, and that they look forward to receiving citizenship of this "dream land", as Arun once emphasized. They adopt a form of "cultural mimicry", in which Bhutanese refugees imitate what they perceive to be 'British' (Shoat, 1993, cited in Bromley, 2000: 8). For example, they hardly wear 'Nepali' clothes (such as saris or kurtas) except during cultural festivals (such as *Deepawali*). Young refugees (under 25) spend large sums of money on branded clothing and

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[173] Used in quotation marks to highlight the fact that this is what my informants perceive to be 'British' or 'Western', rather than stating it as a general fact.

fashion items, such as jewellery and sunglasses, as well as on the best and newest smart phones. Most also closely follow daily news by watching television news channels, informing themselves on current affairs, often discussing them amongst themselves. Many of my informants compare their Nepalese Bhutanese with the British community, as one of them explained:

> "British community is where there is stable and good governance and it is highly developed comparing to Nepal. People here always seem to be in their own track which means they do not care a lot about what somebody is doing, especially neighbours and relatives, whereas in Nepal, people stay communal with their friends, families, neighbours and relatives. Despite that, British are tolerant and they have more willingness and eagerness to tolerate other people who are not like them".

On the one hand, Bhutanese refugees may criticise the 'British community' for being alienated from one another, whilst being convinced that such a 'multi-cultural' society is better equipped to deal with 'difference', and show more tolerance towards the 'other'. My informants' assumptions of 'British-ness' is that of an 'advanced' society, vis-à-vis the Bhutanese or Nepalese community, as one of them highlighted: "after arriving, I learnt that we [and Nepal] are a hundred years behind the British people". It is this comparison between 'developed' Britain versus 'undeveloped' Nepal (or Bhutan), that engenders change amongst young Bhutanese refugees. For example, as I exemplify in Chapter 7, young people emphasize their desire to live independently "like the English do", rather than with their extended family (as it used to be the case in Bhutan and Nepal). Similarly, they adopt English as the lingua franca even at home (rather than Nepali, also see Chapter 7), adopting a strong Mancunian accent. These performances of British-ness are important representations of themselves as both Bhutanese Nepali and 'Western'[174]. Bromley's (2000: 19) work on migrants in the UK mirrors this perception, paraphrasing his

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[174] In turn, some argue that RCOs are merely products of performances of diverse actors and their interests (Griffiths et al, 2006: 895), confined on a stage set by international and national policies and humanitarian agencies.

informants' views: "[t]o be fully 'human' is to be Westernised", reflecting the aim of social re-engineering by aid agencies discussed in Chapter 4.

These examples show that Bhutanese refugees live an "everyday cosmopolitanism"[175] (Chatty, 2010: 32; 443), through which they maintain social networks with individuals outside of their refugee community, and actively participate in, interact with, adopt (but not completely assimilate) and intermingle multiple socio-cultural practices and norms.

However, as mentioned above, identities are also subject to social and political discourses and representations (Chatty, 2010: 55; Malkki, 1992: 36-7). In the following section I demonstrate that my informants adopt and use the 'refugee-label' when communicating with service providers and funding bodies, in order to legitimize their residency in the UK, and present themselves as 'deserving' migrants.

Refugee-ness

Durable solutions (or indeed, any support for refugees) only apply to individuals who are recognized as 'refugees' according to the 1951 Refugee Convention[176] (UNHCR, 2010 [1951]). This convention (and the UN itself) is a direct result of the events during WW II, and was developed and ratified by the UN and its members in 1951. It is intended to protect people from 'human rights abuses', such as torture, imprisonment and execution, and begins with a definition of refugees as individuals who (UNHCR, 2010: 14):

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[175] In brief, cosmopolitanism (Greek 'cosmos' and 'polis' - city, citizens) refers to the notion of the 'citizen of the world', in which all people belong to one single community, based on shared values, and equal political and economic relationships (Chatty, 2010: 304). I follow Chatty's (ibid.: 32, 443) use of the term as an everyday social practice, through which people are conscious of and accept a multiplicity of different cultures, values and practices. Also see Hannerz (1990) Butler (2004) and Gilroy (2005).

[176] The latest (2010) version of this convention includes (a) the 1951 Conventions relating to the status of refugees, (b) the 1967 (updated) Protocol relating to the status of refugees, and (c) the 1967 Resolution 2198, all of which were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

"owing to the well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion[177], is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it".

A person is able to claim refugee-status, if s/he has crossed an international border to seek asylum from persecution in their 'home' nation (Harrell-Bond et al., 1996: 1076). This refugee-status allows them to "transcend nation states" and be subject to distinct international laws and institutions (Turton, 2002: 27).

Refugee resettlement entails the organised migration of these *recognised* refugees, which is of particular importance for the public discourse, in which there is an ongoing debate about "genuine" and "phoney" refugees[178] (Westwood and Phizacklea, 2000: 103). Bhutanese refugees are *not* asylum seekers or voluntary (e.g. economic) migrants[179]. The distinction entails very different rights and duties. Refugees have many rights, whilst asylum seekers do not: in fact, the latter are classified as 'illegal' immigrants, until they are able to prove their refugee status. Recognized refugees, such as Bhutanese refugees, have the right to be unified with their family (in their country of refuge), a right to housing and a right to receive an Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK. On the other hand, asylum seekers are housed in detention centres, and have no right to live and work in the UK until their status is approved or

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[177] These loaded concepts are not defined in the convention, and leads to criticism that what constitutes a refugee is solely based on Western ideas and values (e.g. amendments in 2008 to include LGBT individuals). See Harrell-Bond et al (1996: 1076-7) for a critical discussion.

[178] At the time of writing this thesis (2014-15), residents in the UK (and Europe) debate whether people crossing the Mediterranean to reach Europe are refugees or migrants, reflecting these debates in current public and media discourses (see Baba's [2013: 2-4] discussion on "public angst" towards immigrants). Also, in 2014 I met an anthropologist who conducts research with North Korean refugees, some of whom successfully resettled to the US after claiming that they are Bhutanese refugees. It was unclear to both the researcher and me, how North Korean refugees accomplished that, but it shows the importance of the refugee label (the researcher consented to include her statements, but to retain her anonymity).

[179] See Richmond (1994, cited in Chatty, 2010: 30-33): reactive (refugee) migrants have to flee due to political circumstances beyond their control, whilst proactive (voluntary) migrants actively decides to migrate due to economic, educational or social mobility.

they are send back to their country of residence[180] (Sales, 2002: 464-6; also see Mitchell, 2006; UNHCR, 2013). This categorisation – or labelling – as a refugee is of significant importance, as I discuss in the following section.

The use of the refugee-label

In late 2010, the Pathaks and Sinhas arrived in the UK, and were settled in Bury. At that time they were identified by their white British neighbours as "Pakis", resulting in a graffiti on the Sinha's fence reading "Pakis[181] go home". Refugee Action intervened, and held an "awareness event" in the Bury neighbourhood, explaining to the residents who Bhutanese refugees are, and why they are in the UK. These service providers attempted to replace the neighbour's assumption of ethnic identification (also see below) – 'Pakis' or South Asians – with a more convenient label: refugee-ness, which carries with it the supposition of 'victimhood' and 'involuntary migration'. Thereafter, the Sinhas never experienced abuse from their neighbours again – in fact, the Sinhas claim that the white, British community in their area began to support them after the event, offering assistance (such as car rides to supermarkets or other facilities) and goods (e.g. toys and clothes for children).

These powerful identification markers were immediately adopted by my informants, whereby they emphasize their "right to be here", as they were "victims of the Bhutanese government", as expressed by the chairpersons of RCOs during various speeches to non-refugees. Bhutanese refugees make conscious use of the notion of refugee-ness to gain advantages, whereby they portray themselves as one cohesive community, who shares the experience of 'victimhood'. This allows them to access facilities, funding and other

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[180] Research (e.g. Sigona et al, 2004: 8; Spicer, 2008: 493; Zetter & Pearl, 2000: 696) suggests that asylum seekers are more prone to social exclusion from both the society *and* services, due to restricted rights and entitlements (in comparison to refugees), as well as discriminating media coverage.

[181] Paki' is an abbreviation of 'Pakistani' and often used derogatorily to describe individuals with brown skin or dark complexion, based on the assumption that individuals with these physiological traits are from a Pakistani or South Asian migratory background

governmental and non-governmental allowances, which are exclusively reserved for recognised 'ethnic' social groups (also see Chapter 8).

This refugee-label has to be distinguished from identity construction, although both are shaped "within institutionalized regulatory practices" (Zetter, 2007: 173). But whilst cultural identity is based on the negotiation of shared socio-cultural values and practices, the refugee-label is based on negotiations of classifications between refugees *and* Euro-American governmental and non-governmental institutions (Malkki, 2002: 356). Bhutanese refugees have learned to adopt the label in conversation with institutions and non-refugees, and adapt it to their own needs in a "masterful manipulation of their marginal status" (Gemie, 2010: 31). These labels have consequences in everyday life, especially in the context of refugee resettlement and integration (Colson, 2003: 2; Zetter, 2007: 179).

Here, I employ Ian Hacking's (2006: 2) take on labelling theory[182], demonstrating how national and international institutions, such as the UN or the British government, create "new kinds of persons" through bureaucratic labels[183]. Refugees can be perceived as "moving targets", as labelling impacts on people, "and since they are changed, they are not quite the same kind of people as before" (ibid.). Bhutanese refugees may not have any impact on the classification 'refugee' itself, but nevertheless make conscious use of it within certain frameworks in which labelling takes place (ibid.: 5, also see Mead, 1934).

Firstly, labels do not operate in a vacuum, but are created, shaped and utilized by institutional and bureaucratic bodies (Zetter, 2007: 180; 184). The refugee-

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[182] Labelling theory originates in the work of Durkheim (1952 [1897]), who argued that labels allow societies to categorize and thus to manage and control (especially "deviant") individuals. This was later further developed by other sociologists and social theorists, such as G.H. Mead (1934) who postulated that an individual's self emerges out of interactions with others. In turn, labelling is a dual process: although we are categorized and labelled by others (who then expect certain behaviours from the labelled individual), we are aware of this process, and are able to adopt and adapt multiple labels depending on the context and social interactions in which we find ourselves in.

[183] Although Hacking looks at the 'scientific classifications' of medical conditions (such as autism) by the medical establishment, his theories can be translated into the context of the refugee-label.

label is applied to those who fit into the Refugee Convention[184], making them 'targets' of aid and humanitarian intervention (see Chapter 3). In turn, nation states adopt the Refugee Convention definitions, using 'experts' to advise, regulate and control the labelled individuals by means of national policy (e.g. the UK Immigration Act). These labels are then debated and reflected upon in the wider public discourse and the media. Consequently, funding bodies, NGOs *and* RCOs adopt these labels and operate within this social policy and the public discourse (Hacking, 2006: 2-3). The refugee-label and the subsequent legal differentiations between the 'deserving' refugee and the 'undeserving' asylum seeker and migrant, serve the interests of nation states to assign privileges or punishments to individuals depending on whether they fall within or outside of these categories. Whilst the refugee label 'merits' protection and inclusion, the latter two categories are subject to punitive measures by the government, and stigmatized in public discourse (Baba, 2013, 2-4; Malkki, 2002: 356; Sales, 2002: 4734).

Thus, labels are not neutral classifications of people, but create powerful, "convenient images"[185], which are adopted by humanitarian agencies and liberal public discourses, portraying the refugee as a "helpless victim" of nationalist governments (e.g. Bhutan), war and conflict, or natural and environmental disasters (Malkki, 2002: 356; Zetter, 2007: 173; 176). They are "victims in need of humanitarian aid", as they have been forcibly removed from their homelands, cultures and communities (Chatty, 2010: 56-8). Social re-engineering in refugee camps perpetuate this assumption by creating dependency on relief agencies (by, for example, not allowing refugees to leave the camp and solely rely on agency hand-outs), fuelling the humanitarian paradigm of aid intervention as a response to people "in need" (Hitchcox, 1990; cited in Colson, 2003: 10).

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[184] Zetter (2007: 176; 188) is most vocal in criticising the inadequacy of the refugee-label, which reduces the complexity of forced migration and displacement into a single, all-encompassing category.

[185] Here, I compare the refugee-label to the term 'Lhotshampa' discussed at the onset of this chapter, which (similar to the refugee-label) served the interest of the Bhutanese nation state in order to define the 'other'.

Harrell-Bond (1996) and Malkki (1997: 224) caution against this victimisation, as it denies refugees their agency and ability to challenge as well as utilize national and international systems of power. In fact, my informants very actively use the refugee-label in discourses with public institutions and non-refugees, in order to highlight their protective status, as one Bhutanese refugee once explained: "I am a refugee, I deserve help from the government and people". Ownership and the use of labels is not a one-way, top-down process, but the labelled individuals interact, refashion, adopt and use classifications for their own purposes (Gemie, 2010: 31; Hacking, 2006: 5; Zetter, 2007: 186). This harks back to my earlier discussion (Chapter 3) on my informants' acquisition of terminology such as "miserable" to describe the refugee camp. For example, in conversations with non-refugees, Bhutanese refugees use the following narratives emphasizing this victimhood:

"We came to Nepal and had to live in the refugee camp. This is a … sad and pathetic story with lots of trouble and hardships."

"We are deprived of our birth rights and have to live as refugees, and our life is a miserable plight."

"It is difficult to lead the life of a refugee."

Bhutanese refugees adopt different identities depending on the context and the 'audience', and the refugee-label serves them when they communicate with non-refugees (Malkki, 1992: 35). Rather than portraying refugee-ness as a "spoiled identity" (ibid.), the label becomes a highly-valued status, and even a commodity, which serves both, those who created the label, and those who claim the label (Zetter, 2007: 186; 188). For aid agencies, as well as for charitable organisations in the UK, the 'victim-narrative' serves to attract funding and donations from governmental and non-governmental bodies. For Bhutanese refugees, the refugee-label allows them to claim a status of the 'deserving' migrant, who has to be protected, and has the right to stay in the UK. The consequences are immediately visible: as we saw in Bury, the British neighbours began to support Bhutanese refugees. In Longsight, the refugee-

narrative was used by my informants to obtain increased support from their local community centre. Desiree, the manager of Northmoor Community Centre (NCC) asked Niraj[186] to explain what happened to Bhutanese refugees, so she could tailor their support to them. Niraj printed out images from Nepali refugee camps showing desolation, destruction and their "miserable" living conditions, confiding to me later, that he deliberately chose "bad pictures" to show "how bad it was" in the camps. When I met Desiree and asked her about NCC's services for Bhutanese refugees, she explained:

> "I never knew what happened to them [the refugees]. [Niraj] gave me these pictures, and I began to understand. Their lives were so hard. And you can't understand and help people if you don't understand their background… most people don't know what happened to them. They don't know that they lived in camps for 20 years, and in what conditions they had to live…. They don't know about the refugees. But I understand now, and can help them much better."

After the meeting between Niraj and Desiree, NCC offered further free services to Bhutanese refugees, including support that they do not normally provide (such as help with their RCOs). In Chapter 8, I elaborate on the financial benefits of adopting the refugee-label by appropriating "humanitarian discourses" (Zetter, 2007: 172; 188).

Both Hacking (2006: 10-12) and Zetter (2007: 183; 189) argue that labelled individuals may resist categorisations, and take ownership and control over labels by means of their own institutions (RCOs) and experts (chair persons). It may be true that some labelled persons attempt to resist the 'process of normalisation', by which divergent individuals are encompassed into easily identifiable categories. Labels engender restrictions and may result in

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[186] One of the four Bagale brothers (Ram, Bal, Bikram and brother of Daya mentioned above) Niraj is in his mid-twenties, and at the time of my fieldwork was unemployed, working (illegally) at a few South Asian businesses, whilst attending a higher education course in Business and Management in Manchester. He was one of my closest informants in the field, and was very active in Takin UK. However, he struggled to deal with being disappointed with resettlement in the UK (also see Chapter 8), resulting in alcohol and substance abuse during my time in Manchester.

additional burdens to the labelled individuals, such as the difference between refugees and asylum seekers in British policy and discourse. Bhutanese refugees, on the other hand, *use* the label, rather than resist it, quickly adapting to the fact that the refugee-label brings with it vital advantages, especially by using the narrative of victimhood[187].

However, there is a gap between how institutions and policies fashion and use labels (i.e. as a means to control 'migrants' and foster 'integration'), and how refugees themselves perceive the label (Zetter, 2007: 189). Bhutanese refugees use the refugee-label exactly *because* of the inherent victim-narrative, which they use to legitimize their residence in the UK to non-refugees. However, internally (amongst Bhutanese refugees) their own definition of the refugee-label is a powerful tool to ensure and foster a sense of mutuality (or difference) between them (Chapters 7, 8 and 9). Here, the emphasis is not on the Refugee Convention definition. Rather, most of my informants define their *Bhutanese* refugee-ness through their shared experience of forced migration from Bhutan, their lives in the refugee camps in Nepal, *and* their experience with organized resettlement. However, as I explore in Chapter 8, this interpretation of Bhutanese refugee-ness is contested amongst my informants, and creates a rift between them, and one is of the reasons for the split between the three different RCOs in Manchester. Therefore, labels have become tools for internal differentiations.

But, Bhutanese refugees' shared history also creates mutuality and fosters *samaj* in resettlement. Here, the emphasis is on Bhutanese Nepali-ness (rather than refugee-ness), which is, as I explore in the following section, defined as an 'ethnic' group identity by policy makers and service providers in the UK.

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[187] Also see Scott's [2008] work on the 'weapons of the weak' for a detailed analysis of the everyday resistance of disenfranchised people.

Bhutanese Refugee-ness as Ethnicity

The refugee-label and the term *Lhotshampa* are, as I showed above, created in a political and historical context, and are derived from various public and political discourses. This necessitates a critical look at the problematic notion of ethnicity. Baumann's (1996: 10-1) research with communities in Southall (London) is a good example of the gap between official government publications and social sciences concerning the notion of identity and ethnicity:

> "[T]he term [culture] seems to connote a certain coherence, uniformity and timelessness in the meaning system of a given group, and to operate rather like the earlier concept of 'race' in identifying fundamentally different, essentialized, and homogenous social units (as when we speak about 'a culture')".

Cultural identity is often attributed to a 'unique' ethnicity in public and political discourses, and is assumed to be based on similar physical, cultural, linguistic and religious traits – a 'culture', which is perceived as permanent and homogenous within a 'cultural community' (Baumann, 1996: 13). This 'dominant view' permeates social policies affecting refugees, especially when it comes to the community development approach (ibid.).

When discussing the SOAS workshop with my informant Hari, he criticised some refugees' self-identification as *Lhotshampas*, especially when filling in forms for resettlement and later residency in the UK. In 2011, before my fieldwork began, the British government conducted a national census[188], to quantify and measure its population. Referring to this, Hari explained that many Bhutanese refugees were not sure what to put in the ethnicity section

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[188] The 2011 Census was the first in the UK to include national identity as a question. In the ONS publication (2012b: 10), it is claimed that the inclusion of this data is due to "an increased interest in 'national' consciousness and demand from people to acknowledge their national identity" (ibid.: 2).

(see image[189]). According to Hari, almost all Bhutanese refugees he knew filled in "Nepali" or "Bhutanese Nepali" in the *C. Any other Asian background* section. However, there were a few who wrote *Lhotshampa* instead. Hari angrily exclaimed: "They put there *Lhotshampa* as ethnicity – don't they know what ethnicity is?"

These comments, as well as the debate at the SOAS workshop demonstrate the problematic nature of categorisation based on ethnicity and labels such as refugee-ness. Questions of ethnic classifications continue to arise not only due to the 2011 census, but on a daily basis when filling in official documents (e.g. registration with a GP, etc.) requiring ethnic classifications. In the following section I attempt to discern why these simplified

Figure 14: 2011 Census Question on Ethnicity

categorisations are so compelling for policy makers and service providers, and juxtapose this 'official' stance with my informants' own perceptions of ethnic identity.

The 'dominant discourse'

Ethnicity[190] can be broadly defined as a "sense of belonging to a group, based on shared ideas of group history, language, experience, and culture" (Chatty, 2010: 44). But rather than seeing it as a biological fact or "primordial

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[189] From http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/how-our-census-works/how-we-took-the-2011-census/how-we-collected-the-information/questionnaires--delivery--completion-and-return/2011-census-questions/index.html Page 8. [Accessed: 25 September 2013].

[190] The scope of this work does not allow for a critical discussion of the term 'ethnicity' in public, academic and anthropological discourses. Here, I merely use the term as a referential category of the dominant discourse. For further reading on ethnicity see Eriksen (1993), Gellner (1983), Rex (1996), Turton (2002) and Westwood and Phizacklea (2000).

attachment" into which someone is born in, as Geertz (1963:109) has done – the 'dominant discourse' adopted by policy makers and service providers in the UK – ethnicity in this context is better understood as a social construct. Following Barth's (1998: 14) notion of "situational ethnicity", ethnic identity is created by social groups in order to "mark out a differentiated self-identity to create social and physical boundaries" (in Chatty, 2010: 45).

As explored in Chapter 2 when outlining the history of Bhutan leading to the expulsion of Bhutanese Nepalese people, notions of ethnicity and nationalism are interrelated. In times of uncertainty or transition, ethnic identities (however 'imagined') are re-invented and stressed (Chatty, 2010: 35-8). This is a dual process: on the one hand, nation states use ethnicity to dispossess and expel those who do not 'belong' to the mainstream ethnicity (the *Ngalongs*). On the other hand, those who are displaced adopt an identity to stress their mutuality in order to create a strong unified community.

However, I follow Baumann's (1996) call to be cautious about reducing social groups to cultural and ethnic identity. Baumann (ibid.: 17; also see Barth, 1998: 11) criticises this view as 'biological reductionism'. In Western public and political discourses, Baumann argues, "social complexities" are "reduced ..., both within communities and across plural societies, to an astonishingly simple equation[191]:
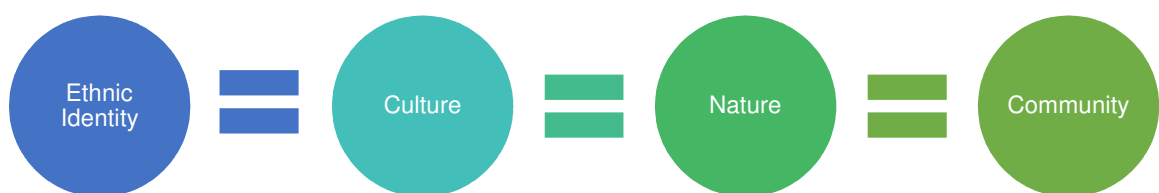
Figure 15: The Equation of Ethnicity, Culture and Community in Public Discourses in the UK

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[191] Illustration: Author's own adaptation of Baumann, 1996: 17.

This equation of culture with ethnicity is applied to any person with an assumed "common identity"[192] (ibid.: 29), such as Bhutanese refugees (Appadurai, 1996: 13-14; Amit et al., 2002: 463). Within political and public discourses in the UK, migrants are grouped into communities "based on [their] regional origin or migratory history", which transcends differences between them (Baumann, 1996: 23; 79). Consequently, it is convenient for service providers to ascribe all Bhutanese refugees in the UK with the same identity, based on their shared origin (Bhutan and Nepal) and history of displacement, whereby their migratory background becomes a signifier of social and cultural cohesion that are fixed in time. That is, the assumption that because Bhutanese refugees share a specific history, they thus have a homogenous culture which is shared across difference, and therefore form cohesive communities.

As Dresch (1995: 66) argues when looking at US population surveys, ethnic groups are comprehensive and enduring classifications, into which every individual within a nation state can be "conveniently pigeonholed". The ethnicity-section in the UK census (see above) is an equally pragmatic simplification of ethnic classifications: population surveys (such as the 2011 census) are used in policy making and in public discourse - including refugee resettlement policies[193] - to determine, and thus to manage and control, diverse populations within the British nation state.

However, even if individuals self-identify with a categorisation – such as Bhutanese refugee-ness - research with, for example, South Asian communities in the UK suggests that rather than adopting one "homogeneous" Asian culture and tradition (Richman, 2010: 446-7), migrants (and descendants) actively "combine and rework images, values…from what they see as their multiple cultural worlds, transforming each system and themselves in the process, and in so doing creating rich, novel forms of public culture"

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[192] Gilroy (1987) and Morris (1968, both cited in Baumann, 1996: 15, 29) argue that this "stereotype of uniform commonality" is a "colonial construct", based on discourses in the British Empire since the 19th century.

[193] The ONS (2012b: 13) does, however, caution about the use of this data: "It is important to note that assumptions should not be made about a particular ethnic group, there are some people in ethnic minorities that could (or wish to) belong under any of the 'Other' categories."

(Mines and Lamb, 2010d: 403-4). As I highlight through this thesis, the strict boundaries between 'us' and 'them' – as implied by ethnic classifications – are neither simple, nor static, but highly malleable and contextualized. In this sense, cultural identity is not fixed, but 'syncretic' and bound to historical and personal circumstances, changing and developing "like a living organism" (Baumann, 1996: 13), and cannot be easily grouped into convenient ethnic categories.

Nevertheless, as I explore in the following section, these categories and labels have an impact on how people are perceived (within the political and public discourse in the UK), and how they understand themselves (Kalra et al., 2005: 16).

Bhutanese refugees as an ethnic identity?

Population surveys, such as the 2011 census, allow individuals to tick a box that resembles their "cultural backgrounds". This self-identification is closely tied to how people perceive themselves when faced with the question of ethnic classifications, and is thus related to "identity making" (Dresch, 1995: 70).

First and foremost, my informants stress their Nepali identity, by means of shared values and norms (see Chapter 7); language (Nepali[194]), and social practices (e.g. dietary habits; celebration of Nepali New Year, rather than *Losar*, the Bhutanese New Year). This is not to say that they evoke a *national* identity[195], which signifies belonging to a specific national territory (e.g. Bhutan or Nepal) and a common *national* history and culture (Voiscu, 2013: 171). Rather, my informants' experience of (forced) migration created a "hyphenated" and "deterritorialised" identity - Bhutanese Nepalese-ness – which is not tied to any nation state (Bromley, 2000: 14; Kalra et al., 2005: 33). That is, they perceive themselves as distinct from the Nepali (and Bhutanese) *national* identity and *ethnicity* through a shared history of 'refugee-ness'.

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[194] A particular form of Nepali which was re-worked during 200 years of life in Bhutan.
[195] Which has to be distinguished from nationalism, as defined by Gellner (1983) – see Chapter 2.

Therefore, commonality for my informants is *situational* rather than an *a priori* biological fact based on ethnicity (Barth, 1998: 14). Their Bhutanese refugee-ness is not only determined by the characteristics they share with Nepali people – and which distinguishes them from *drukpas* – but more importantly by the particular situations and circumstances they found themselves in since the 1980s. However, these similarities do not make them a distinct 'ethnic group' comprised of easily classifiable individuals who share a common culture and nationality.

Bhutanese refugee-ness is not an ethnic category. However, the self-identification as a Bhutanese refugee suffices to generate a sense of belonging that is highly symbolic - albeit imagined[196] – creating a sense of mutuality between them. Their common identity is shaped by various external and internal forces within the context of displacement, camp life, aid intervention, and resettlement (Bromley, 2000: 6-8), and thus produces new forms of identifications that are "somewhere in-between" (ibid.: 3), rather than being bound by a particular locality and socio-cultural affiliations (Mohan, 2002: 98-9).

Nonetheless, through social re-engineering in the refugee camps in Nepal and their experiences with service providers and the public through resettlement and in the UK, my informants quickly adopted the ethnicity label (although they may not use the word 'ethnicity' in English or Nepali), portraying Bhutanese refugee-ness as a unique aspect of their 'imagined' ethnicity, and therefore securing advantages (such as funding) reserved for these social groups (see Chapter 8), making them what Kelly (2003) calls a "contingent community" (see Chapter 4). As such, ethnic classifications are not merely Western categories applied from above, but are used by social groups themselves to adapt and respond to state politics (Amit et al., 2002: Loc 939). However, the conscious adaption of these dominant public and political discourses, and their portrayal of themselves as a unique Bhutanese refugee community is directed

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[196] That is, although the more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees may never meet face-to-face, nor have anything in common on an individual level, and do not inhabit one geographical nation state, they 'imagine' themselves to be part of one community with "finite, if elastic boundaries" (Anderson, 2006: 6-7).

outwards in conversation with official governmental and non-governmental bodies, rather than employing these classifications amongst themselves.

In the following section, I show that, contrary to policy makers' and service providers' assumptions, *samaj* and RCOs are not ethnic communities. My informants may employ this notion in order to be eligible for funding (see Chapter 8), demonstrating that (forced) migrant communities make use of top-down classifications in order to gain advantages.

An ethnic community?

As discussed above, the normalisation of streamlined ethnic classifications in political and public discourses allows the stereotypical, oversimplified categorisation of groups as for example a "Black" or an "Asian community" (Baumann, 1996: 15). These groups then adopt these notions to portray themselves as one cohesive social group vis-à-vis the white British host population[197]. Bhutanese refugees consciously use the refugee-label and emphasize their "unique" community in public discourses, in order to portray themselves as a small, cohesive group in need of protection and support from the British host community and policy makers.

At the same time, the 'white majority' creates ethnic communities different to their own, in order to make sense of the extensive diversity of migrants in the UK. Within this public discourse 'community' becomes a "polite term for ethnic minority" (ibid.), classified by either physiological commonalities or common geographical origin (e.g. South Asia). Similarly, the CDA in Bhutanese refugee camps and in resettlement requires an equally simple equation[198]:

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[197] E.g. see Hall (1996) and Baumann (1996) on the adoption of term "Blackness" amongst Afro-Caribbean and South Asian migrants in the 1950s and 1960s.
[198] Illustration: Author's own.
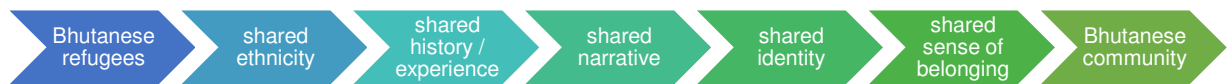
Figure 16: Equation of Bhutanese refugee-ness with Bhutanese community

As Ignatieff (1992, cited in Baumann, 1996) argues:

> "Community is a dishonest word. … It is invariably a party to pious fraud. Ethnic minorities are called 'communities' either because it makes them feel better, or because it makes the white majority feel more secure".

Membership of a community (as a social group or network) does not depend on behaviour, but on constructing and agreeing upon shared sets of histories, symbols and values within certain boundaries that determine who *is* and who is *not* a member (Rapport et. al. 2000: 62-3). It is, to remind us of Cohen (1985), symbolic, as it serves to *represent* something or someone, rather than being 'factual' and the "result of a natural process" (Voiscu, 2013: 171).

What a Bhutanese refugee *is*, and *who* can claim this classification, and thus belongs to *samaj* and RCOs, is changing and adapted to the context in which my informants find themselves (see Chapter 7). It may be emphasised – for example, in comparison with other refugees – or downplayed, for instance, when young refugees attempt to "fit in" with the British mainstream society, as I demonstrated above. That is, Bhutanese refugees may share certain traits, but this does not mean that they share an identity, or sense of belonging, and therefore create one cohesive social group, or *a* Bhutanese refugee community. Rather, as I show throughout this work, communities also operate my means of 'othering' and the establishment of boundaries that determine 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (see Hall, 1996; Baumann, 1996).

However, Baumann (1996: 159, 161) outlines how community leaders in Southall (London) must assure that they represent their community as a "monolithic body of lifestyles and convictions … shared amongst *all* their constituents" (my emphasis) in order to be eligible for funding. Bhutanese RCO leaders in Manchester have to adopt the same dominant discourse, portraying their RCOs as inclusive, harmonious support networks that unify and celebrate their 'unique' Bhutanese Nepali-ness (see Chapter 9). RCO board members must demonstrate that they can speak for the whole community[199], regardless of internal differences. However, leaders are not always representative of the community they supposedly serve, or are able to fulfil the multiple wishes of all members (Griffiths et al., 2006: 892; Baumann, 1996: 66), as I discuss in Chapters 8 and 9.

Nevertheless, when it comes to RCOs, Bhutanese refugees have to adopt and comply with the dominant discourse in order to be eligible for funding. Therefore, they have to adopt the notion of a bounded, homogeneous ethnic group. This is emphasized in the RCO constitutions (see Chapter 8 and Appendix 2), which stresses the inclusiveness and distinctiveness of Bhutanese refugees in the UK, with 'culture' as the ultimate axiom. This is mirrored in Baumann's (1996: 15) work, in which members of social groups opportunistically use the notion of ethnicity in public discourses, exploiting the general public's and media's perception of community as a purely positive force, implying "interpersonal warmth, shared interests and loyalty". However, as I show in Chapter 9, internal problems between Bhutanese refugees in Manchester emerged exactly because some members criticised the assumption that everyone shares the same socio-cultural characteristics and practices.

Here arises the question of 'authenticity' of 'unique' ethnic cultures which RCOs strive to represent. For example, Boddy (1995: 30) describes the severe pressure her Sudanese refugee informants (in Toronto, Canada) experience, to define and reiterate an 'authentic' Sudanese culture that is distinct from

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[199] As Baumann (1996: 64) argues, this representativeness further increases the social capital leaders obtain – see Chapter 8.

other cultures, and is therefore in need to be protected (by means of e.g. funding). The wording my informants employ in their constitutions and on funding applications – for example, to celebrate "Bhutanese culture" – is ambiguous and vague, reflecting the notion that in public discourses in the UK, terms such as 'culture' and 'community' mean 'everything and nothing', and that 'authenticity' is subject to shared discourses, rather than based on 'facts'.

Baumann (1996: 192) understandably criticises the "hegemonic language" and bureaucratic practices migrants must comply with, in order to be eligible for support. Ultimately, the external representations of RCOs say more about the bureaucratic landscape and the dominant discourse in the UK than it does about Bhutanese refugees, emphasizing my argument (see Chapter 9), that Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester are formalized British organisations with non-British members, rather than Bhutanese refugee communities.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I explore the importance of community – both as *samaj* and as in relation to RCOs – for Bhutanese refugees in the UK. As I have shown in this chapter, community membership is tied to creating and re-inventing identities over time and across difference (Bromley, 2000: 5). The complexity of these processes is demonstrated by my informants' use of Bhutanese refugee-ness as an ethnicity (rather than the term *Lhotshampa*) vis-à-vis other refugee- and migrant groups in the UK, in order to portray themselves as one, cohesive community distinguished from other migrant groups, such as other South Asians.

As I illustrated above, the creation of the refugee-label is an important classification, especially in comparison to non-refugees. The adoption of labels engenders advantages for the community, such as funding or access to facilities (see Chapter 9). However, these processes occur within a specific

local context in the UK, and are therefore not reflections of 'traditional' Bhutanese Nepalese identities (if there ever was such a thing). Similar to 'community', 'identity' and a sense of belonging to a social group is tinged by external influences and specific histories. As Voiscu (2013: 163-4) so aptly states:

> "[C]ultural identity is a…. matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation".

In the following chapter, I explore this transformation by providing a detailed ethnography of arrival, in which life (in the UK) is "beginning". It illustrates the practical notions of community as support network, but also highlights that contrary to my informants' hopes, their expectations may not be fulfilled in resettlement. It is here where community becomes a tool to ensure support. However, the arrival in the UK also marks the initiation into both *samaj* and RCOs, and the inherent creation of similarity and difference within the divided Bhutanese refugee community in Manchester.

Chapter 6 - "Life Beginning"

In late 2011 and early 2012, Refugee Youth UK[200] – a British charity supporting young (under 25 year olds) refugees and asylum seekers in the UK – invited Bhutanese children and teenagers in Manchester to participate in a film project in order to create a five-minute short film about their lives in the UK. By working closely with professional film makers, Bhutanese youth in Manchester were urged to film their experience of resettlement in the UK, juxtaposed with young British people, in order to illustrate the differences (and indeed, similarities) between life in Bhutan, the refugee camps in Nepal, and in the UK. My teenage informants stressed that they chose the title "Life Beginning" for their short film themselves, and, as stated in the film, the title signifies that the film "is about our new lives in the UK" (Life Beginning, 2011).

The choice of the title carries with it a lot of meaning, expressed by all my informants in the UK. For most, arriving in the UK felt as if a new life was about to begin – a life expected to be full of happiness, wealth and comfort. However, as Williams (2006: 869) argues, newly arrived migrants quickly realize that there are barriers to their hopes and aspirations for a "better life". When I began fieldwork in Autumn 2012, the Bhutanese refugees' sense of excitement was not yet diminished, but severely bruised: many – especially the young and educated – had high expectations on arrival, but only a few of these were realized in practice, even after staying in the UK for two years. It then became the role of the Bhutanese community – both *samaj* and the formalized RCOs – to help newly arrived refugees manage these expectations, and to make them understand that some presuppositions may not come true. When Bhutanese refugees arrive in the UK[201], as I will illustrate further below, it is the Bhutanese

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[200] See http://www.refugeeyouth.org/about-us/
[201] Or *did* arrive: Bhutanese refugee resettlement via the UK *Gateway Protection Programme* officially ended in December 2014, and the UK does not accept any further Bhutanese refugees via the resettlement programme. The last new arrivals came to the UK in Summer 2014. However, according to my informants, Bhutanese refugees already in the UK have the possibility to apply for family reunion – that is, they can petition the UK government (Home Office) to allow resettlement from Nepal

refugee community that provides support to *new arrivals* – a term coined and used by my informants to describe those refugees who just arrived in the UK[202] – and it is here where the role of RCOs is both most relevant as well as contested.

Refugee resettlement is a significant, life-changing event in the lives of my informants. Similar to their expulsion from Bhutan in the late 80s and early 90s, they have to gather their belongings once more, carefully deciding what to take with them[203], and bid farewell to a camp that may have been "miserable", but nevertheless was "home" for the last two decades. From here, they embark on a day-long plane journey (for almost all of them their first) to settle in a new country with unfamiliar customs, technologies and weather. Most refugees had never set foot in an urban space such as Nepal's capital Kathmandu, and the prospect of moving to an urban centre somewhere in the global North was daunting for many.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, all Bhutanese refugees arriving in the UK are settled in the North of England, and almost without exception arrive at Manchester Airport[204]. This allows the Bhutanese refugee community in Manchester to "welcome the new arrivals" at the airport, although the arrival is facilitated by the IOM and service providers such as Refugee Action UK. The refugee welcome party cannot do more than say hello, before social workers usher the new arrivals to their new homes. The ethnographic case study outlined below will provide a glimpse of the kind of experience that Bhutanese refugees typically have when they arrive in the UK for resettlement.

But whilst for the new arrivals during my fieldwork certain facilities and

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for family members. However, the bureaucratic process is highly complicated and requires legal documentation, something that Bhutanese refugees may find hard to attain.

[202] For clarification of terminology used by my informants: "new arrivals" are all refugees who arrive from refugee camps in Nepal up to three to six months in which they still receive governmental or non-governmental support from resettlement agencies. Once this support is phased out by service providers, refugees undergo what could be termed a rite of passage, and are considered "established refugees", who have the skill, experience and know-how to live without support from outside of the community. To be an 'established refugee' also means to have higher social and often economic capital, which results in a higher social status within the refugee community (see Chapter 8).

[203] According to my informants, they were only allowed to bring a bag of 23kg per person.

[204] The largest airport in the North of England, with many international flights.

communities were already in place, the 'pioneers' of resettlement who arrived in late summer and autumn 2010 did not have these elements available, and their experiences differed greatly from the new arrivals in 2012-13[205]. They were the ones who truly arrived at the unknown and the unfamiliar. The support network new arrivals find in Manchester creates a sense of certainty, but also attunes them to the divisions that exist in the Bhutanese refugee community. Regardless of their views and opinions of these RCO divisions, new arrivals have no choice but to surrender themselves to the authority of 'established refugees' and their history of arguments and animosities.

Indeed, it is 'Life Beginning' in resettlement, but within constraints created not only by British law and society, but also by their own refugee community. New arrivals have to confront both internecine arguments, and the realities of life in the UK. Therefore, in this chapter I illustrate the experience of arrival, settling in, and lastly managing their aspirations - the "cultural forces that drive people to build and rebuild their worlds in the face of often daunting challenges" (Bunnell and Goh, 2012: 1). Here, I illustrate how Bhutanese refugees frame their expectations within limited 'opportunity structures' (see further below), and how established refugees assist new arrivals with the management of these anticipations.

Arriving

On a chilly morning in January 2013, Niraj and Bikram invited me to come along to welcome their *didi* (elder sister) at Manchester airport. Niraj bought a cheap mobile phone and prepaid SIM card for them, and during our journey from Longsight, saved the "most important" phone numbers of family and friends already in the UK onto the new phone. Niraj mentioned whilst typing on the phone that he saves these numbers on the phone in order that new arrivals may call him "when they are in the house and the people [social workers] go

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[205] As I outline in Chapter 9, the division between Bhutanese RCOs has its origin in an arrival scene in summer/autumn 2010, long before my fieldwork began.

away".

Once we were in the international arrival hall of Manchester airport, we saw two people – an older British man and a young woman – with International Organization for Migration (IOM) T-Shirts already waiting at the barriers, eyes fixed on the automatic door through which arriving passengers step. We exchanged a few greetings (also see Introduction), although Niraj later remarked that the IOM team normally ignores the welcome committee from the Bhutanese community:

> "We come here, always, when new arrivals come, you know. We bring flowers and give phone. They [IOM team] don't like it. Why don't like it? All of us – we are refugees, you know, we have to help [new arrivals]. You are scared when you come here, it's all new, and very big. Nobody speak Nepali, only English. …. 'No time, no time' they say, but my eyes are tired. ... But they don't care, you know, they only want [us] to shut up. It's stupid".

My informants' experiences and rhetoric about service providers such as the IOM was not new to me. Yumi (a native community support worker, see Chapter 8) described the arrival as an "assembly line system", not allowing new arrivals time to adjust: "these people arrive after a 13-hour flight, they are exhausted ... and jet-lagged. But [service provider] don't give them a break".

The (perceived) lack of service provision is not the only problem on arrival in the UK. At the airport, Bikram quickly turned our conversation from criticising British service providers to RCO divisions:

> "Welfare comes here, you know, and the Christians too. When we [Takin] come here, and they are here, they don't talk with us… and when [new arrivals] come, they tell them Takin is bad. So we tell

them that Welfare is bad. But people know about Mali [206], people

talk".

This suggests that the divisions between Bhutanese RCOs and the importance of community membership are already relevant on arrival in the UK - although, on this occasion no other RCO spokesperson was at the airport. Bikram explained that the other RCOs know that these particular new arrivals are kin of Takin members, and therefore "don't care".

Waiting in the arrival hall, it intrigued me once more that the RCO divisions are persistently talked about amongst my informants, even on such a joyful occasion as the arrival of a family member. I began to wonder what impact these divisions and debates may have on new arrivals. As stated by Yumi, refugees arrive exhausted after what is for most their first flight, experiencing a new country, and are immediately in the midst of community divisions, in which each of the three RCOs woo for the new arrival to become a member. As RCO affiliations have an impact on relationships for Bhutanese refugees in Manchester, the decision to join (or not join) a particular RCO during their first weeks in the UK is an important one, although the affiliation may change, and membership can be revoked or taken on at any given time[207].

Therefore, the arrival is more than just an arrival in a new country, but also an arrival in a new community of Bhutanese refugees, and decisions made in the first days after arrival can determine the long-term experience with *samaj*. On the surface, Bhutanese refugees emphasize equality, sharing the same historic, social and cultural experience of refugee-ness and resettlement. This 'imagined' sameness leads to the assumption that they are one coherent and all-encompassing community. In reality however, differences persist: education, gender, religion (Hinduism and Christianity) and personality have an impact on hierarchical structures amongst Bhutanese refugees. After arrival,

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[206] He refers to events in the refugee camps prior to resettlement, involving the Mali brothers being accused of embezzling money. This forms part of the community division between Takin and Welfare, discussed in Chapter 9.

[207] Yet, "people talk", as Bhutanese refugees always remind me, and to attempt to join all RCOs or switch between them is frowned upon by my informants (see Chapters 8 and 9).

the acquisition of social and cultural capital, as well as linguistic skills, determine one's position within the community (Chapter 7).

On this January morning, only Takin members welcomed the new arrivals. The other RCOs were aware that the new arrivals are kin of the Gadal family, who are part of the founding of Takin. Moreover, the Gurungs are Hindus, and therefore of no interest to the Christian RCO at this point. Therefore there were no BWA and HNC members welcoming the Gurungs[208]. Thus, unbeknown to the family arriving in the UK, their community affiliation has already been decided by the established refugees in Manchester, before they even touched down on British soil.

As I pondered these questions and listened to Niraj and Bikram's conversation, the plane landed, and we eagerly waited for the Gurungs to exit. Niraj's anticipation was palpable – he had a long friendship with his cousin Durba, a few years his junior, but could not maintain the relationship in resettlement, as Durba had neither internet nor phone access on a regular basis. Whilst Niraj entered education in the UK, and supported his family by working in Asian restaurants, it was said that Durba developed a taste for alcohol and drugs in the camps, and quit camp school. Tapping his foot on the banister in front of the exit door, Niraj remarked

> "I can't wait, you know. [Durba] needs our help! We need to guide him, help him, so he can help the family. ... He must have responsibility now, and make his life here in England. Everything is here, so he can get better. ... It's good he comes here, ... but I hope he lives not far away."

Niraj touched on several important points with this statement. Firstly, he regards it as his duty to support the new arrivals, and as having the necessary know-how to advise his peer about what is 'proper' here in the UK. Almost all my informants emulated this sense of providing support, which is often driven

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[208] According to my two companions on the day, if different RCO representatives are present at the airport, they try their utmost to "ignore" each other.

by the insufficient service provision by governmental and non-governmental organisations. In turn, these support-networks create and foster social bonds for both *samaj* and RCOs (Spicer, 2008: 504).

Furthermore, Niraj's statement shows that young people are under mounting pressure to support their families. It was widely assumed amongst my informants that children and young people find resettlement less difficult than older generations, becoming 'liminal experts' (Chapter 8). The teenaged Durba was supposed to take over a similar supporting role once he arrives in the UK. These expectations are taken-for-granted assumptions for all my informants, although the new arrivals may not be aware of it before coming to the UK. This put pressure on young refugees who just arrived from the camp.

Moreover, Niraj's comment summarises the general perception of the UK and life in the UK: "everything is here, so he can get better". Most of my informants perceive resettlement as highly positive, and England or the West in general is seen as "modern", "advanced", "free" and "full of possibilities". However, as I explore further below, these expectations may not always be fulfilled.

Lastly, Niraj hoped that the Gurungs would not live "far away". Arriving at Manchester Airport did not automatically mean that refugees would be settled in the city, but may be sent to Leeds, Sheffield or Bradford, depending on the availability of housing and services. Due to my lack of access to service providers and policy makers, I never discovered exactly how and why the decisions are made to resettle refugees to specific places, and whether to place them in e.g. council houses or privately rented accommodation[209].

Whilst it was common for service providers to inform at least a few Bhutanese refugees of new arrivals, and sometimes even provide exact arrival times, the established refugees were never told where the new arrivals would be brought

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[209] Personal conversations with RAUK volunteers (who would not reveal much of the actual procedure) suggest that these decisions are mainly based on availability and funds. If cheap housing is available in Manchester, it was often attempted to settle Bhutanese refugees within the city. However, service providers were struggling for funding during my fieldwork, and it was often cheaper to settle refugees in smaller towns rather than urban centres.

to. When we asked the IOM worker at the airport, he apologized that due to "data protection" he is not "allowed to tell" us[210]. Niraj asked if we could come with them to the new house, which was again denied: "For insurance purposes we can't take you on our bus, I'm sorry. … You have all day to visit them later".

When the door finally opened and the Gurungs stepped out to be greeted by the IOM workers, Niraj and Bikram hardly had time to welcome them. The Nepali IOM support worker, who travelled all the way from Kathmandu with the Gurungs, quickly ushered them on, ordering them to sit down on the benches in the arrival hall, be silent and wait. What surprised me at first was that Durba and his much younger brother (five years old) and sister (seven years old) only wore T-Shirts and flip-flops, despite the freezing temperatures outside. Mrs. Gurung wore a red sari and a worn-out woollen jumper, whilst her husband sat down shivering in khaki trousers, T-shirt and sandals. These five people only carried three large bags, and each carried a white plastic bag with the IOM logo printed on in bright blue[211] (see Figure 17[212]). The Nepali IOM worker (who was wearing a thick jacket and heavy boots, well equipped for a chilly January day in the UK) urged them to wait for the other case workers, folded his hands in a farewell greeting and walked away.

Figure 17: IOM Logo

Mr. Gurung was visibly confused, whilst his wife exchanged brief formalities with Niraj and Bikram. Durba seemed more awake and aware of the new surroundings. A skinny teenager with spiky hair, he looked around with a beaming smile, and was eager to listen to Niraj, who handed over the mobile phone and explained how it works, and what he would have to do once the case workers were gone. In Nepali, Niraj whispered that they should not worry

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[210] As per a later private correspondence with a volunteer at RAUK, this "data protection" should safeguard families in case of conflict and arguments that may have been "imported" from the country of origin (or the refugee camp), especially for "vulnerable individuals", such as women and children who fled from abuse.

[211] The plastic bag contained only one thing: the refugees' lung x-rays. All refugees are obliged to have their lungs x-rayed before resettlement to proof that they do not carry tuberculosis. Those who do suffer from TB are not allowed to resettle until they are "cleared". Refugees have to show these x-rays at immigration on arrival. Most of my informants said that they threw them away after arriving, as they are not obliged to keep them, and have no need for it.

[212] From http://liberia.iom.int/iom-logo-iom-oim-iom-blue-2/ [Accessed: 10 May 2015].

if they don't understand everything the case workers explain as "we will come later, and help you".

A few minutes later, the IOM support worker urged them in English: "Get up, come on now, we have to go, our bus is waiting", and handed each of the family members a bottle of water. The Gurungs stared at him unmoving, clearly not understanding a word he said, until Niraj translated and assured them that we would visit them later. They were ushered outside, where a fierce breeze of cold air greeted the new arrivals. It was obvious that they were very cold, and even Durba rubbed his naked arms to warm them[213].

Welcome to Manchester

This detailed ethnographic anecdote demonstrates several relevant points. Firstly, established refugees perceive new arrivals as in need of support. It reveals the commitment of my informants to advise and assist them in what is perceived as a "very difficult" situation on arrival. It is exactly because governmental and non-governmental service provision are regarded as inadequate and "rushed" by my informants, that established refugees feel the need to support new arrivals[214]. As they have been in similar situations on arrival, established refugees know exactly what difficulties new arrivals are facing, and often mention that they "know better than the NGOs" who facilitate resettlement.

The perceived lack of empathy or care by service providers leads to RCOs feeling obliged to provide extra support, whilst still maintaining that assistance depends on kinship relations and community membership. As outlined above, the Gurungs were only received by us, rather than by other RCO

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[213] Bikram complained later that the IOM should tell people that "in England it's very cold, you must wear good clothes when you go, give your children good clothes". We only discovered later that the Gurungs had winter clothes packed in their luggage, as they have not been advised prior to their departure that it may be very cold in the UK in January.

[214] Support of new arrivals begins before resettlement by sending remittances to Nepal, which is only possible if established refugees acquired the economic means to do so. For example, the Gadal family sent funds to the Gurungs before they arrived in the UK.

spokespeople due to the fact that they are related to members of Takin (rather than Welfare) and that they are Hindus (rather than Christians). Therefore, solidarity, or the much emphasised equality amongst Bhutanese refugees has strict boundaries: support is only provided for the benefit of RCO *members* (also see Chapters 8 and 9).

If one does not join an organisation, less or no assistance is given, as was the case with Raja, as he later recalled when discussing his arrival in May 2013. Raja – whom we already encountered in previous chapters - settled in Bury, a suburb of Manchester dominated by Welfare members. A day after his arrival, Welfare spokespeople visited Raja's house, and offered support if – and only if – Raja and his household joined Welfare. Raja argued that he does not appreciate being "blackmailed" into any RCO, and as he refused to join the RCO, Welfare spokespeople did not provide support to him and his family on arrival. As a Christian convert, Raja and his family received support and advice from the Christian RCO *after* he joined their congregation in Rochdale. Raja has the advantage that he speaks almost fluent English, and that he lived in an urban area before through working near New Delhi (India) for many years. Therefore, he argues that the adjustment to living in the UK is not as difficult for him as for most other Bhutanese refugees, who do not speak English and have never set foot outside of the refugee camps in Nepal and who used to live in rural areas of Bhutan.

These examples demonstrate that whilst Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester emphasize in official and public statements that they offer support for *all* new arrivals in order to allow them to 'settle in' to their new lives, kinship relations, personal animosities and religion play a part in determining who "deserves" support and who does not. Yet, throughout my fieldwork, there was no individual or household that was ostracized from all RCOs – sooner or later, all Bhutanese refugees become members or affiliated themselves with one RCO or another, and receive support from them. The beginning of a new life in the UK is also the beginning (or, in some cases, continuation) of new relationships within a new Bhutanese refugee community.

The arrival scene also demonstrates that the period of transition from Nepal to the UK is not complete when touching down on British soil. The lack of language skills, the unfamiliarity with air travel, technologies, the weather and 'the way of life' impedes an immediate 'adaptation' to the new lives in the UK. Life may be 'beginning' on arrival, but as stated by one informant, the new arrivals "are like children, we have to patient with them. They are learning". They are not only learning to be in a new community – both the one comprised of Bhutanese refugees as well as the (British) host population – but also learn how to live this new life in the UK. In the following section I explore some of the issues and new experiences Bhutanese refugees have when arriving in the UK, and conclude the chapter with an illustration of how previously attained expectations about the UK and their lives there have to be carefully managed, in order to impede disappointment. In both cases, the Bhutanese refugee community plays a major part in supporting new arrivals during this time of adjustment.

Settling in

The arrival of Bhutanese refugees in the UK follows the same schedule and programme for service providers: IOM workers collect refugees from the airport, and bring them to their new accommodation, which are normally fully or partially furnished houses or flats. There they are received and welcomed by their case workers from RAUK and a Nepali translator. Firstly, the case workers and translator show the new arrivals their house. The refugees are inducted in household appliances with emphasis placed on health and safety. They are introduced to electric or gas stoves, stressing that the residents have to assure that it is off after cooking. They are told that a fridge and a freezer are not the same, outlining what belongs in a fridge and what should go into a freezer. When talking about her arrival, Daya recalled laughingly that initially she put all vegetables in the freezer, being surprised that they are frozen "like a stone". New arrivals are shown how a toilet flush works, and how to switch

on the shower and bath. Most have never used a shower before, and some older refugees still only take 'bucket showers': filling buckets with water and washing themselves with hand jugs. Then they are shown smaller kitchen appliances (e.g. kettle, washing machine, microwave), fire alarms and fire safety equipment (e.g. fire extinguisher and fire blankets). Last but not least, they are instructed in how a boiler and central heating works.

"They say 'press the button'"

The excitement about new technologies and appliances is recalled in hindsight, but the reality of arrival is very different and overwhelming. Unnayak wrote for the SOAS workshop publication:

> "Everything was ready for us when we arrived. Washing machines, can openers, electric ovens, stoves and central heating were new to most of us: in the beginning, we found it somewhat difficult to handle the kitchen equipment, particularly the electric stove. It took us a few weeks to learn our way around these things" (EBHR, 43: 190).

In a conversation with Yumi, she lingered on the "issue of buttons":

> "[Social workers] do everything quick, like on an assembly line, ticking all the boxes 'yes, we have shown and explained all of this', then they go home and get paid. The interpreter only translates what the social worker is saying. The arrivals are tired, exhausted, sad to leave [Nepal], but [the social workers] don't give them a break. They say 'press the button', but the new arrivals don't even know what a button is. People didn't eat for three days because they didn't know how a stove works"!

When I asked Yumi why the new arrivals would not ask questions or mention if they did not understand something, she emphasized the importance of RCOs:

"They are too shy to speak up and they don't speak English! But they are also too grateful! They tell me: 'Yumi, we are so happy! [The UK government] give us houses, unlimited stay, so why should we complain?' ... So, what do they do? They call us and the community. … Now, the community is good, they are organised, and they know when people arrive. ... They already buy things, cook and have everything ready. When the social workers leave, they go there and help them, explain everything again – not quick, … but slowly, so they can understand".

The equation of new arrivals with children was common, and often repeated in the field. I often heard my informants recall that they felt like children on arrival – tired, exhausted, worn-out, but also excited, happy and curious – and in need of learning, acquiring the know-how to live in an English house, urban space and community. The need to learn how to live in the UK is what makes community so relevant for new arrivals: whom should they ask for help once the case workers have left? Established refugees knew about these difficulties, as they had similar experiences and thus saw it as their responsibility to provide support in these confusing first days after arrival. Kiptinness et al. (2011: 84) report the same for Bhutanese refugees in the USA, highlighting that new arrivals rely on established refugees to disseminate information, especially how to get around the city, where to shop (for familiar groceries) and how to access temples and churches.

All informants arriving in the UK during my fieldwork expressed their gratitude for this community support provided by all three RCOs or individual refugees. They felt more comfortable and at ease to ask their fellow refugees to explain the electric stove for the third time, or why they should only boil water in a kettle rather than trying to make *chai* in it. Rukmini – a single mother of two teenage boys who arrived in May 2013 – summarised the feelings of many new arrivals:

"I would have been lost without [the community]. I was so scared when I came here, everything was new and our house was so big. I didn't like it here in the beginning, because I was so scared of doing something wrong. My boys tried everything in the house, but I told them to be careful – what if we break something? Will they send us back to Nepal or will we have to move out and live on the street? But then the community came, and explained everything to me. … They are so kind, and explain things slowly, and I was not scared to ask when I did not understand. ... I was only happy when they came to my house and helped me – I began to feel at home" (BRFP).

Other research (e.g. Williams, 2006) mirrors my findings that refugees trust other refugees' advice and information more than those of service providers. As discussed in Chapter 7, within *samaj* trust is important and indeed expected, and therefore, the established refugees' advice and support is seen as reliable by new arrivals.

Similar to Rukmini's family, the Gurungs were visited later that day in January by the Gadal and Bagale family, who had already prepared boxes and bags full of clothes, crockery, familiar groceries and some other items such as alarm clocks[215], washing powder and *puja*[216] items. If children are amongst new arrivals, the welcome committee would bring toys and notebooks. But the arrival and welcome is not only marked by instructions and gifts, but also by coming together as a family and community, sitting together sharing memories and gossip whilst enjoying *chai*. New arrivals talk about their journey as well as bringing news from the camp. Established refugees share gossip and news about the local community in the UK, and bring the new arrivals up to date about births, marriages and deaths.

On their arrival day, the Gurungs showed that they were happy about the

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[215] Alarm clocks were important after arrival, as new arrivals have a very strict schedule of appointments they have to attend in the first few days and weeks after arrival. If they miss an appointment this could have severe consequences for service provision and a delay in pay-out of benefit and welfare payments refugees are entitled to in the UK.

[216] *Puja* are Hindu prayer rituals conducted either at home (at the home-made puja shrine, displaying various Hindu god statues) or in *mandir* (Hindu temple).

community visit (which I attended with my informants). Mrs. Gurung even dared an almost toothless smile, laughing about the stories and anecdotes told during the gathering. The Gadals already cooked meals in big pots, which they brought from Longsight to Swindon (where the Gurungs were settled) by taxi. Daya heated the food on the stove, slowly explaining to Mrs. Gurung how stoves work whilst stirring the vegetable curry. Both Mrs. and Mr. Gurung remarked on the rushed welcome at the airport, and the fact that the case workers and the translator explained everything too quickly for them to understand.

Immediately after arrival, the priorities for new arrivals are to get a UK bank account and visit the Job Centre (both with their assigned caseworker), in order to get welfare and benefit payments. But because they lack the language skills and expertise, and although they have case workers supporting them throughout the first weeks after arrival, established refugees still have to invest time and in some instances money to support new arrivals (also see Chapter 8).

Although life may be "beginning', many new arrivals experience disenchantment with the UK, contrary to their initial amazement with technology, consumer culture and infrastructures. Bhutanese refugees need to learn to manage their expectations on arrival. Often, new arrivals are astonished by the lack of property-ownership (none of my informants could afford to buy a house or car), as well as the marginalisation from the labour market amongst established refugees. They expected that the UK (or the global North) would allow all of them to purchase property and goods within only a few months, gain well-paid employment, and "have the good life", as one of my informants once joked. In the following section I outline how the Bhutanese refugee community – both as *samaj* and RCOs - attempts to manage these expectations amongst both new arrivals and well-established refugees.

Managing Expectations

The Nobel laureate Amartya Sen (1979, cited in Fischer, 2014: 9) asserted that economic development and "freedom" is the capacity of a person to pursue a life that they deem "worthy", having the agency and capabilities "to act with intention, to envision and make changes in one's life, to aspire"[217]. Appadurai (2013, in Fischer, 2014: 5-6; 11) goes further by claiming that aspirations are signifiers of empowerment and individual agency, to stir one's destiny towards a meaningful and valuable life. But as my fieldwork showed, individuals are confined to the environment and economic and social context in which they find themselves.

When talking about their arrival in the UK, most Bhutanese refugees speak of their anticipations, fuelled by COELTs during the resettlement preparations in the IOM compound in Kathmandu (Chapter 4). As one of my informants stated: "I was very excited, because it was a new home, new emotions. It was different, a new environment, everything was new" (BRFP). In the same breath he added: "Yes, it was difficult to go to places, but I got used to it – it is interesting! I have made new friends. It's good now". Other comments mirrored those above: "When we first landed at the airport in the UK, I was nervous, because I didn't know what to do, and where to go. It was all new to us" (BFRP). Both expressed the excitement about experiencing novelty – starting from flying in a plane for the first time, to arriving on a different continent, a different country, with a different language, and different way of life. However, both expressed their loss of orientation: they did not know where to go and how to do things – all was new and unknown, which is experienced both in a positive (by being excited) and negative way (by needing support).

Bhutanese refugees learnt a few elements of British and European history during COELT, and apparently their teachers highlighted that the Industrial Revolution began in the UK, especially in Manchester. This fuelled the

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[217] Sen in turn defines (economic and material) poverty as the "absence" of these freedoms and the lack of choice over one's decisions (in Fischer, 2014: 9-10).

Bhutanese refugees' expectations, that the UK is an industrial nation, and they would easily find a job. For instance, when Niraj and I sat in a park near Longsight on a sunny August afternoon, and we talked about Niraj's prospects of employment, he laughed hesitantly, and remarked:

> "You know, in Nepal they show us pictures of Manchester – you know, old pictures. [The teachers] say that Industrial Revolution starts here, and we see picture of big, big factory, … and they say: 'You can work in factories when you arrive in England.' … So, when I come here, I expect to see factories, you know, big big factories [he stretches his arms in front of him], and I can get job very easy, no problem. I come here, and look, and think: 'Where are factories?' ... Nothing is here, you know, nothing, no factory, no jobs. Where [do] people work here?"

Niraj's comment is reflected in many other statements by Bhutanese refugees, and verified my sensation that the UK (and the global North) was 'oversold' to them by service providers and Western volunteers in Nepal, raising the refugees' expectations far beyond what they actually experience after arrival. RAUK highlights this in their guidance literature, claiming that refugees often have "unrealistic expectations about life in the UK", but hopes are not met due to the "extremely competitive labour market" in the UK (RA and RC, 2008: 11; 15).

This shows that although, according to Jackson (2011, cited in Fischer, 2014: 6), all humans share "existential discontent" which gives rise to hopes and aspirations (and thus engenders many of our actions in daily life), the fulfilment of these expectations still depends on the individual's position within a society[218]. Individual aspirations, however much hoped and worked for, are still constrained by "opportunity structures", such as laws and regulations, as well as economic circumstances and resources. As Fischer (ibid.) emphasized, individuals may have the agency to act on their choices, but these choices are

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[218] Appadurai (2004: 69) states that (for example economically) privileged individuals have greater "navigational capacity" and opportunities to realize their goals than more disadvantaged people.

structured and constrained by political and economic processes that "transcend the individual", which in turn leads to disenchantment (with, for example the UK and refugee resettlement).

Especially when it comes to acquiring property or goods (such as for example cars), as well as gaining employment, my informants' sense of disappointment is palpable, particularly in conversations with young, 25 to 35-year-old males, who are expected by the community to provide for their families. Lalan is in his early thirties, underwent training in health management and nursing by the UN during their time in the camps, and has a wife and an infant daughter. Lalan finds it very difficult to gain employment in the UK, or to have access to training or education allowing him to continue as a health care worker, as he lacks formal qualifications, such as GSCEs or A-Levels. With a look of disappointment on this face, he remarked:

> "Soon after we get resettled in the UK, I thought we will be able to get job, earn money, and buy our own house and car, and improve our living standard….and prosper to lead a luxurious life. But it doesn't seem so, because it is difficult to find a job" (BRFP).

After a short pause, he then added: "I still hope to get a job in the future, and lead a better life".

Life in the UK may be "new" and perhaps "better" than in the refugee camps in Nepal. But their expectations raised before resettlement are not fulfilled – a fact which some find difficult. Unnayak – as mentioned before, a trained and experienced veterinary doctor– once commented with a bitter tone: "I think my working days are over", referring to the fact that after more than two years, he was still unable to gain steady, white collar labour[219] in order to support his family.

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[219] As an educated man, Unnayak aims to obtain employment in the white collar sector, especially in veterinary medicine or health care. He held posts as a Housing Officer (for Salford Council), freelance translator (for the British Home Office and Border Agency) and community support worker, but until the end of my fieldwork was not able to secure steady, contractual employment.

For young refugees, who arrived when they were about 18 or 19 years of age, life in the UK becomes a struggle to remain optimistic, whilst coming to terms with the competitive and demanding UK labour market. Sameer (26), who was trained as a Cancer Awareness Officer in Nepalese camps, summarised the sentiment of many Bhutanese refugees:

"I imaged that after coming to England, I would be working and earning a lot of money [he laughs]. It hasn't yet come true, but maybe it will come true in the future. I am studying at the moment, and it takes a while. But back then, I used to think that: As soon as I arrive I get a job, have a good job, I thought like that when I was in the camp. [He hesitates] But it didn't happen. I have to learn the language first. Hopefully it will be alright in the future" (BRFP).

Anthropologists argue that aspirations are embedded in culture and society, rather than the individual. That is, the aimed-for "good life" depends on shared socio-cultural values and moral evaluations (Appadurai, 2004: 62, 69; Bunnell and Goh, 2012: 1; Fischer, 2014: 7-12). For example, Bhutanese refugees' definition of wealth does not involve a high salary and bank balance, but the ownership of property and consumer goods (e.g. mobile phones, branded items, clothes). My informants often remarked that whilst they lacked the financial and material resources to purchase goods in Nepal, they now very much participate in consumer culture, which they also see as a means to become (what they perceive to be) "British" (see Chapter 5).

Despite these issues, their agency and capacity to aspire is not diminished (Bunnell and Goh, 2012: 2). Yet, to have expectations requires the realistic assessments of ability and possibility, compromises and trade-offs (Fischer, 2014: 2). Here, the Bhutanese community (both as *samaj* and RCOs) enter the stage, in order to manage the refugees' expectations and help to fulfil aspirations where possible. Bhutanese refugees support each other to for example purchase necessary items (e.g. computers), access infrastructures (e.g. free language classes), and even fulfil larger ambitions, such as when the

whole community across the globe lend funds to Kanchan and Daya to open a corner shop in Manchester.

At the same time, however, established refugees remind the new arrivals to carefully manage their funds, as they have to keep enough welfare payments to cover rent and bills, as well as daily expenses. Some learnt the hard way, and recalled later that they spent their whole first welfare payment on consumer items, and then had to borrow money from the community in order to pay for rent and utilities.

Established refugees emphasize to new arrivals that they have to acquire English as quickly as possible, send their children to a "good school", and work "somewhere" (both illegally and temporary). Young new arrivals (under 25) are integrated in their peer groups, and urged by them to work in Asian businesses to gain "pocket money" for themselves and their families. At the same time, new arrivals are reminded that the UK is not what they have been told in COELTs, and that gaining steady employment, learning English and "integrating" is "not that simple", but that it can take a long time to obtain a job, property and goods.

Established refugees are often unable to offer support beyond advice and small sums of money, as they themselves still struggle to manage their previously held expectations of "life beginning" in the UK. Nevertheless, new arrivals greatly benefit from their long-term experience in the UK. Here, we should also be reminded that the more expertise refugees have acquired, the higher they are regarded within the Bhutanese community (see Chapter 8). New arrivals draw on the advice they receive from these experienced community members. For established refugees, support provision to new arrivals fosters reciprocity within *samaj*, and engenders a sense of purpose and value (see Spicer, 208: 504), which in turn eases the disappointments experienced by many of my informants. As a few informants remarked during my fieldwork when talking about their involvement in the community: "at least, we have something to do".

Conclusion

Resettlement is 'settling in' a place, a nation state, and a culture previously unknown, as well as in a new community comprised of both Bhutanese refugees and non-refugees. Bhutanese refugees coming from Nepal do not arrive into a social vacuum: RCOs, relationships and animosities are already in place. They become part of an existing social network, with new hierarchies based on social, economic and educational capital (rather than traditional signifiers of authority). It is exactly in this time of arrival, in which new alliances, belongings and identities are forged[220], and with it possible animosities between people, as I show in the subsequent chapter.

It appears as if policy makers and service providers assume that resettlement (and the assumed liminality of refugees) ends within a few months after arrival when so-called 'self-sustainability' is achieved. But the in-betweeness Bhutanese refugees experience, as well as their shared history of refugee-ness does not simply disappear by providing a house and welfare payments. The ethnographic vignettes in this chapter show that the phase of liminality and uncertainty still persists two or three years after my informants' arrival in the UK. When touching down on British soil, one fact remains: for better or worse, this country is their new 'home' now, and they "have to make the best out of it", as one of my informants once remarked. Life is indeed "beginning", in a country where they are allowed to work, to go to school, and pursue whatever they wish – within the confines of laws, means, ability, education and availability of services and infrastructures.

Resettlement, as stated in a private conversation with a fellow researcher working with Bhutanese refugees in the USA, is "unsettling", especially on arrival. Bhutanese RCOs highlight their responsibility to tend to the needs of

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[220] However, I do not argue that refugees arrive in the UK as a *tabula rasa* – a blank slate on which new characteristics, perhaps even British-ness is simply inscribed upon. Each new arrival brings with him or her their own individual story about their lives in Bhutan and in refugee camps in Nepal, their kinship and personal relations, religion and previous educational or professional expertise.

new arrivals, in order to ease their experience of resettlement. In reality, however, it is often exactly these organisations that 'unsettle' Bhutanese refugees, and add further burdens on new arrivals. The decision to join one RCO over the other in the first weeks after arrival may have long-term consequences, impacting on Bhutanese refugees' experience of resettlement and life in the UK. Nevertheless, these communities provide the necessary support new arrivals need in order to settle in, making both *samaj* and RCOs an indispensable support network in refugee resettlement.

In the following chapter, I explore the creation of similarity – of *samaj*, the 'native' understanding of community. Amit and Rapport (2002: Loc 508) remind us that we can only understand formally institutionalised communities, such as RCOs, by gaining an insight into personal social networks such as *samaj*, as RCOs draw on these relationships. Only through contextualizing and illustrating the various perceptions of community amongst Bhutanese refugees are we to understand the complexity of the term, and why community – albeit being a contested notion – is still highly relevant for Bhutanese refugees in resettlement. I outline that Bhutanese refugee communities are built on notions of mutuality and trust. But community is not only an abstract construct: rather, it is a lived experience in form of social interactions. However, I also demonstrate that similar to notions of identity (Chapter 5), my informants' understandings of social relationships are changing in resettlement. In turn, their personal social networks are influenced by RCO divisions.

Chapter 7 – *Samaj*: Community in Context

In the previous chapters, I have highlighted that Bhutanese refugees in the UK are persons in transition, which brings about new definitions, values, norms and social practices. I have explored how Nepalese settlers migrated throughout the southern Himalaya region, and through settlement in various countries, such as Bhutan, experienced change. The exodus from Bhutan marks another phase of transition, and the settlement in the seven refugee camps in Nepal brought about further changes, and relationships were again re-shuffled. As I highlighted in Chapter 4, my informants' changing perceptions of norms, values and practices, as well as the meaning of community, are influenced by the social re-engineering programmes employed by Western aid and relief agencies operating within refugee camps. Resettlement to third countries disrupted relationships and networks established in the Nepalese camps, as Bhutanese refugees were dispersed in the various resettlement nations. In the UK, new relationships and networks are created, and through the intervention of policy, education and the environment, norms and practices are changing once more.

However, as discussed in the Introduction, my informants are not liminal persons that are now undergoing 're-integration' in, for example, the British host population. Both the flight from Bhutan as well as resettlement to third countries did not, as some argue (e.g. Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 91), "destroy" relationships, values, practices and people's identities. I contend that my informants have been a community in transition for the past two centuries (through migration in the Himalaya region), and they constantly forge, refashion and maintain new and old networks, norms and activities. There was no unique 'Nepalese Bhutanese' community or identity that has been dismantled and was then reproduced in Nepal, and which my informants strive to maintain and recreate in resettlement. Rather, these aspects of their lives were constantly changing in Bhutan, Nepal and now in the UK, and social

networks are established and maintained based on their environment. Bhutanese refugees' notion of community as *samaj*, is highly relevant in everyday life. However, *samaj* is neither a re-creation of old relationships as experienced in Nepal or even Bhutan marked by social cohesion (as policy makers and service providers would have it), nor is it an entirely 'new' community created in resettlement. Rather, *samaj* is a combination of both, old values bestowed upon these relationships by them, and new networks created with refugees and non-refugees in resettlement – relationships which are now informed by social re-engineering, as well as my informants' experiences and personal preferences. What remained constant throughout Bhutan, Nepal and the UK is the overall assumption that community exists and is highly relevant. As one Bhutanese refugee explained:

> "We lived with a community in Bhutan. We also had a community in Nepal. We also have our community here. It is not possible to live alone without community".

Here, my informant is using the notion of *a* community, rather than *the* community. As I explore in this chapter, *samaj* is a decidedly important notion for Bhutanese refugees, and is maintained on a daily basis through social interactions. But what this community *is*, how it is structured, and most importantly, who is *not* part of *samaj,* is changing in resettlement. Therefore, I explore what *samaj* is from my informants' point of view, and how it they experience it on a daily basis in resettlement in the UK.

The importance of community was most clearly articulated by Kavi during the BRFP (see Introduction). Kavi is in his late thirties, married and a father of two infant sons[221]. Kavi summarized my informants' view of community:

> "It is said that we are social animals, we have to socialise in our community. … Community is like an organ in our body. Lack of

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[221] Kavi is, in general, an outspoken and highly active person, and enjoys "philosophizing" (as others around him sometimes mockingly remarked), which he mainly does in English to emphasize the perceived validity of the point he tries to make. This reflects my informants' notion of 'being British' discussed in Chapter 5.

community is similar to a lack of an organ in our body. ... So it is not possible to live alone without the community" (BRFP).

Here, Kavi employs the notion of community as an almost biological fact, existing *a priori* from cultural specificities. He implies that social relations are an inherent human quality, and that similar to 'organs in our body', we cannot exist independently of our social relations. All my informants reiterate that community is created through being with one another, sharing and interacting. Here, the notion of community is about social interactions, rather than an abstract construct, as I explore further below.

For my informants, *samaj* is essentially based on and created by four elements: mutuality, trust, reciprocity and social interaction (see Figure 18[222]). The interplay of these four elements determines the intensity of a *samaj*, and whether or not social networks are maintained.
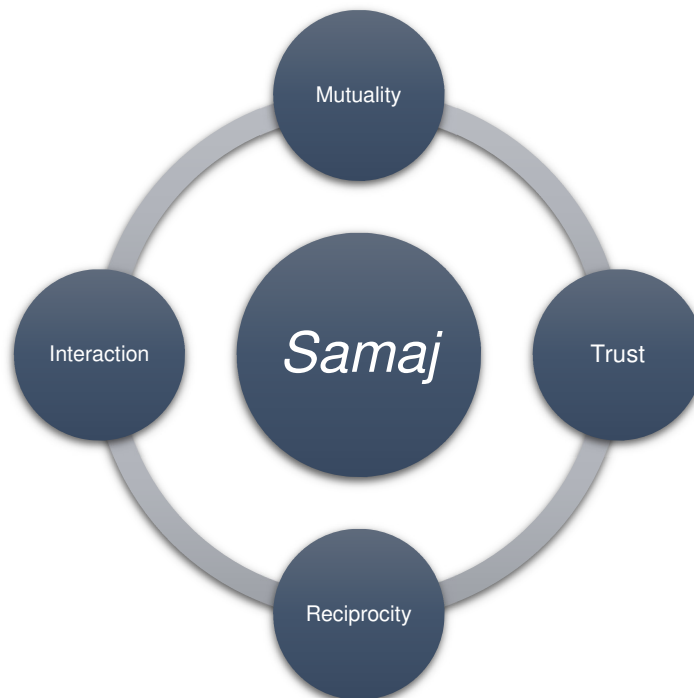
Figure 18: The Four Elements of *samaj*

In times of uncertainty (such as in resettlement), social networks become the most important tools of support and indicators of belonging (Chatty, 2010:

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[222] Author's own.

466), and are therefore *not* (contrary to Anderson's [2006] imagined communities – see Introduction) only based on 'imagined' similarities, but on actual face-to-face interactions. Individuals can, of course, be part of several communities simultaneously, and illustrated by the formation of RCOs in Chapters 8 and 9. There is not one, all-encompassing *samaj* of Bhutanese refugees in the UK, but several smaller communities which form, overlap and change over time depending on individual preferences as well as circumstances. *Samaj* can stretch from the smallest nuclear family, and local Bhutanese refugee network, to RCOs in the UK and the global diaspora of Nepalese Bhutanese. I argue that similar to other norms, values and practices that are changing in a community-in-transition, personal social relationships are significantly restructured in the context of resettlement. An understanding of my informants' perception of what *samaj* is, is relevant to comprehend the formation and divisions of RCOs, as explored in later chapters.

In the following section, I outline what *samaj* means for my informants, and how these relationships are created, maintained and experienced on a daily basis. I also explore the changes of these experiences brought about through resettlement in the UK, and the impact of *samaj* on RCOs and vice versa. As I attempt to disentangle these complexities and changes, we should be reminded of Redfield's (1960) caution:

> "As soon as our attention turns from a community as a body of houses and tools and institutions to the states of mind of particular people, we are turning to the exploration of something immensely complex and difficult to know" (cited in Rapport and Overing, 2000:64-5).

Samaj

Samaj is an idiom for personal social relationships amongst my informants. "I meet my community/*samaj*", or "I spend my weekend with my community/*samaj*" were commonly uttered phrases amongst those I worked with. On several occasions I had to clarify whom exactly they meant, and often the term 'community' (both in English and Nepali) replaced the term *pariwar*[223] (family) in everyday conversations. When raising this issue during a dinner with some informants, they explained that, "of course, family is community". My informant Buddhi, chuckled during our dinner conversation, and remarked in the simplest Nepali for me to understand:

> "Nicole, *pariwar* community cha! *Sathi* community cha! Nicole community cha!" [Family is community! Friend is community! Nicole is community!]

From Buddhi's statement, we can see that *samaj* is an all-encompassing term[224], comprised of family and friends within the Bhutanese refugee community, as well as non-refugees, such as myself, who (as I describe below) went from being guests to becoming members of the community.

But communities are not "indefinitely portable and decontextualizable" (Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 1344). Relationships and communities emerge in multiple processes of social interactions as well as personal and socio-cultural values, preferences and intimacies (ibid.: Loc 1389). The importance of these networks reflect the notion of community as "personal social networks", which are "ego-based", and emerge out of "particular individuals' efforts, experiences and history" (ibid.: Loc 508). In the context of my fieldwork, these personal

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[223] Or *bhitriya* or *jahan*, all meaning family

[224] Later dictionary research revealed that the word *samaj* originates in words for 'tribe' or caste groups, and one's *samaj* would denote someone's caste affiliation. However, when probing this matter, my informants stated that in today's use of Nepali, the word is more often used to broadly mean 'society'. As one of my informants stated when discussing the terminology: "Nowadays, community referring to caste is shadowed, nobody understands community refers to caste. The concept of people is changing according to the change in globalization and modernisation".

efforts are most expressed in the substantial amounts of time and (inter-) actions Bhutanese refugees invest in these personal social networks (Colson, 2003: 5-6; Azarya, 1996: 155). My informants place importance on establishing and fostering reciprocity, mutuality and trust within *samaj*, and it is within these personal relationships in which interaction takes place, and the notion of community becomes tangible as a lived, social experience.

In this section, I dissect these elements of *samaj*, and in turn emphasize how these notions altered in resettlement in the UK. As I progress throughout these elements, I use myself as an example, outlining how I moved from being considered a guest (*pahuna*) to being a friend (*sathi*) for my informants, which then progressed into a *mit* relation (see below: friendships that gain the same relevance as kinship relations), and therefore becoming part of the family (*pariwar*), referred to by my informants as community (*samaj*). Similar to any 'outsider', including other Bhutanese refugees who did not know one another before resettlement, my positioning in the field depended on the same concepts of mutuality, trust, reciprocity and interaction. Only through employing these elements in daily interactions during my fieldwork was I able to become a member of some *samaj*; or, as I discuss in Chapter 9, failed to become a member of another *samaj* (for example, by being affiliated with a 'rival' RCO).

However, the social relationships I describe merely offer a snapshot of my informants at a particular time in particular circumstances. Some notions and symbolic constructions of personal relationships have been maintained since Bhutan and Nepal, and offer a sense of certainty in a time of transition. However, meanings of interactions and hierarchies of *samaj* are adapting to the new lives in resettlement, and the novel ideas and values they obtain from living in the global North[225]. As Mines and Lamb (2010b:12) argue by looking at South Asian immigrants in the UK, migrants (especially individuals from this geographical area) undergo "crucial dialectic processes of interchange between … local and global cultural forms". Moreover, throughout this chapter, and indeed, this thesis, we have to be reminded that communities operate

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[225] For example, Euro-American notions of nuclear families (comprising of biological parents and children) are different to my informants' understanding of what constitutes a family – see below.

through 'othering', and membership in a *samaj* is determined by creating similarity and difference. 'Othering' is largely informed by employing and reinterpreting the four elements of *samaj*, which I outline below.

Mutuality and the creation of similarity

One informant once remarked that Bhutanese refugees perceive themselves to be "all the same", regardless of the refugees' background, gender, religion and personal history, and therefore have to support one another. As mentioned above, some researchers looking at refugee communities (e.g. Mortland, 1987) believe that refugees in exile (both in camps and in resettlement) create some sort of *communitas* which "transcends distinctions of rank, age, kinship position" (Turner, 1967: 100). From this viewpoint, the experience of becoming and being a refugee (refugee-ness, as I call it, see Chapter 5), of life in the camps as well as resettlement, removes all hierarchies and differentiations in favour of an unequivocally egalitarian community, which shares values, norms and practices. On the one hand, this may be true for my informants, who feel a sense of mutuality towards *all* Bhutanese refugees, and acknowledge a similarity in experience. Yet, although they share refugee-ness (see Chapter 5) and create *samaj* predominantly with other Bhutanese refugees, these relationships are *not* necessarily equal, without hierarchies and internal divergences. Mutuality for my informants does not denote equality, but rather a sense of similarity, based on refugee-ness, which is grounded in familiarity and reciprocity (see below). But within these mutual relationships still exist hierarchies, although as I explore in the following chapters, these hierarchies are changing and adapting (see Chapter 8). Moreover, community members share ideas, values and norms, which unite them and allow them to create boundaries to others who do not share the same ideas and behaviours (see Rapport et al., 2000:62-3).

Nevertheless, one pre-condition of *samaj* is an (imagined) sense of sameness, expressed in, for example, the taken-for-granted assumption that similarity is

found predominantly in networks of *pariwar* - (extended) family[226] and friends (*mit*-relations, see below). Bhutanese refugees perceive kin as the 'smallest common denominator' between them[227]. But as Cohen (1985: 98) argues, relationships are "repositories of meaning" based on the social discourse in which it emerges. Personal relationships with non-kin are highly flexible and alterable, although the relevance given to *pariwar* and *mit* relations (see below) remains constant. Although social networks in both Bhutan and Nepal have been disrupted through (forced) migration, *pariwar* and *mit* relations continue to be maintained. Even if separated in between the seven refugee camps in Nepal, regular visits to family members were common and indeed – as my informants often recalled – an obligation, as one of my younger informants' put it: "Family is family - you like them or not, you have to help".

The importance of community may not be unexpected, as in South Asia from where my informants originate (both Bhutan and Nepal), the extended family is "the central site of everyday life" and more importantly, the stage on which "persons move through life-course passages" such as birth, youth, marriage and death (Mines and Lamb. 2010b: 9). Participation in events, such as naming-ceremonies for newborns, rites of passages (see below), weddings and funerals, is a social obligation for Bhutanese refugees. Attending special events is a signifier of mutuality and reciprocity, and they regard non-participation (except with valid excuses such as work commitments) in these events as rejections of personal relationships (see below), which impact negatively on the intimacy my informants experience with others. That is, kin and friendship affiliations may be based on their 'imagined' understanding of mutuality, but it still requires the investment of time and resources, in order to maintain these relationships.

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[226] In the past anthropology regarded kinship as the "*recognition of a relationship between persons based on descent or marriage*" (Stone, 1997: 5). However, Carsten's (2004) work addressed broader conceptions of kinship not based on 'blood' relations - that is, biological relatedness – but on, for example, shared experiences, actions and living arrangements. Similarly, Bhutanese refugees do not necessarily speak about kinship as determined through biological descent, but through mutuality (see below and Carsten [2004]).

[227] However the notion of what 'family' *(pariwar)* means, is influenced by Western ideas of the nuclear family, which in turn has an impact on how and why these relationships are maintained and lived.

RCOs are, for the most part, extensions of these personal social networks based on perceived similarity. As Amit and Rapport (2002: Loc 508) put it, although "institutional groupings have a structure that transcends any one individual, they are nonetheless fundamentally shaped through the relationships and interactions of their members". In order to understand how Bhutanese refugees structure these close personal networks, I offer a brief examination of kinship structures and hierarchies amongst Bhutanese refugees in the UK, as well as the formation of *mit*-relations

Pariwar & mit

In my informants' understanding, *pariwar* (family) is comprised of three or four generations – grandparents, parents, children and (great) grandchildren - and normally includes extended kin such as uncles, aunts, cousins and in-laws. In most cases, these families are headed by the oldest male or the oldest son. These hierarchical structures are continued in institutionalized communities such as RCOs, in which educated men hold all positions of power, such as chairperson, secretary or treasurer (see Chapter 8). Decision-making powers are mostly in the hands of men – whether it be within families, personal social networks, or formalized community organisations.

However, in resettlement traditional gender roles are slowly changing[228]. Men engage in domestic duties, such as cleaning and cooking, as well as being closely involved in child rearing. Also, women are far more financially independent in resettlement in the UK, as they have, for instance, their own bank accounts and receive their own governmental welfare and benefit payments. This allows women to rely less on their spouses, and leaves them to decide for themselves what they want to spend their money on – contrary to their lives in Bhutan and Nepal, where men held most financial and material resources. This means that a few women in the Bhutanese refugee community gain power in their families and *samaj*, and are highly respected individuals.

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[228] Female empowerment and gender equality is also one of the aims of social re-engineering (RA et al, 2008: 12-4;31-2; 39-40). As mentioned in the Introduction, much could be written on the changing gender roles amongst Bhutanese refugees, but the scope of this work does not allow for a detailed elaboration. I aim to provide further details in future publications following the completion of my PhD.

The Bagale household is an example of these new hierarchies, in which traditional gender roles are changing. Daya and Kanchan (both in their mid-thirties) arrived in the UK in Autumn 2010, together with Kanchan's elderly parents (70 plus), and their two sons Manendra (15) and Tarun (8). Daya's parents resettled at the same time with Daya's younger siblings (the Gadal household), and both families live in close proximity in Longsight. Kanchan fought with alcoholism during their time in the refugee camps, and Daya confided in me that their marriage was a struggle throughout the almost twenty years in Nepal. She recalled that once they arrived in the UK, she gave her husband the ultimatum: "'You stop drink, or I have a divorce.' I say to him, that here [in the UK] divorce is easy, and he lose everything." Following Daya's ultimatum, I have observed Kanchan drinking beer only on special occasions, and he referred to himself as a "house man", which denotes his role and duty in the household, cleaning, cooking and caring for his elderly parents. Daya is in charge of the Bagale household in Longsight, and Bhutanese refugees refer to their semi-detached house as "Daya's house". She is the main tenant, pays all bills, attends English classes, and at the time of writing runs a successful corner-shop with her husband in the city centre of Manchester. Daya obtained her status by being exceptionally fast in acquiring English (in comparison with her husband) and by being a very outspoken and confident young woman.

Similarly, young refugees in resettlement demand mutuality from their elders and become so-called 'liminal experts' in resettlement, gaining authority and status within the community (see Chapter 8). For example, young people traditionally live with their parents until their wedding day, and in the patrilocal tradition, newlyweds move in with the groom's parents and extended kin, whereby it is the eldest son's and his wife's duty to care for the parents[229]. However, these practices are changing in resettlement in the UK, and several young couples try to resist the patrilocal tradition, and residency became, to an

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[229] Care in this context means elderly care, such as cooking and cleaning for elderly family members, helping them with grocery shopping, supporting them in their daily activities, and helping them to the bathroom and cleaning themselves. Although throughout my fieldwork, no community member was in need of 24h care or was bound to the bed, this kind of care would also be provided by family members.

extent, ambivocal or neolocal, living in their own accommodation separate from their parents and in-laws (although staying in close proximity, normally in the same area of the city).

For example, Rani eloped with Sudeep in Summer 2013 and married him against her parents' wishes[230]. Rani and her husband moved to a different area of Manchester, neither close to her nor her husband's kin. The young couple Nacha and Bal also resisted Bal's parents' call to move in with them, and live in their own two-bedroom flat in Salford, about thirty minutes away from Longsight where their closest family lives. As Nacha emphasized, she wants to have "her own space". Similar arrangements are reported amongst (voluntary) migrants from South Asia across the UK: Kathleen Hall's (2010: 453) work on British Sikhs in London outlines the experience of some young (educated) informants, who aim to move away from their parents after marriage. Hall argues that the "fantasy of moving out on their own" is based on her young informants' wish to "enjoy domestic privacy [her informants] imagine exist in British nuclear families". This notion of creating one's own space, independently of family members was expressed by several, if not all of my young informants regardless of the marital status. This does not, however, signify that kin-relations are not important or maintained on a regular basis.

Samaj includes not only family, but also friends, which can become so-called *mit* relations. For my informants, *mit* relations are a practice continued from Bhutan and Nepal, and are described by Evans (2009: 159) as special forms of relationships in which "unrelated families treat each other as kin". Similar to kin, *mit* relations are based on mutuality and reciprocity, and therefore Bhutanese refugees make no distinction between kin and *mit* relations. Consequently, it was often difficult for me to tell who was (biologically) related to whom or married, as my informants behaved the same way with *mit* as with

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[230] They eloped only 'in a sense': Rani's parents were against the marriage, as they regarded her too young to marry (she was 18), and should finish her college education first (she was in her third year of college, training to become a hairdresser). However, Sudeep's parents were in favour of the wedding and organised it at a Methodist community centre in Ashton. Members of the (Bhutanese Welfare) community attended the wedding, as did Rani's siblings and other family members (but not her parents). Yet, on their wedding day they did visit Rani's parents in Bury, and by now, their marriage seems to be accepted. Note that they are not legally married, according to the law of the UK, as no civil wedding took place, nor was an official registrar present.

pariwar, and addressed each other in kinship terms regardless of their 'actual' kinship relation. Close friends are referred to as *chhora* (son) and *chori* (daughter); *baa* (father) and *aamaa* (mother); *bhai* (brother), *didi* (older sister) and *bahini* (younger sister); and *uncle* or *auntie*. Only when it comes to specific events and (Hindu) rituals, such as *Bhai Tika*[231], are kinship relations more important and considered more important than *mit* relations, although even this was slowly changing during my fieldwork.

Due to the limited contact with non-Nepalese Bhutanese people in Bhutan and Nepal, *mit* relations were previously only established with other Nepalese Bhutanese. In resettlement, however, *mit* relations are established with 'outsiders' – mostly through creating trust and investing time and resources in social interactions. Soon after I began fieldwork, I too was referred to as *didi* or *bahini* (depending on my age in relation to the person) or *chori*, and I called older people (over 50) *aamaa* (mother) or *baa* (father), as well as *uncle* or *auntie*. My close relationship with Maya and Sameer, for example, resulted in me being their witness at their civil wedding in Manchester in summer 2013. I moved from being *pahuna* (guest) to *sathi* (friend) and ultimately a *mit* relation to some informants, as I explore below.

Moreover, kinship may engender within my informants an automatic feeling of mutuality, expressed in reciprocity. However, this mutuality does not inevitably generate trust, and therefore *pariwar* and *mit* may not always be considered *samaj*, as I illustrate further below.

Becoming a member of samaj

In order for an outsider (non-kin) – for example, a white European woman conducting research – to become a member of *samaj*, mutuality has to be established. When I arrived in the field, my informants considered me a guest

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[231] *Bhai Tika* is part of the Hindu *Tihar* festival in Nepali Hinduism, whereby sisters apply *tika* on the forehead of their brothers, signifying protection and longevity. *Tika* is a thick, sticky paste made of rice, red powder, and water or yoghurt, which is applied to the forehead. Although, as my informants remarked, *Bhai Tika* is traditionally from sister to brother (regardless of age and seniority), in resettlement, siblings apply *tika* to each other's forehead, and share small presents.

(*pahuna*), and treated me with the utmost respect and formal hospitality. For example, during the first few months of my fieldwork, *chai* and food were always served to me, and I was not allowed to bring my dishes to the kitchen after I finished eating. For my informants, *pahuna* signifies an unequal relationship of obligation to serve me, rather than mutuality. However, as fieldwork progressed, we established a mutual relationship: Bhutanese refugees spent time with me, shared their experiences and everyday routines, whilst I assisted them to improve their English, supported them when dealing with British bureaucracy (e.g. forms to fill in for case workers or governmental agencies), and helped them with their RCOs. By forging a reciprocal relationship, I moved from being *pahuna* to being *sathi* to some of my informants. In a few households, I was allowed to bring my dishes to the kitchen, helped making *chai* or coffee, cleaned the house with them, and even served other Bhutanese refugees[232] who were visiting households. This was the time when I moved from being a guest to being a member of *samaj*, who can move freely in refugee households, and participate in these symbolic practices as an equal member of the community.

Sunil - a Nepali migrant who came to the UK as a student and later stayed as a labour migrant - experienced a similar movement from being a translator for Refugee Action supporting UK service providers with new arrivals, to becoming a close friend to some of my informants, and is held in high esteem amongst Takin members today. Here, the element of reciprocity plays an important role: as both Sunil and I supported Bhutanese refugees, we were reciprocated with shelter, food, company and social interaction. As Sunil noted on several occasions, the Gadals are his family now, and he calls them mother, father, sister and brother. In turn he is referred to as son or brother by the Gadals and their extended family[233]. Sunil took on responsibilities in the household like the

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[232] The commensality of food and drink (*paskanu* – to serve food – see below) is highly relevant for Bhutanese refugees. The kitchen, where food is prepared, is a highly symbolic space reflecting ideas of pollution (Evans, 2009: 156-7). For instance, in the past upper caste Hindu refugees had their food prepared separately and barely shared food with lower castes or converts (to other religions). However, as Evans (2009) outlines, these practices already changed in the refugee camps for pragmatic reasons – for example, as the bamboo huts where refugees lived were merely a single room with a stone or clay hearth, it was impractical to maintain the idea of the kitchen as a highly regulated space.

[233] In 2014, this personal network was transformed into a kinship relationship by the two unmarried Gadal brothers Niraj and Bikram travelling to Nepal to marry two of Sunil's first cousins.

other family members and helps them with their English language skills. In the same way, the Sinha household has a regular house guest in Nitin, a Nepali labour migrant. He once explained how the Sinhas are his "UK family, away from home". For Bhutanese refugees, these relationships are beneficial: most Nepali labour migrants in the UK have excellent skills in English, being able to assist with translations, and serve as appropriate marriage partners in the absence of suitable Bhutanese refugee community members[234]. As resettlement progresses, most Bhutanese refugees in the UK establish *mit* relations with non-Nepalese Bhutanese, whether they are Nepali, South Asian, British or from any other background, although these relationships do not have the same importance as relations with other Bhutanese refugees.

The examples above also demonstrate that migrants and refugees do not necessary establish social networks as a replica of traditional structures in order to "rebuild culture and a sense of 'place' in exile" (Williams, 2006: 873). Family and *mit* relations remain the main arena of socialisation and support amongst Bhutanese refugees. However, as my informants remarked on several occasions, these relationships are *not* a facsimile of Nepali or Bhutanese kinship relations and hierarchies, and are, as I explore further below and in the following chapters, influenced by RCO divisions. Whilst *samaj* may be situated in the social network of Bhutanese refugees, it is still highly dependent on trust and reciprocity, as well as on an individual's personal preferences and circumstances. This is mirrored in other research: Williams (2006: 870), who worked with refugees and asylum seekers in London, and argues that rather than focusing on mutuality between migrants as a determining factor for the creation of community, her informants place emphasis on the "functions…of networks", which are driven by pragmatic considerations (ibid.: 873). Similarly, amongst Bhutanese refugees in the UK, mutuality and 'place of origin' are not enough to create *samaj*, but require trust as well as practical, reciprocal action and social interaction, as I illustrate in the following section.

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[234] For example, Nitin (mentioned above) married the Sinha's youngest daughter Ishita in September 2015, and therefore assured his relationship to the family.

Community as a support network

Sunil and I became members of a *samaj* not through biological or socio-cultural relatedness, but through our investment of time and resources, establishing close relations by becoming familiar with Bhutanese refugees, their idiosyncrasies, routines, and meaning-making. For my informants, mutuality is not enough to maintain relationships – trust is what binds *samaj* together[235]. Without trust, mutuality is hollow, and *samaj* is not maintained. Bhutanese refugees perceive trust as something that has to be earned, rather than an implied and unconditional quality of individuals, even if *pariwar* or *mit*. I established trust with most of my young informants by keeping secrets – for example, not telling the parents of teenagers and young adults that they smoke, drink and see their "sweethearts" secretly.

More importantly, however, is the fact that my informants feel that they can rely on me, if they need support. As Colson (2003: 5-6) argues, for migrants "trust rests on reciprocity, which is a process in time because it requires action and response and some possibility of sanctioning breaches of expectations". Research with migrants in the UK (see e.g. Colson, 2003; Mitchell, 1987; Williams, 2006) demonstrates that migrant communities "carry a high degree of social obligation" to deliver practical support by, for example, offering information and money (Williams, 2006: 873-4). The assistance provided to one another is what generates trust between community members, whilst failing to comply with this obligation seeds mistrust (ibid.; Colson, 2003: 5-6), as I explore in Chapter 9 when discussing RCO divisions. That is, despite their shared mutuality of refugee-ness, some Bhutanese refugees in the UK do not trust each other, creating and exacerbating divisions between them.

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[235] The scope of this work does not allow for a detailed discussion of the notion of trust. For my informants, trust is a feeling of confidence and reliance towards other people. Similar to Jimenez's (2011) work, I argue that trust does not necessarily depend on its definition, but on "what kind of work [trust] does" (ibid.: 179). As I show in this chapter, trust is about both my informants' shared understandings of its value in social relationships, and about (material) reciprocity (ibid.).

For Bhutanese refugees, the exchange of information and resources is never more important than when they arrive from Nepal, as I demonstrated with a detailed ethnographic example in Chapter 6. New arrivals receive support from resident refugees during their first weeks and months in resettlement, to elaborate on the information received by official service providers. The perceived mutuality, such as a shared language and mutual understandings, allow new arrivals to feel more comfortable asking questions or requesting help from other Bhutanese refugees, rather than solely relying on service providers (also see Williams, 2006: 873). There is a supposition of mutuality amongst newly arriving Bhutanese refugees, who assume that refugees share the same experiences, and are therefore a reliable source of information. As Williams (2006: 872) argues:

> "[T]his information represents voices of experience, [which] is directly relevant to refugees and provides practical information that is up-to-date and can be evaluated for reliability by the recipients who know its source and so are in a position to assess its value".

That is, new arrivals perceive the information provided by Bhutanese refugees as more trustworthy than that of service providers, with which they feel no mutuality. In fact, the mistrust towards service providers was a common feature of my fieldwork. Service providers are perceived as presumptuous, as one of my informants explained: "they believe that they are better than us". Throughout fieldwork I noticed that service providers often dismissed their "clients" as "naïve", referring to refugees as "children", who need to be "guided" and "constantly supported", as they lacked the "agency and education" to "effectively live their life"[236]. This top-down notion of refugees by service providers as "helpless victims" who cannot exist independently is recorded by many other researchers (e.g. see Kelly, 2003; Malkki, 1997), and refugees are fully aware of this view. Rather than generating mutuality between them and service providers, the narratives of the latter (in e.g. guidance literature and

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[236] All words in quotation marks are direct quotes from various Manchester service providers I have met throughout my fieldwork.

flyers – see e.g. RA and RC, 2008) position refugees as hierarchically below them, which my informants perceive as offensive.

Because of the lack of mutuality, no trust can be established to service providers, and therefore their relationship is not one of reciprocity, but one similar to business-client relationships, with a strict top-down hierarchy. Familiar with the hierarchical regime of aid workers and service providers since the Nepalese refugee camps, new arrivals rely on networks within the Bhutanese refugee community for practical support (e.g. translations and official paperwork) as well as for help with everyday practicalities, such as finding shops, temples or churches, or acquiring a job through social networks. Bhutanese refugees invested large amounts of their time and resources to support new arrivals[237]. In turn this allows some refugees to acquire social and human capital (Williams, 2006: 872): trust is earned through assistance, which in turn increases social capital[238], which is then used to obtain a higher position within the social hierarchy of *samaj*, making some refugees so-called "liminal experts" (Williams, 2006: 876) and in turn altering definitions of hierarchies (see Chapter 8).

Furthermore, many Bhutanese refugees move from the initial place of residency in the UK to another, for which they require assistance from their *samaj* and RCOs. The most cited reason for this secondary migration is reunion with family and friends, as well as employment, which is easier to obtain in urban centres such as Manchester (rather that Bradford or Leeds). But they have to accept the bureaucratic and pragmatic consequence of moving, such as loss of council housing, child care facilities or access to English language classes[239]. *Samaj* offers a support network to overcome these issues, by, for example, offering private child care arrangements[240], or

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[237] Here, I highlight 'invested' as a past commitment: there have been no new arrivals since the end of 2014, and the UK does not accept any further refugees from Bhutan.

[238] Following Bourdieu (1997) and Durkheim (1992), social capital are the benefits obtained through personal and social relationships and interactions (see Chapter 8).

[239] Refugees are of course allowed to move within the UK, but service providers only offer localized services, to which funds are allocated to. If refugees decide to move from e.g. Leeds to Manchester, they are (according to my informants) cautioned by service providers that allocated services, such as access to free language classes or child care facilities cannot be provided in other locations.

[240] Mothers who are busy with, for instance, English classes can rely on their personal network of family and friends to care for their children, in absence of state facilities.

making sure that Bhutanese refugees who move within the UK can sign up to local English language classes. The support from *samaj* is necessary, as service providers do not offer assistance for secondary migration, as Nina's (see Chapter 3) husband Chandan Dawadi explained:

> "I requested case worker to move my home from Bradford to Rochdale in Manchester. Case worker took up the matter to his manager. … They said it is alright but they can't provide transportation: 'You will have to pay for the transportation. You have to hire a vehicle yourself.'… My brother and our association helped me. ... So we were able to move to Rochdale with help of community".

Chandan and his family moved to Manchester, because he and his wife have family in Rochdale, and because they want to be part of the Christian community of Bhutanese refugees established in Rochdale. From Chandan's example, it is evident that *samaj* serves as a support network. Again, reciprocity and mutuality play a part in the establishment of relationships: it is not the governmental agencies who assist with secondary migration, but members of the *samaj*. This signifies the practical importance of community affiliations through reciprocity and mutuality, and demonstrates the relevance of actively maintaining these relationships. In the absence of personal social networks such as *pariwar* or *mit*, it is the RCOs who provide support, although personal relations are the most important source of support in resettlement.

However, *samaj* as a support network is not straightforward or unproblematic, and trust has to be continuously maintained through reciprocal and social interactions. *Mit* relations are the battleground on which animosities within and between RCOs are played out, and whilst some attempt to ignore these issues, for many Bhutanese refugees these divisions have become unbridgeable. RCOs operate by means of 'othering' (Cohen, 1985), and these constructions of difference have an impact on personal relationships, and, in many cases, fracture them. As we move towards the other interpretations of community in the following chapters, this 'othering' is analysed in further detail.

Moreover, families are not always the best support networks, depending on the issues an individual is facing. The Roka family arrived on the UK in January 2013, and have close and extended kin in the UK, who tried to integrate them in their personal social network. After serious issues shortly after resettlement, such as a visit by the police due to domestic disturbances fuelled by alcohol abuse, Mrs Roka did not approach her direct kin to ask for support, but visited an 'unrelated' household, confided in them, and sought shelter from her abusive husband. This is all the more problematic if health services use family- and community members to serve as translators during appointments. As observed by Williams (2006: 878), this may not be the best strategy to assure discretion, preventing (especially young) refugees to address health concerns with medical staff. For example, several young female newlyweds expressed their "embarrassment" to take someone from the community to their appointments at sexual health clinics or their GP to request contraceptives[241]. They rather preferred a non-refugee friend (such as myself) to come with them, and keep it "secret" from the community. Some of my informants emphasized that it is often "difficult" to seek support from direct family members with 'complex' issues that breach 'traditional' norms and values, fearing judgment and stigma and the loss of relationships, because, as many of them stressed, "people talk".

Furthermore, personal conflicts are common among my informants, arising due to various issues, such as young people eloping against their parents' wishes, conversion to Christianity, arguments due to money or housing arrangements, and many other minor concerns, ranging from jealousy to personal dislike. *Samaj* is highly sensitive to individuals' moods, values, personal preferences and interactions (see Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 508). Individual animosities

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[241] However, birth control is *not* a taboo amongst my (Hindu) informants, although openly talking about it with other community and family members is experienced as "embarrassing", as many young women told me. Nevertheless, many refugee women who already have children advised younger women to delay childbearing (and favour education and career development), and to have less children. In the UK, Bhutanese refugees do not have more than two to three children (in comparison to five to eight children in Bhutan and Nepal), and all my young informants from both genders highlighted that they do not want more than two children, preferably after the completion of studies, and once they have reliable employment. To assure this, many couples confided that they make use of contraceptives, such as condoms or the contraceptive pill.

have an impact on the formation and maintenance of both *samaj* and RCOs. In turn, antagonisms between RCOs exaggerate mistrust, and therefore have a negative impact on both reciprocal support and social interaction between individuals. For example, regardless of kin- and friendships, support may be denied on the basis of RCO affiliation (see Chapters 6 and 9).

As illustrated above, *samaj* is a complex idea amongst Bhutanese refugees. However, it is more than just a notion; it is a tangible, lived experience in the form of social interactions. That is, *samaj* is not merely a mode of self-identification and a sense of belonging, but a daily experience of being social. In this context, the term *samaj* is used to signify social relations, rather than emphasizing commonality or boundary-making, as I explore in the following section.

Samaj as social interaction

How people understand and experience social relations on a daily basis depends on their understanding of what a community is from *their* point of view. But community is not only a theoretical and 'imagined' construct, existing purely in the minds of people. It is a real-life, tangible experience of interactions between individuals, emerging out of particular circumstances and environments (Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc. 1254). The notion of community is based on and actualized in social practices and interactions.

Samaj is expressed in being social – that is, through daily social interactions with members of *samaj*. For Bhutanese refugees, being social is an important element of their daily lives, as they understand themselves as "interdependent rather than independent", giving more importance to the community rather than being individual-orientated (Williams, 206: 870). RCOs are relevant because they provide the arena and means to be social (through e.g. RCO events). Therefore, community membership is not only determined by mutuality and trust, but also through active participation in the daily lives of others.

Relationships are maintained on an almost daily basis either by means of face-to-face interactions, or by using mobile and internet communication technologies (MCTs and ICTs) to communicate with Bhutanese refugees across the various resettlement nations[242].

Especially during the initial years of resettlement, marked by unemployment and lack of access to education, job training and infrastructures, their extensive spare time is used to interact with the local and regional *samaj*. Some social practices from Bhutan and Nepal continue in resettlement, such as "hanging out", chatting and gossiping, playing cards (for money), and making music or dancing together. Other practices from Bhutan are revived in resettlement in the UK: for example, the availability of gardens with UK houses, allows Bhutanese refugees to engage again in agricultural practices, even if on a much smaller scale as in Bhutan. Young refugees are invited to participate in these gardening activities, learning from the older community members how to grow plants from seeds, how to tend to them, and when to harvest them[243]. Women engage in traditional Bhutanese and Nepalese past times such as crafts. Crocheting, for example, is especially popular amongst young female newlyweds, who participate in these practices learned from their mothers, whilst watching TV or chatting with other women. Similar to the harvests gathered through gardening, the finished crocheted table-cloths, scarves, or blankets are given to other community members as small gifts.

Food as social practice

Paskanu – the serving and sharing of food – is a common, daily practice signifying hospitality and respect for Bhutanese refugees. It is important to note here that although in Bhutan and Nepal women had the duty to cook, men have taken up the practice with so much enthusiasm, that in some houses it is

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[242] However, as some families are scattered in the eight resettlement nations, and not all have access or the ability to make use of MCTs and ICTs, and lack travel documents, some relations are now less maintained. Relationships with local Bhutanese refugees often gained more importance than with relatives living aboard due to locality and proximity.

[243] In brief, gardening in this context is more than a social practice: it also serves as the transmission of values and meanings from one generation to the next. The scope of this work is too limited to discuss the relevance of gardening in further detail – see e.g. Crouch (2009) and Kingsley and Townsend (2006) for further discussions on gardening.

now exclusively men who cook. In the many households, young men gather to prepare food, and chat and gossip whilst cooking. They explained that they picked up cooking in the camps, learning from their mothers, and now in resettlement find jobs in South Asian restaurants, where they often work their way up from dishwasher to sous chef. Cooking and *paskanu* are one expression of being social, which in turn fosters relationships within *samaj*.

For example, *momo*-making[244] became a shared social practice (see Figure 19[245]): Shortly after fieldwork began, I urged some of my informants in Longsight to teach me how to make *momos*, a traditional and delicious food from Nepal.

Figure 19: Momo-making in Longsight

On the arranged afternoon in mid-October 2012, I found myself in in a kitchen with about twenty Bhutanese refugees, all of us closely watching Kanchan - whom I nicknamed "*momo* master" - stuffing and folding *momos* into the characteristic shape, carefully placing them in a tin steamer. Soon enough we all tried to copy Kanchan, and children as young as seven were as much engaged in it as older women (60+), laughing about misshapen *momos*, and exchanging tips and tricks on the best filling and folding techniques. This was only the first of many *momo* cooking sessions I attended throughout the Bhutanese refugee community, and at the end of my fieldwork, I too became a "*momo* master" as some Bhutanese refugees remarked jokingly.

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[244] *Momos* are dumplings filled with vegetables or meat, and can be steamed or fried. The dumplings are normally dipped in a chilly sauce.

[245] These images are my own and included here with permission of the informants features in the pictures.

I do not argue that *samaj* is a 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Belonging to *samaj* is not only determined through participation in practices outlined in this chapter. Social practices, such as cooking, are relevant as they bring Bhutanese refugees together in a group. Furthermore, *paskanu* is an expression of mutuality and reciprocity for Bhutanese refugees. Bhutanese refugees perceive *paskanu* as a central part of their lives, and the cooking and sharing of food entails certain norms, which changed over time. For example, whilst in Bhutan higher castes would not share food with lower castes, or even allow converts (to Christianity) into their homes, these restrictions are not upheld in the UK, because of the small size of the Bhutanese refugee community in the UK, which allows them to out aside such divisions. As one of my informants argued "these things are not practical anymore".

'Timepass' [246]

Communal hobbies and 'timepass' activities change in resettlement. For example, when I began fieldwork, hardly any of my informants owned televisions. But as time progressed, more and more people bought TVs and paid for cable television, often signing up for 'Asian TV' (e.g. imported channels from India and Pakistan). Live streams or online videos (e.g. YouTube), as well as watching Bollywood and Nepali films online remains a favourite 'timepass' of younger informants (under the age of 25), gathering in crowds up to ten people. This has become their preferred practice on weekends: staying awake until four or five am, and watching their favourite actors on the small laptop or computer screens, singing along with well-known songs, giggling about romantic scenes, and indeed even crying during the over-dramatized finale of Bollywood films.

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[246] Timepass is a common expression of 'passing time' – a hobby, practice or event one conducts in their spare time. See also Jeffrey (2010), who has written at length about this in relation to educated, under-employed north Indian youth, and see Introduction to this thesis, along with Chapter 3.

Moreover, Bhutanese refugees enjoy active sports within a group. Almost every household owns a football, and when young people come together on a sunny day, they gather in the back garden or walk to a nearby park to play football, cricket and badminton. Playing and watching football with other members of the *samaj* is a favourite hobby for my informants of both genders. Moreover, whilst they went to the rivers and jungles near the refugee camps in Nepal, going for walks in suburban forests or visiting parks together with family and friends is another way to spend time in the UK. For young people it is a way to see their "sweethearts" in secret, or to smoke and drink, whilst older people enjoyed the fresh air and company of their fellow walkers. As there are hardly any facilities people can use on rainy or cold days in Manchester, such as youth clubs or neighbourhood centres, free weekends with bad weather are used to visit shopping centres doing windows shopping.

All these timepass activities happen in a group: my informants hardly ever engage in any of these activities alone. In fact, 'alone-time' is not valued amongst Bhutanese refugees, and it is extremely rare to find refugees by themselves, engaging in activities unaccompanied. If they are alone, for example on their way to work, they chat with friends and family on their mobile phones. When asking some of my informants why they hardly spend any time alone, they all remarked that it would be "boring". They are not forced to spend time with other people, but my informants actively seek out company. *Samaj* is therefore a lived experience of spending time with each other, and engaging in various activities together, some of which have to be learned, as I explore in the following section.

Learning to be social

One of the main functions of Bhutanese refugee communities is not necessarily to serve as the 'common good' as service providers would like, but the fact that it serves as "the arena in which one learns and largely continues to practise being social" (Cohen [1985] cited in Rapport and Overing, 2000:63).

But what these practices are, and what 'being social' means to individuals is ever-changeable, and situationally adaptable, as I have shown above.

For Bhutanese refugees, *samaj* serves not only as an arena for timepass, but is also a means to acquire language competence in Nepali, to participate in community activities, festivals and worships, and to impart 'traditions' to the younger generations. As a socio-culturally diverse group, spanning over three religions (Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism), intra-ethnic groups, generations and gender, what exactly 'being social' means is highly dependent on family, kin, religion, age and education. However, as the Bhutanese refugees' perceptions of their culture – that is, the meanings they share – changed both in the refugee camps and in the UK, practices and behaviours are modified according to the new environment in which resettlement takes place. Although I do not want to argue that my informants' socio-cultural practices and meanings are disappearing entirely, similar to the notion of *samaj*, they cannot be clearly defined and outlined. This is largely informed by resettlement, aid intervention, education and personal preferences, and the adoption of Western norms and practices, transforming not only the community, but also their practices.

Samaj is the main arena of social interaction and serve to impart and practice Bhutanese-refugee-ness[247]. We have to be careful not to equate practice as the main signifier of community membership. However, some practices are a necessary pre-condition to create mutuality within a community. For example, most informants regard it as important to learn and speak Nepali, the main language spoken within *samaj*, although it increasingly became mingled with English. Less importance is placed on learning how to read and write in Nepali, and most of my informants, including older refugees, are illiterate in Nepali[248]. However, in practice, Bhutanese refugees in Manchester make no active effort

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[247] As illustrated in Chapter 5 what makes a Bhutanese refugee is a complex set of ideas of a shared history of 'refugee-ness' and resettlement. Not all Nepali-speaking Bhutanese are considered Bhutanese refugees and therefore belong to *samaj*, and it is highly dependent on individuals' perceptions and behaviours.

[248] Laksamba (2012) observed the same amongst the second and third generation Nepalese migrants in the UK. Especially those who are born and raised in the UK have "no skills in reading, writing and understanding" Nepali (ibid.).

to teach their community members to gain literacy in Nepali, and RCOs in the UK do not offer Nepali courses[249]. Thus, the language in refugee households - a curious mixture of Nepali and English - is a colloquial practice. Young people and children, who attend school in the UK tend to speak more and more English, even at home, which most parents regard as a positive development. When I asked a few informants with babies and toddlers if they are worried about their children not learning to speak Nepali, parents dismissed the concern. In Lalan's words:

> "I don't worry about [my daughter] speaking Nepali. She must learn English, this is important. The kids grow up here, it's easy to learn for them. They don't have problems with language in the future. ... Nepali isn't so important, you know, they can learn slowly at home, with us".

The same attitude is applied to imparting Hindu practices. In comparison to my Christian informants, who place enormous emphasis on teaching their children about Christianity and Christian practices at home and in their church, Hindus do not actively teach their children about Hinduism. Older Bhutanese refugees believe that Hindu religious practice will vanish amongst the young generation - a view verified by my own observations. Most young people do not practice Hinduism actively, but merely participate in main events and festivals, such as Nepali New Year, weddings, *Nwaran* (name-giving ceremony for newborns), *Holi* (festival of colour), *Teej* (festival for women), *Bhai Tika* (also called *Tihar* - sibling ritual), *Dashain* and *Deepawali* (Nepali *Diwali*, the festival of light and most important holiday of the Hindu year).

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[249] In comparison with refugees in the USA, who offer intensive Nepali courses in their community centres, as confirmed by the *Bhutanese Refugee Association* in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (personal correspondence).

Figure 20: The *Upanayana* Ritual in Longsight

I have never observed older Hindu community members imparting their religious knowledge (however limited) to the younger generation. In fact, especially children do not seem very keen to learn about Hinduism, or participate in the rituals, if it would not be for small presents they receive during festivals[250]. In 2013, when Maya and Sameer's (Hindu) wedding was planned, the two youngest boys of the Bagale family, Tarun and Sajit (both eight years old), were also prepared for their *Upanayana* ritual (see Figure 20[251]). This 'rite of passage' marks the initiation of young (male) children into their caste and Hinduism in general. The presence of Hindu priests for the wedding was a convenient way to initiate these young boys, rather than hosting a separate event. For this ceremony, the young boys' heads were shaved – a very dramatic experience for Tarun, who cried and screamed during the haircut and later ran off, locking himself in a room. After much persuasion through a locked door, Tarun finally let Maya and me into the room, and under tears explained that he would be embarrassed to go to school with a shaved head: "Everybody will laugh! They make fun of me! Why I have to do this? This is so stupid!" Tarun's family attempted to comfort him, explaining to him that the ritual is very important, but Tarun remained unconvinced throughout the ceremony. The only comfort for the young boys was that they both received presents on the day – in this case, expensive *Manchester United* football kits. When I asked the boys after the event what it signified to them, they shrugged and said "dunno", and Tarun confessed in a whisper: "I don't care, it's stupid, innit".

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[250] From my informants' accounts, it can be inferred that this is also the case in Nepal and Bhutan. Also see Gellner et al.'s (2012) and Laksamba's (2012) work on Nepali migrants in the UK (Chapter 5).
[251] Author's own image, included with permission of the informants and their parents (as they are minors).

For both boys, the significance of the ritual was irrelevant, and as far as I observed, they were not advised about the meaning of this initiation. For the boys' parents, the social aspect of initiating the boys into their Hindu community was an important celebration, to be enjoyed with members of *samaj*. The wedding and 'rite of passage' were held on the same day, with more than one hundred guests celebrating in a pavilion temporarily erected in the Bagale household. However, hardly any of the guests paid attention to the rituals the Hindu priest conducted with the young boys as well as the bride and the groom[252], the guest sat around tables, chatting and laughing, sharing food and applying *tika*.

For Bhutanese refugees, festivals are a means to meet one another and interact within *samaj*, with less emphasis on the relevance of rituals or their meanings. Religious festivals are photo opportunities, waiting for the perfect 'Kodak moment'. When I celebrated *Deepawali* with the Sinha household in Bury there were no rituals (such as *puja* or *deusi* songs[253]) taking place. The extended family came together from across Manchester, dressed up in their finest saris and kurtas to have photos taken in front of the makeshift *puja* shrine. However, once the pictures were taken, they dressed again in comfortable (Western) clothes, and spent the rest of the evening uploading pictures onto Facebook, and laughing and chatting with their family, as well as exchanging small (mostly cash) gifts.

What appears to be important during these events is self-performance[254] within the *samaj* and the receiving of gifts[255]. The latter is also a reason why more and more Hindu households celebrate Christmas. Although they do not

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[252] The wedding rituals were held in the bedrooms of the bride and grooms' parents, and besides the priest and couple, only the parents and older siblings were present. I was the only other person in the room, taking pictures for the couple, and observing the rituals. All other guests were in the party tent outside.

[253] *Deusi* are Nepali songs sung during Hindu festivals. The content of the songs can be both religious as well as casual, often joking and mocking. During *deusi*, participants clap, walk in a circle around a tray with offerings to the gods (fruit, fake money, spices), or dance in the centre.

[254] In this context, being social was a tool for self-expression: culture became performance (see Goffman [1990]).

[255] I believe that in anthropology enough is said about the significance of gift-giving, especially in maintaining relationships and creating reciprocity – first and foremost, Mauss' (2002 [1966]) work *The Gift*. The scope of this work does not allow for a detailed exploration of this aspect of community construction.

concern themselves with why Christmas is celebrated, they buy Christmas trees, and indulge in the gift-giving ceremony on December 25th, as well as in the feast following this ritual, although they serve Nepali food. What matters for Bhutanese refugees are the maintenance and strengthening of community ties, expressed through the coming together of family members, the sharing of food and gifts, and the social interactions that comes with it[256]. That is, events are opportunities to express mutuality and reciprocity, which maintain *samaj*. But as refugees gain employment, their free time decreases, and opportunities to meet distant relations become rarer. This makes RCOs so relevant, as they allow refugees to come together for RCO events, such as during Nepali New Year.

Another example of the way in which 'being social' is learned and is transformed in resettlement is the celebration of birthdays. I have often been told that birthdays were not celebrated in Bhutan and Nepal, due to scattered communities and lack of resources. However, in the UK, every birthday or other personal events such as wedding anniversaries, are celebrated with *samaj*. Customs, such as having a birthday cake, are adopted – along with the giving of small presents, mostly in the form of cash gifts. But my informants make these 'birthday rituals' their own, by applying *tika* on the forehead of the individuals celebrating, and by making *sel roti*, a traditional Nepali, doughnut-shaped snack especially made for festivals and celebrations. Young people over the age of 18 now celebrate with their friends by going clubbing. In this sense, "learning how to be social" includes Western (or more specifically, British) social practices. But these new social actions do not replace traditional activities - they become an adaptation of cross-cultural practices, mixing Nepali (and South Asian) functions with new, Euro-American practices. This serves as one example of the new, hybrid identities Bhutanese refugees adopt in resettlement (also see Chapter 5).

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[256] This may be very different for Christian refugees, but due to my lack of access to these households, this can only be inferred rather than verified through ethnographic examples. Yet, Christian refugees never participate in Hindu rituals, and in some cases, do not even come near a Hindu household during festivals such as *Deepawali*. They attend Hindu weddings, but notably only after the Hindu rituals are complete, and only to congratulate (with a hand shake rather than applying *tika* on the forehead of bride and groom) and give presents.

It is important to mention that RCOs and affiliations with them have a big impact on who socialises with whom. In general, close family members belong to the same RCO. Yet, distant family members, such as uncles, aunts, first and second cousins and more distant kin may be divided between the rivalling RCOs, and therefore disrupt these relationships. It is here, where 'othering' comes to play a part. *Samaj* encompasses similarity and difference, locality and distance, as well as familiarity and incongruity (Rapport and Overing, 2000: 63). These boundaries are of symbolic nature - 'imagined' in the minds of the community members (Chatty: 2010: 54) - and play an important (and dividing) role in kin and friendship relations, and change and disrupt their social interactions, as I show in the following sections.

Changing relations

Refugee resettlement is an 'unsettling' experience. The experience of becoming a refugee may dismantle the "community's identity, values, activities and livelihoods and visions for the future" (Chatty, 2010: 465; also see Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010). Basch et al. (1994, cited in Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 552) argue that migration entails a "personal emotional cost for the individuals involved, who must live daily with the pain and strain of separation". Although serving as a 'durable solution' for protracted refugee situations, my informants often compare their resettlement in the UK to their experience of exile from Bhutan (to Nepal). Relations established in Bhutan suffered because of the (forced) migration to Nepal, but the proximity of the refugee camps established in East Nepal allowed Bhutanese refugees to maintain their kin- and friendship ties by visiting one another in the various camps.

In Nepal, Bhutanese refugees may have been able to maintain their small personal communities comprised of kin and *mit* relations as they were in Bhutan, but when resettlement began in 2007, and the first Bhutanese refugees left for the USA and other Western resettlement nations, these

established and highly valued relationships were dislocated, separating families and friends over vast geographical distances, and therefore signifying a disruption of *samaj* they established in the camps. Those who were left behind in Nepal often lacked access to MCTs and ICTs to communicate with the resettled refugees, and for many this was a deeply sad experience. As Griek (2013:22) writes:

> "All of a sudden, families faced the prospect of separation … by oceans, continents, and a range of migration laws that deterred them from travelling for specific lengths of time".

As resettlement progressed, it became evident that this geographical distance had an impact on my informants' relationships. Whilst kin-relations are maintained over all resettlement nations, *mit* relations and loose friendships established in the camps decrease in resettlement, and new relationships – and thus, new forms of *samaj* – are created with Bhutanese refugees (and others) who live within the same country, such as the UK. My teenage informant Arun explained:

> "In camp I have best friend, we do everything together. He moves to America, and I come here [to the UK]. We talk, you know, on Skype and Facebook, but I'm busy now. … I have new friends here. I don't talk with him many times anymore".

I observed many friendships across (rather than within) resettlement nations decrease in social interaction over time, but my informants do not perceive this as a loss. They find friends in their new place of residency, which are actively maintained through social interaction. Close kin-relations are maintained across nations (by utilizing MCTs and ICTS), and continue to be highly relevant in resettlement, although they are limited to once-a-week conversations.

Moreover, as discussed above, although *samaj* is still the main arena for social interactions, traditional family hierarchies and living arrangements are put into

question. Many young refugees attempt to resist their family duties and obligations, such as care for the elderly. As time progressed in resettlement in the UK, the notion of nuclear family as a "natural unit"[257], has become increasingly ingrained in my informants and they mostly engage socially with friends rather than their families.

As more and more Bhutanese refugees 'become Western' – or what they believe to be 'Western' (see Chapter 5) - there may be a tendency to adopt the Western perception of individual independence, as highlighted by other researchers working with South Asian migrants in the UK (see e.g. Baumann, 1996; Hall, 2010; Mines and Lamb, 2010a-d), having an impact on the perception and relevance of *samaj*. Now it is the individual who has the agency to establish and maintain relationships, and "to make the best of complex situations, jostling for position and denotation" (Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 389), rather than following 'traditional' social structures (see Chapter 8).

My informants, being in a phase of transition, re-establish and re-structure relationships and the social hierarchies within their community. Evans (2009: 156, citing Giddens, 1984 and Ortner, 2006) observed this trend amongst Bhutanese refugees in the refugee camps, and argues that rather than viewing them as only "bearers of subject positions", they actively "reflect on their situation" and "exercise some control over their circumstances", and ultimately "contribute to changing the social structures influencing power relations between individuals and groups". In turn, this affects the formation of RCOs in resettlement, as they are made up of members of *pariwar* and *mit* relations, as I explore in the following section.

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[257] Defined by service providers as "A nuclear family is generally accepted as consisting of spouses and, their minor or dependent, unmarried children and minor siblings…. Beyond this, the concept of dependency is central to the factual identification of family members" (UNHCR, 2011: 178). With the availability of free-of-charge contraception for women, family sizes are significantly decreasing (also see above). This is also a consequence of an increasing sense of gender equality amongst Bhutanese refugees, fostered by aid intervention in the camps and in the UK.

***Samaj* and RCOs**

As outlined in Chapter 4, service providers in the UK are making use of Rex's (1987) description of functions of RCOs. However, service providers largely ignore Rex's caution (cited in Griffiths et al., 2006: 894) that

> "[F]ormal organisations are only one part of a larger picture which includes a vast network of informal, transient, unnamed and unofficial forms of social organisation. The degree to which formally constituted RCOs are at the centre of refugee networks or peripheral to the main sources of community activity is a vital question".

Therefore it is all the more important to highlight that *samaj* has to be distinguished from formalized, bureaucratic Bhutanese RCOs. RCOs perpetuate imagined differences and foster marginality between community members (Griffiths et al., 2006: 894), and may impact negatively on *samaj* relationships, and influence social interactions between Bhutanese refugee families.

For example, Unnayak's wife Hasita is a cousin of the Sinhas, and therefore felt obliged to pay occasional visits to them. As, however, Unnayak is the head of Takin Association, and the Sinhas are closely involved with Welfare Association, Hasita's visits to Bury were less and less frequent, reduced to a single yearly visit during *Deepawali*. Hasita recalled:

> "I go to visit, pay my respect, bring small present for the children. They give me *chai*, but I sit in the house, they don't talk with me. ... Family is important, you know, it's *our* community [informant's emphasis]. But they treat me bad, so I don't go anymore. I feel sad, because when we are children, we are so close, we play together and go to school. … We come here [to the UK] together, and I was very happy, ... but now fighting is everywhere, we can't talk, ... they

don't talk with me. ... I feel sad sometimes, very sad, 'cause it's family, you know, and family is important".

Hasita emphasised several important points here: *samaj* serves a symbol for family, and relationships between family members are highly valued. Although on the one hand, social interactions within *pariwar* are important, the divisions between different RCOs reduce these interactions to an obligation, and social relationships are disrupted because of the boundaries that Bhutanese refugees created between different RCOs.

It is not only kinship relations that are fragmented; personal relationships between close friends are also affected. Before the boundaries between Takin and Welfare were exaggerated to a point where RCO members were not supposed to talk to one another, Rani was a close friend of Maya (both mentioned above), and they considered each other a *mit* relation. However, RCO divisions lead to their friendship disappearing, as Maya mentioned one day:

> "Rani calls me yesterday, and ask why we not talk anymore. … She don't call for a year and talk bad things in Bury. She don't come to my wedding, and she don't tell me about [her] wedding! ... Now she call, and ask why I never call! … We are good friends, you know, we have so much fun. But Welfare say I am bad because of Takin, and she stop talking".

From this quote we can see that attending events – especially personal ones such as weddings – is an important condition for social relationships. As a friend, Rani was supposed to attend Maya's wedding, and in turn, Rani was expected to invite Maya to her own wedding (I, for example, attended both). It is part of their expression of social relationships. However, due to the divisions between RCOs, these social obligations – including calling once in a while – are not upheld. The divisions between the organisations is too great: due to gossip within all three RCOs, and accusations that people "talk bad" about rival

members, personal relationships are hardly reconnected once they are divided along RCO lines. In turn, this affects who interacts with whom.

However, not all Bhutanese refugees comply with these imagined boundaries. The 'Rochdale boys', for example, is a clique of teenage boys (16 to 18 years old) who meet on an almost daily basis in Rochdale, especially to make music together. They met in Manchester in 2010 and thereafter formed a close relationship bridging community organisation divisions and religions. Dharendra became a self-proclaimed "atheist" in resettlement (often flagged in his Facebook posts) investing most of his time in natural science education, whilst his good friend Durba, who only joined the group after he resettled in 2013, is a devout Christian and less studious. Ajay, on the other hand (whose piece for the EBHR I discussed in Chapter 3), is from a family of Takin supporters (his father being one of the main founders of Takin) and identifies with Hinduism, whilst Gatha's family is closely involved in Welfare, who never meet or communicate with Takin members. For the boys, however, their personal friendships supersede religious or RCO divisions, which they regard as petty issues, irrelevant for their friendships. As much as their parents and other RCO members frown upon their relationship, the Rochdale boys cherish and maintain their friendship, and move freely between all RCOs and religious communities, and participate in events and projects regardless of RCO affiliations.

For example, during the film project (BRFP) organised by Takin, the Rochdale boys actively participated by providing music (i.e. covering popular Nepali songs and playing instruments), despite not being directly affiliated with the RCO. Shortly after the filming and recording for this project was completed, the chair of Welfare – Pran Mali from Bury (see Chapter 8 and 9) – approached me (as the producer and editor of the film) to request that I "remove" the music provided by the Rochdale Boys, as they are "not Takin, but Welfare members". The boys themselves denied any knowledge of this attempt, and insisted on participating in the project, very much to the detrimental effect of my relations to Welfare. Nevertheless, during the premier screening of the film in Manchester in May 2014, friends of the Rochdale Boys – regardless of RCO

affiliations – attended the event, and cheered on the performers, demonstrating that personal relationships may overcome RCO divisions.

Yet, not all Bhutanese refugees are like the Rochdale boys, whose friendship transcend RCO divisions. *Samaj* has become the battleground on which organisational animosities are played out, and whilst some attempt to ignore these issues, for most Bhutanese refugees in Manchester these divisions are unbridgeable, as RCO politics creates mistrust between them, which has a negative impact on feelings of mutuality and obligations of reciprocity and social interactions. RCOs operate by means of 'othering', and this construction of difference influences personal relationships, and in many cases, fractures them. This also leads to a decrease of social interaction between these rival RCO members. In some instances, Bhutanese refugees that are divided along RCO-lines do not communicate at all, and do not maintain *samaj* with them. They refuse to provide support to one another, and do not engage in time-pass activities, which I discuss further in Chapter 9.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the perception and usage of the term and notion of *samaj* (community) amongst Bhutanese refugees in the UK, with family and *mit* relations as the focal point. Bhutanese refugees establish *samaj* in resettlement, which are significantly redefined and restructured in the context of migration. *Samaj* is based on real and imagined mutuality, based on trust and reciprocity, and is expressed in social interactions between members of *samaj*.

But personal social networks are not immune to the divisions and 'othering'. The creation of boundaries between formalized RCOs influences these social relations, and how they are expressed in everyday life. Community is a complex notion, and does not denote a homogenous group of people who

share common values and meanings across difference. Rather, to return to Chatty's argument (see Introduction) the notion of community remains "fuzzy" and difficult to define. In the following two chapters I illustrate how RCOs are created, and how new forms of social stratifications emerge within the context of resettlement. Within these RCOs, previously powerless individuals (such as young people) are able to gain authority in the community through their accumulation of various forms of capital. However, as I show in the final chapter, 'othering' is most visible within RCOs, and puts into question the assumed positive aspects of community development in refugee resettlement.

Chapter 8 – Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester

It was almost Nepalese New Year[258] (in March 2013) and Unnayak and Kavi (whom we have met in previous chapters) were busy. There were many things that still needed to be planned for the occasion. Both of Takin's leaders felt obliged to organize an event on this auspicious festival[259], during which Bhutanese refugees enjoy coming together to eat, sing, dance and chat. The biggest concern was – as with every event Bhutanese refugees organized – the venue: Where is a convenient venue located, and can it be reached easily with public transport for those who do not live nearby? How many people can the venue hold? What infrastructures does the venue offer[260]? Is food included in the venue or can RCOs bring their own food[261]? Is a venue available on a date that is convenient for most Bhutanese refugees?

Once these requirements are assessed and met, venues are gauged by price[262]. Unnayak established a good relationship with the owners of a church hall in Swindon[263], merely a ten minutes' walk from his house, and received a special rate from them[264], leading to most Takin events being held at this

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[258] In the Nepali calendar- the *Bikram Sambat* – the new year starts around March or April.

[259] As stated on the outset of this thesis, I do not discuss Hindu or traditional practices in this work. See Gellner (2001) and Jha (1997) for information on Nepali Hindu practices.

[260] The required items are: stage for dances and speeches; a screen and projector for displaying videos and images; microphones and speakers for speeches and performances; tables and chairs; kitchen; easily accessible bathrooms, etc.

[261] Some venues either do not allow any food to be brought inside, or offer a fixed menu preventing event organisers to bring their own food, which is unacceptable for Bhutanese refugees. They always cook (Nepali) food and bring it to the venue, catering to vegetarians or for other dietary requirements (e.g. diabetics). Venues that serve their own food are immediately dismissed as options. However, sometimes events are catered for by Indian and Nepali restaurants (where my informants work). Cooking for events is done by a group of about ten refugees (both male and female) in the house closest to the venue the day and night before the event. This reflects the importance of *paskuna* (sharing of food) within a community as described in Chapter 7.

[262] Hourly prices in Manchester range from £35 - £170, depending on the size, location and equipment the venue offers. Daily rates, that is, for an all-day event (eight hours plus one hour for initial set-up and cleaning at the end) range from about £250 up to a stunning £1500. As all Bhutanese RCOs are severely underfunded, venue prices are an important consideration.

[263] The venue does not have religious connotations: in my experience it is common to rent a Christian church venue for events in the UK. These venues are popular amongst RCOs, charities, youth clubs and even for private parties, as they are cheap and spacious, being able to accommodate a large group of people.

[264] On this occasion TA was able to rent a church hall including chairs, tables, a huge raised stage, screen and projector, microphone and digital sound system and kitchen for £350 for a whole day event on Saturdays.

venue during my fieldwork (see Figure 21[265]). In order to support low-income families, refugees who live further away (including outside Manchester, such as Bradford, Sheffield and Leeds), and the elderly and infirm who find it difficult to take public transport, RCOs may choose to organise a shuttle bus or taxi service, or provide a refund for travel costs.

Figure 21: Nepali New Year 2013 in Manchester

RCO events are always free for attendees, with costs being covered by the organisation. Most Bhutanese refugees were unemployed during my fieldwork, relying solely on welfare and benefit payments to support themselves. Consequently, it important for RCOs to secure external funding. Hence, refugees in resettlement establish RCOs not solely for the functions assumed by service providers (Chapter 4): as both Baumann (1996) and Kelly (2003) argue in their work with other migrant groups in the UK, RCOs largely serve as a means to obtain funds, benefiting community members.

For these reasons, it is important to create an RCO that is attractive for funding bodies. In order to achieve this, RCOs have to comply with the standard of other community organisations and charities operating in the UK, emphasising their aims and responsibilities in a formalised 'community association' constitution. These purposes and duties have to fit neatly into what is expected from them by external bodies, following the service providers' assumptions of the 'functions' of RCOs discussed in Chapter 4. It would, for example, not be

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[265] These images are my own and included here with permission of the informants features in the pictures.

appropriate to state in a constitution that an RCO has been founded merely for the purpose to obtain funding. Thus, refugees have to learn and adopt the language of policy makers, service providers and funding bodies, in order to become a 'legitimate' organisation which is eligible for governmental and non-governmental support and funding. The RCO constitutions (below and Appendix 2) are an example of how this 'language of funding bodies' is used by my informants.

Moreover, RCOs also need to have their own (RCO) bank account and detailed financial records, approved by an independent financial advisor. As I illustrated at the start of Chapter 4, refugees have to decide what the bank account is used for: only official payments requiring receipts can be made from these accounts (for e.g. events, projects, etc.), rather than using it for offering individual financial assistance (e.g. support for funerals).

Additionally, RCOs need to follow the prescribed rules of its internal structure, with an elected board (consisting of chair, vice and treasurer), as well as a list of formal members who are eligible to elect and be elected as board members. RCOs have to have documented Annual General Meetings (AGMs) attended by a majority of members, in order to (re-) elect board members. Decision-making must be based on a two-third majority in a democratic vote.

Bhutanese RCOs are consequently not 'traditional' community organisations following structures and decision-making familiar to refugees (in which elder males hold all decision-making powers), but are formalized British organisations complying with British rules and regulations[266]. RCOs are not necessarily led by "traditional leaders", who base their authority on traditions and custom as a "natural order" of social stratification (Weber, 1922 in Calhoun, 2002: 26). Rather than submitting to the traditional authority of elder men (as in Bhutan, and in parts in Nepal), Bhutanese RCOs are led by

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[266] RCOs are thus part of British civil society, defined as the total realm of the political with "politically active citizens". Following Hegel (1821), RCOs are "social and civic institutions" that govern life within a civil society. However, as I show below (following Gramsci [1929]), Bhutanese RCOs are not operating by means of force or coercion, but by creating and maintaining consent within the group (both references in Kumar, 1996: 89).

'charismatic' leaders (ibid.) and 'liminal experts' (see below), who obtained their status through personal qualities and the accumulation of various forms of capital. RCOs are thus a continuation of the *Community Development Approach* (CDA), in which social re-engineering is used to transform refugees into 'Western' citizens, in order to make them 'integrate-able' in resettlement.

In this chapter, I outline how Bhutanese RCOs are structured, and how they serve the particular pragmatic needs of refugees, albeit not in ways policy makers intend. For example, for Bhutanese refugees, RCOs are mostly a means to maintain *samaj* by sponsoring social events. Moreover, I illustrate the power structures amongst Bhutanese refugees that emerge through the creation of RCOs, and the impact these new hierarchies have on my informants. This is necessary in order to understand the formation of *samaj* in resettlement and the impact RCO rivalries have on Bhutanese refugees, as explored in Chapter 9.

Function of Bhutanese RCOs

> "TAKIN ASSOCIATION UK – *Connecting Bhutanese in Diaspora* (TAUK) is a non-profit, community-based organisation for and by Bhutanese refugees living in the UK. The association has a [sic] approved community constitution, and aims to establish itself as a charity in the future.
> TAUK was founded in Manchester in November 2010, and set out to be a [sic] association of Bhutanese refugees who have resettled to the UK with the *Gateway Protection Programme*. The aim of the organisation is to create a reliable network of support for Bhutanese refugees in order to improve the refugees' lives in the UK" (TA, 2010, original emphasis).

As explored in the previous chapter, service providers compel refugees to create RCOs in order to outsource support to them, because, regardless of whether refugees created dependable and even formalized support networks to take over assistance, service providers stop their provision six months after arrival.

Shortly after the first refugees arrive in resettlement in the UK, community development workers as well as 'native' support workers[267] approach refugees who are educated and have a good command of English to create formalized organisations. In a free guide to 'how to set up RCOs', Thompson (2010: 3) offers an overview of the key stages of achievements RCOs should fulfil within their first year:

In the first 3 months
Start contacting the community
Put together aims and objectives
Finalise constitution
Source around for funding
Start finding out about and writing policies (child protection, equality statements)
Get everything ready to run the group

In the first 6 months
Apply for funding
Launch and publicise the organisation
Monitor progress and evaluate group's activities

In the first 12 months
Maybe get some funding
Extend network and activities
Think about ways of improving the organisation

Figure 22: Thompson's (2010) 'How to set up RCOs'

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[267] 'Native' community workers are Nepalese Bhutanese who live in the UK for many years (who mostly came here as asylum seekers before resettlement), and who were approached by British service providers in order to assist with resettlement in the initial stages, such as providing information on refugees to support workers, and help with translations. The term is coined by me, rather than official sources. See Chapters 8 and 9 for further discussion.

This outline shows that obtaining funding is a prescribed aim of RCOs (according to service providers). It is further assumed that with this funding, other main purposes – "aims and objectives" – can be realized. As Takin's mission statement on its website (see above) shows, this rhetoric was adopted by Bhutanese refugees in the UK in order to pander to these requirements. However, although I have outlined the functions policy makers ascribe to these associations, there is no guidance on what these RCOs should actually *do* in practice during these stages. For example, 'providing support and assistance' is a very broad conceptualization of what can realistically be done for refugees on a daily basis, especially if no funds are available to maintain staff. Nevertheless, these aims and objectives have to be laid out in a constitution – one of the first elements of formalisation of RCOs, which I outline in the following section.

Formalized RCO constitutions

During the first official RCO meeting for any community organisation, which is organized with the help of service providers (that is, community support workers), attendees are advised to draft a "governing document" – a RCO constitution – which states the aims of the organisation, how it is managed and how responsibilities are shared (see below), and how its purposes can be realized within the (British) legal system in which RCOs operate (Farley and Garcia, 2006: 28; 224; Thompson, 2010: 26). The formalization in a written document is said to serve "accountability and openness", and is a pre-condition to apply for funding, as most funding bodies require a written and notarized[268] RCO constitution (Thompson, 2010: 26). This allows external organisations to assess RCOs, depending on how well they are able to implement and realize the objectives outlined in the governing document. As Zetter and Pearl (2000: 692) argue, the "role of RCOs in developing good

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[268] Constitutions have to be certified by and official, independent bodies, such as a local community service – e.g. NCC notarized Takin's constitution by having the manager sign a printed copy of the constitution.

practice is crucial" – both for the RCOs themselves (to obtain funding) and for service providers (to legitimately outsource support to an official community organisation).

As individuals are unable to apply for community funding (from both governmental and non-governmental funding bodies), migrant and refugee groups have to establish highly formalized associations to be eligible for funding (Williams, 2006: 877). As Zetter's (2007: 287) extensive work shows, RCOs mainly serve "advocacy, protecting basic rights, supporting claims and filling the increasingly large void left by the withdrawal of state support". RCOs provide the "organisational infrastructure" within which individuals are able to seek and provide assistance (Williams, 2006: 869), linking refugees with larger, external bodies and the government, as well as assuring internal continuity (Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 682).Yet, Bhutanese refugees arrived in the midst of a financial downturn, in which charities and NGOs experienced a decrease in state-funding of up to eighty percent (private correspondence with service provider), further reducing the pool of available resources for RCOs (also see Zetter and Pearl, 2000).

The comparatively small Bhutanese RCOs in the UK (only about 50-100 members each) makes it difficult for my informants to compete for the increasingly reduced resources[269]. Sigona et al. (2004: 3) and Zetter and Pearl (2000: 675) highlight that the NGO and RCO sector is hardly 'equal' or stable: large and well established organisations are able to generate more funding than smaller RCOs. In comparison to large NGOs, charities and governmental organisations[270], small and local RCOs often operate outside of legal, organisational structures, lacking professional staff, have very limited access to funding, and thus often fail to endure over time (Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 681).

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[269] Zetter and Pearl (2000: 675-6) also highlight that RCOs are further constraint by policies (emphasizing the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act), making it harder for RCOs to provide assistance, access resources and infrastructures, and lack professional skills to provide adequate support. My research revealed that due to reduced public spending, RCOs are significantly limited.

[270] For example, Refugee Council and Refugee Action, which are partly funded by the British government, are the main agencies offering support for newly arrived refugees, offer training and provide information and advice before outsourcing to established RCOs. They are also the main organisations that encourage community development. However, both agencies operate top-down, rather than allowing for mutual cooperation (Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 681; 686).

Similarly, Griffiths et al. (2006: 895) are critical of the fact that "far from promoting the integration of refugees, this [RCO] framework may rather perpetuate a condition of institutionalised marginality for refugee groups", and put into question the utility of RCOs in the mobilisation and 'integration' of migrant communities (also see Zetter and Pearl: 676; 682). For instance, Bhutanese RCOs hardly have funds to host events, initiate projects, such as English language classes, or offer specifically tailored support as envisioned by policy makers. Therefore, RCOs are unable to fulfil their aims, and refugees remain on the side lines of official structures and networks.

During the first meeting in 2010 (see Chapter 9), service providers offered draft constitutions (of other RCOs) to Bhutanese refugees, and were encouraged to copy the aims and objectives, although they were advised to make it "their own" by using their "own words" (Thompson, 2010: 26). However, most Bhutanese refugees lack skills in English – especially the "language of bureaucracy" – to create a document within the required standards. Both Welfare and Takin copied and pasted from other draft constitutions, and once I entered the field, my informants from Takin asked me to assist them with a re-drafting of their constitution (see Appendix 2). The wording of Takin's and Welfare's constitutions is very similar, with four major objectives of both RCOs.

The first of these objectives in both cases is 'community cohesion' to "bridge the gap" between refugees and the British host population (TA UK, 2013). Both RCOs assume that through creating and participating in these networks, and through liaising with service providers, NGOs and the general public, 'integration' can be achieved (ibid.). For example, in Takin's constitution the aim is to ensure a "smooth transition towards effective integration and harmonious adjustment with the wider community" (ibid.), although neither RCO defines what they mean with 'integration' (also see Chapter 4).

Secondly, the aim of both RCOs is to increase the refugees' "quality of life" by providing and assisting with access to education and training, developing their

skills (e.g. English language), and assist with gaining employment[271] (ibid.). However, as I discuss further below, in practice RCOs are unable to provide effective support for this aim.

Thirdly, both RCOs commit to support community members by organising events, to realize projects and recreational activities, as well as to assist with "connecting Bhutanese in diaspora"[272] (ibid.). As discussed above, due to a lack of funding, this aim can hardly be actualized.

Lastly, because RCOs are defined as an interest group based on a shared 'cultural identity' (Thompson, 2010: 5 – see Chapter 5), both RCOs are committed to "preserve" their "culture" and "heritage" (TA, 2013), such as Nepali language, music, dance and dress, and to create awareness of their "culture" amongst the British host population (ibid.). For example, BWA defines one of their purposes as to "preserve and promote the religion of interest and culture". What constitutes this "culture", "heritage" and "religion", is not defined in the constitutions. BWA is comprised of Hindu, Christian and a few Buddhist members – but which religion is "preserved and promoted" by Welfare? In Chapter 9 I show how disagreements over how these elements can lead to an exaggeration of animosities between RCOs.

Bhutanese RCOs are often unable to realize these purposes for their community members, both due to a lack of organisation and decreased and highly competitive funding. Zetter and Pearl (2000: 693) observe similar trends amongst other RCOs in the UK, arguing that "RCOs thus face the prospect of both trying to establish themselves with limited or no public resources and supporting clients who are widely distributed". Within these limits, RCOs find it increasingly difficult to meet the standards prescribed in their constitutions.

Nonetheless, Bhutanese RCOs succeed in some aspects: for example, the main purpose of both Takin and Welfare is to organise social events in order to

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[271] Through, for example, helping with CVs and cover letters for job applications.
[272] Similar to the other aims, there is no concrete plan in the RCO constitutions how to realize this purpose. Moreover, 'diaspora' remains undefined, although it refers to the global community of Bhutanese refugees in resettlement.

allow Bhutanese refugees to meet and participate in their "culture" by speeches, song and dance, which in turn fosters *samaj*. These events – about 3 a year per RCO - are popular and well attended, with a high rate of participation, especially amongst young people. Furthermore, due to the lack of service provision, RCOs are a source of support for new arrivals coming from Nepalese refugee camps, as I outlined in detail in Chapter 6. Due to the scarcity of Nepali translators amongst service providers in Manchester, RCOs offer free-of-charge translation services to their community members, especially for official business such as visits to Job Centres and medical facilities. Key members of RCOs (see below) often serve as a point of reference and mediator between Bhutanese refugees, service providers, official bodies and facilities (e.g. schools), and assist with official documents (e.g. tenancy agreements for housing; applications, etc.). Lastly, Bhutanese RCOs are able to obtain small amounts of funding for various projects, such as the *Bhutanese Refugee Film Project* (BRFP), or for workshops and events, such as the 'Youth Seminar on Integration' organised by BWA in August 2013[273].

Nevertheless, my informants reflect critically on service providers, who only offer assistance for community development in the early stages of resettlement, and do not assess the functionality of RCOs in later stages. Whether the aims and purposes of RCOs are met is not necessarily a concern for these official services: success is said to be measured in how much funding an organisation is able to obtain (private correspondence with service provider). It is, to argue cautiously, a capitalisation of community organisations, assessing success and failure based on financial means (i.e. how much money an RCO has), rather than on the realization of 'abstract' goals, such as "community cohesion" or "cultural preservation". This reflects Kelly's (2003: 41) critique of the UK's adoption of CDA, in which RCOs become "contingent communities", which "conform to the expectations of the host society in order

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[273] The event (which I attended) comprised of about 20 Bhutanese teenagers, and featured four speakers from the refugee community (including Dr. Sharma and Dr. Poudel, see Chapter 9), who spoke about the education and health system in the UK. The speakers drew heavily on their own personal experiences, and emphasized certain socio-cultural values and meanings, such as advising young people to remain sexually abstinent before marriage, and not being "caught up" in "peer pressure".

to gain the advantages of a formal community association", such as access to resources and funding (ibid.). For Kelly, RCOs are not a reflection of solidarity between and amongst refugees, but rather "an artificial construction responding to a social policy based on an assumption that communities exist" (ibid.: 46). As outlined in this chapter, Bhutanese RCOs learnt how to adapt to this social policy, and made use of bureaucratized language to gain advantages only open to formalized organisation.

But Bhutanese RCOs also operate by means of 'othering', defining the boundaries of membership and non-membership (also see Chapter 9). Therefore, in the following section I outline the problems of leadership and authority within Bhutanese RCOs, creating hierarchies amongst Bhutanese refugees based on social and educational capital. These pecking orders stretch beyond RCOs, and permeate *samaj*, and my informants' understandings of who should be in charge and claim to be able to 'speak for' all Bhutanese refugees. Thereafter, I unpack the various problems that Bhutanese RCOs experience, rendering the assumed functionality of RCOs ineffective.

Hierarchies and Leadership

One of the functions of RCOs is to mediate between service providers and the refugee community. In order to do so, RCOs require leadership: individuals who serve as brokers between external parties and the community (Baumann, 1996: 66; Colson, 2003: 14). This allows service providers to enact control over information and resources shared with refugee communities (Baumann, 1996: 46). A resilient, independent RCO is defined (by service providers) as hinging on strong leadership, as Mitchell and Correa-Velez's (2010: 95) informants argue: "Leaders can bring people together. When leaders are respected they can solve problems. Good leaders show compassion and are dedicated to the community. If they are positive, the community is positive".

However, leadership brings with it dynamics of power-struggles and distribution of resources (Sigona et al., 2004: 7), and requires skills and assets from leaders (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 97). As Shaw (2008: 28) argues, "without an adequate understanding of the ways in which power relations construct and constrain community life, we are left clutching at the straws of idealized and sentimental versions" of community, especially when it comes to internal community divisions. Therefore it is all the more important to discuss and illustrate who is in charge of Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester, how these key players gained authority, and how they are using it.

Bhutanese community leaders

As mentioned above, once the first Bhutanese refugees arrived in the UK, service providers approached educated Bhutanese refugees who have a good command of English to form community organisations. I describe the exact events leading up to formation of the first Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester (which occurred two years before my fieldwork) in Chapter 9. Here, however, I describe why these leaders have been chosen by their community and service providers, and how they maintain and have fostered their authority since then.

Weber (1922 – see Weber et al., 1968) argued that because systems of power and authority are heteronomous and may arise in plural forms, we have to understand these systems within the context in which they are analysed. Here, I emphasize the distinction between authority and power. That is, RCO leaders do not have absolute power over Bhutanese refugees that would allow them to force or manipulate RCO members to do something against their will (Philip, 1996b: 659). Rather, they have what Foucault referred to as 'casual' power that is not repressive but productive, gently influencing the members' behaviours and experiences (ibid.: 658). Contrary to Weber's (1968) 'intentional' use of power, Bhutanese RCO leaders do not actively manipulate their RCO members for their own personal gains.

This theoretical framework is mirrored in my informants' use of Nepali terms. Bhutanese RCO leaders are referred to (by Bhutanese refugees) as *neta* in Nepali, meaning a leader, guide or chief, which has to be distinguished from the Nepali title *dalpati*, referring to a commander or absolute leader. This choice of terminology is a reflection of the tangible power these leaders hold over community members. Rather than being an authoritative figure with absolute control to which everyone has to submit – that is, *dalpati* –RCO leaders are perceived as guides (*neta*), whose authority and status are based on the practical support they can provide. Although RCO leaders manage funding and organize projects and events, they have little de facto power over individuals in everyday life[274]. That is, RCO leaders may be consulted by individual for non-RCO matters, but their advice may not necessarily be adhered to. Here, I use Arendt's (1960 in Gissurarson, 2003: 39) distinction between *power* as the submission of personal freedom (and decision making) through force, and *authority* that is (relatively voluntarily) agreed upon by both sides and allows individual freedom to resist their leaders. RCO board members achieve their authority not by forceful coercion (also see Lukes, 2003 and Lukes, 2004). That is, they are leaders because they already *have* authority, rather than gaining authority through their role as leaders (also see below). They are considered *neta* because they are trusted to have the necessary know-how to give advice and lead an RCO, such as language skills, education and experience and networks with non-refugees (Philip, 1996a: 42). As one of my informants explained:

> "Community needs a leader for the effective running, and it is very
> important for leaders to have better ideas, familiarities, knowledge
> and skills to rule the community. What I personally think about being
> a leader, they must have the concentration and attentiveness in
> planning, managing and carrying out the events and activities that
> bring contributions and wellbeing in the lives of people in the

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[274] Gissurarson (2003: 38) distinguishes between de facto authority (a collectively agreed role of power due to e.g. traditional systems of hierarchy, charisma) and de jure authority (power that has to be adhered to due to legal regulations, e.g. police, judges, etc.).

community".

However, Arendt (1960, in Gissurarson, 2003) Parsons (1951) and Weber (1922, both in Calhoun, 2002: 378) stress that authority and power structures are necessary in a social group in order to organize social action and achieve collective goals. Despite their relatively 'weak' (de facto) power, leadership is essential to run an organisation effectively as envisioned by British service providers. Therefore, I outline the imposed (by policy) structure of hierarchy within RCOs, and their ascribed functions.
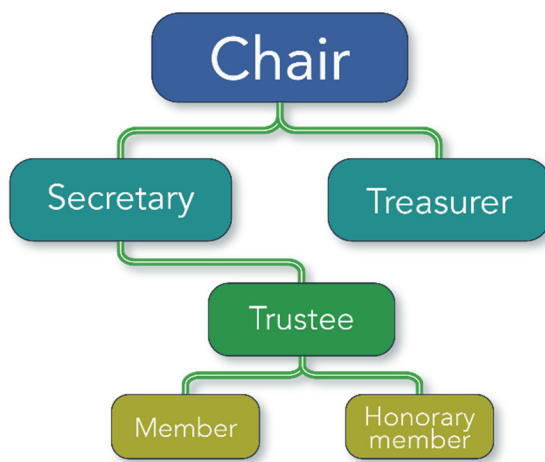
Figure 23: RCO Structure

All community organisations and charities in the UK operate through a specific power constellation (see Figure 23[275]). The key power holders – chair, secretary and treasurer – are, according to TA's (2010) constitution elected by the committee of trustees, by a two third majority vote[276]. There is no limit to how many terms somebody can serve in these roles, and throughout my fieldwork, the key power players remained the same. Each position has ascribed responsibilities – both towards external bodies (the state, service providers, funding bodies) and internally towards the community they aim to serve (see below). Moreover, leadership over RCOs brings with it high status within the refugee community, and the accumulation of different forms of capital, particularly social and education capital. Board members are able to access training provided by governmental and non-governmental bodies in, for example, RCO development, accounting for organisations, and event planning. These training

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[275] Graph by Yamen Albadin, commissioned by the author of this thesis
[276] In reality, there were no trustees for TA. As I was not invited to attend a BWA AGM, I cannot comment on how decisions are reached there, but according to my informant Binita, an AGM took place in 2011, voting for the board without any further elections.

opportunities are only available for official board members[277].

Bhutanese RCOs, as a form of *samaj*, are based on the same guiding principles of mutuality, trust, reciprocity and social interaction[278] – or lack thereof, as the internal divisions between Bhutanese RCOs demonstrate (see Chapter 9). As I discuss in further detail in the following chapter, only Bhutanese refugees who arrived in the UK with the resettlement programme can serve as RCO board members, and thus mutuality on grounds of a shared experience is a given. Pragmatic concerns legitimize the leaders' position: only those who are perceived as being able to provide services, advice, and in some instances physical resources (money, goods) as well as event-organisation[279] are considered appropriate leaders by my informants.

The most relevant factor is, undoubtedly, trust. In order to become elected as a board member, an individual has to establish trust, especially when dealing with funds. However, trust is also earned through the perceived accumulation of forms of capital, as I illustrate below. Individuals who have all characteristics ascribed to them (mutuality, trust, reciprocity and social networks) are bestowed with status within *samaj*, and with actual power within RCOs. In the following section I explore the duties of each board member, and outline how individuals gained their status and authority within the Bhutanese refugee community. The table below shows the names and positions of each of the three Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester, allowing the reader to get an overview of the key players.

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[277] Other training is available to all RCO members, such as female empowerment workshops organized by RAUK for all refugee women across the North of England.

[278] Research suggest the same characteristics of community amongst other refugee communities, such as a "sense of security…significance and…solidarity" (in Shaw, 2008: 28).

[279] RCO board members are obliged to organise and run community events, find funds for them, and make it overall, a "good experience", as event attendees remark

	TA	BWA	HNC
Chair	Unnayak Bagale (2011)	Shaan Mali (2010-1) Pran Mali (2011)	Pastor (2010-3) Binita (2013)
Secretary	Kavi (2011)	Kush Pathak Jibro Pathak	?
Treasurer	Ram Gadal (2011)	Binita (2011-3) ?	?
Families	Bagale Gadal Pathak Thapa Roka Most Longsight & Bolton households	Sinha Pathak Most Bury & Ashton households	Piyas Dawadi Gurungs Almost all converts
Honorary Members	Ved Hari Yumi Nicole	Dr. Sharma Dr. Poudel	Christian RCOs in Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford Nepali Christians

Chair

The role of chair is the most significant for community organisations, as they are the official leaders of associations (Thompson, 2010: 20). They are obliged to organize and conduct community meetings, and guide the members through the bureaucratic decision-making process (ibid.). They claim to 'speak on behalf' of all RCO members, meriting political authority over the community at large[280] (Baumann, 1996: 63-4). Bhutanese community leaders in Manchester, Unnayak (TA), the Mali brothers (BWA) and the pastor and Binita (HNC), are in

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[280] As the main mediator between the external and internal community they have the power to define how the community is presented externally, creating and reproducing the dominant discourse which equates culture with community. By claiming that there is one coherent, all-encompassing, homogenous Bhutanese refugee community, leaders may present themselves as presiding over all Bhutanese refugees, knowing 'what is best' for everyone (also see Chapter 9).

charge of their respective RCOs since their formation in 2010-11. These individuals, gained their position by having social and educational capital, which allows them to effectively communicate with external bodies (see further below). As educated individuals, they have the necessary know-how (e.g. language, experience with bureaucracy, etc.) to represent RCOs for the 'benefit of all'.

But they also need charisma and congeniality within the social network, to gain the support of the community (see Baumann, 1996: 64). Pran and Shaan Mali have experience in politics (see Chapter 4), and the pastor and Binita are used to give passionate sermons – experiences which increases their ability to mobilize others for their cause. Unnayak, on the other hand, is perceived as a highly educated, approachable, tolerant and respectful individual, albeit not being a zealous public speaker. TA members bestow trust on him not because of his ability to give speeches (his chair Kavi more than compensated for Unnayak's shortcomings, as I show below), but because of his determination, commitment and reliability, engendering trust. However, regardless of these talents and skills, RCO chairs rely heavily on their secretaries, who often take on the bulk of work needed to run an RCO.

Secretary

The secretary of a community organisation actualizes ideas and suggestions provided by the chair and the community (Thompson, 2010: 20). Whilst the chair runs meetings, the secretary organizes them by finding a venue (normally somebody's living room). Both[281] Kavi (TA) and the Pathak brothers Kush and Jibro (BWA) are outspoken individuals, assisting the chairs with both practical support and political rhetoric. Similarly, Kavi serves as a key orator during Takin events, as Unnayak lacks the charismatic skills. Secretaries gain authority in the same way as the chairs do - by being ascribed with trust and respectability by the community members - and their status within *samaj* is as

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[281] Due to my lack of access to the Christian community, I am unsure who serves as the chair of HNC. Moreover, there was uncertainty about who has responsibility over BWA funds once Binita left, and Takin members claimed that the Pathaks took over the role of treasurer next to their position as secretaries.

high as that of the actual RCO leaders. Oftentimes, the chair's and secretary's roles are interchangeable and interdependent, and in the absence of the chair, the secretary assumes his/her position. The secretary is in most cases also the co-signatory of RCO cheques, paying for RCO expenses, bridging the role of the secretary with that of the treasurer.

Treasurer

The treasurer's duties include (but are not limited to) ensuring that all expenses are paid and the correct receipts are kept on record (for external auditing). They monitor the RCO's bank account, and provide financial accounts for funding applications (Thompson, 2010: 20). In Bhutanese RCOs funding applications, financial reports (presented to the AGM) and budgeting are conducted in liaison with the chair and secretary.

For Bhutanese refugees, the handling of money requires undisputed trust and a practical skill-set required for dealing with financial accounts. For example, due to the mistrust towards the Malis, based on events stretching back to the refugee camp (see Chapter 4), the Christian community insisted on having a Christian treasurer in BWA until the final split of BWA and HNC in 2013. Binita often remarked that she does not trust BWA with funding, and the issue of how to utilize funds was the reason why these two RCOs ended their collaboration, as I illustrate in Chapter 9. The position of Binita as the treasurer for BWA fostered control and trust of the Christina BWA members.

Both Binita and Ram (Takin) were young refugees (under 20), who became 'liminal experts' (Turner, 1999, in Williams, 2006: 876), through education capital[282] (see below), and their charismatic and candid personalities. Previously powerless young people make use of the accumulation of various forms of capital to gain status in 'in-between' phases, in which conventional structures of hierarchies are replaced with new signifiers of authority. As I

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[282] Resonating with Spicer's (2008: 500-1) research on migrant children, Bhutanese children, teenagers and young adults are convinced that education and job training in the UK will provide them with better opportunities in the future. See Spicer (2008) for a discussion on children's experience of migration in the UK.

explore below, amongst Bhutanese refugees in resettlement, age and gender as a vestige of authority are supplanted by education and personality traits, because these skills offer more practical applications in resettlement in the UK.

Authority and status

As discussed above, authority amongst Bhutanese refugees does not designate absolute power and obedience, but is intrinsically interlinked with status, allowing those further up in the hierarchy to act as guides and consultants for everyday decisions and activities. Whilst status can exist *a priori* of actions, authority has to be earned through actions and skills (Beteille, 1977: 18). For example, although BWA leaders attempted to impose their views on their community members by dissuading them to participate in Takin projects, BWA members (such as the Rochdale Boys introduced in Chapter 6) resisted their control. That is, ordinary RCO members can consult their board members, but nevertheless make their own, individual decisions, even if they are contrary to the advice they have received.

RCO board members are only able to fully exert their control in regards to the internal functionality of RCOs, and the realization of projects and events, although all three Bhutanese RCO boards consult their members for input and suggestions before reaching a decision. RCOs in the UK are, after all, modelled on liberal democratic associations, based on majority rule. For example, during a day trip to Scarborough organised by Takin (but also attended by HNC members) the decision to charter a whole boat (paid for with TA money) to go out to sea for a tour, was reached through a group consensus, with all attendants raising their hands in the middle of a windy pier. Furthermore, due to yearly AGMs, RCO leaders are obliged to demonstrate to their members that they run RCOs efficiently, within its means, and "provide best value for funders and users" (Farley and Garcia, 2006: 37). Ideally, RCOs are "participatory, equitable and inclusive", with a "shared vision" to support all community members (Mitchell and Correa-Velez, 2010: 97).

However, as I illustrate in Chapter 9, this idealism is not realized in practice, as RCOs operate not only through inclusiveness, but also through 'othering'. RCOs have to compete with one another for reduced funding, and those RCOs who are able to attract more external funding are also more prestigious and popular amongst Bhutanese refugees. For example, HNC is able to obtain substantial amounts of funding from Christian funding bodies unavailable to (mostly Hindu) TA and BWA, and therefore are more 'attractive' for Bhutanese refugees, demonstrated by the high conversion rate of new arrivals (see Chapter 9).

Service providers assume that RCO leadership should be based on commitment and "a strong moral sense of justice" (Baumann, 1996: 66) rather than personal gain. However, once in power, RCO leaders become part of what I call a 'perpetual circle of authority and skills' (see Figure 24[283]). Bhutanese refugees in resettlement in the UK gain authority and status (both within RCOs and *samaj*) due to their skills (e.g. language) and various forms of capital (see below). Once they become board members they have more authority and status than an ordinary RCO member. Due to service providers' participatory approach and effort to outsource support, RCO board members have access to training and resources to effectively manage RCOs. In turn, the development of expertise increases the leaders' status, legitimizing a re-election at the coming AGM, because, as one Takin member stated, "they know what they have to do already".

[283] Graph by Yamen Albadin, commissioned by the author of this thesis.
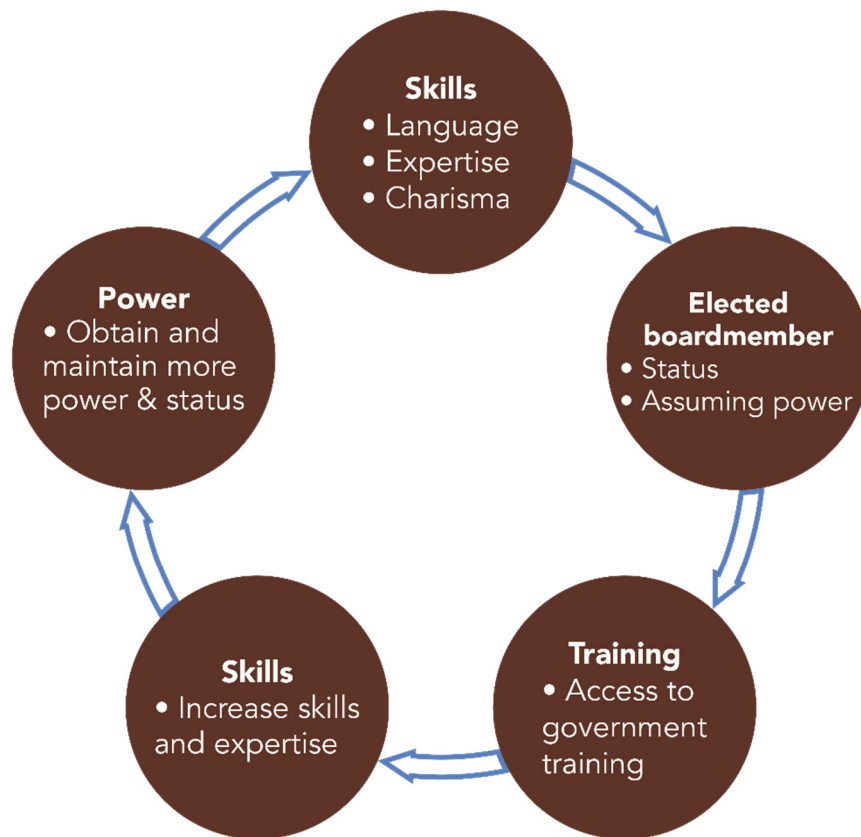
Figure 24: Perpetual Circle of Skills and Authority for RCO board members

As years go by, TA, BWA and HNC board members hardly change, as they accumulate more skills and know-how, and therefore increase their status as a 'legitimate leader'. As Williams (2006: 868, 872) argues, knowledge and social networks become a currency – a "commodity" (ibid.) which can be traded for status and authority within both RCOs and *samaj*. Here, authority and status dynamics are shifting from being determined by age and gender to the accumulation of different forms of capital, allowing previously powerless individuals (such as youths) to gain status and authority within *samaj and* Bhutanese RCOs, as I demonstrate in the following section.

Social and educational capital[284]

Becoming a board member in a RCO, and therefore having access to training and workshops enhancing ones' management skills, allows individuals to expand their social networks both within and externally to the Bhutanese refugee community. TA's board members had far-reaching networks of contacts amongst service providers (e.g. Refugee Action), NGOs (such as MRSN), local associations and other (non-Bhutanese) RCOs. Unnayak established a close friendship with the manager of *Salford Forum*, a refugee charity offering training and support in Manchester. This relationship initiated a snowball effect: Unnayak met leaders from other RCOs, establishing collaborative links from Takin members to non-Bhutanese refugees, resulting in for example some Bhutanese girls joining the *Salford Women's Dance Group* organised by a Somali RCO in Salford. Through extending his networks, the *Cumbria Multicultural Women's Network* and a Chinese women's association invited female Takin members for a day trip to the Lake District in April 2013. Welfare leaders similarly established close ties with for instance Nepali and Ghurkha organisations in North England, participating in each other's events with song and dance. These networks are of utmost importance, as they serve one of the main functions of RCOs: to operate in liaison with various social actors and networks (Sigona et al., 2004: 7).

Anthropologist Peter Loizos (2000: 132), working with Greek Cypriot refugees in the 1960s, argued that refugees are "social capitalists", who fashion social networks based on shared values, trust and reciprocity, in order to assure certainty in a time of transition (Chatty, 2010: 465). Loizos follows Coleman (1988, also see Chatty, 2010: 475), who argues that the relevance of social capital depends on a shared understanding of its function. Social capital "exists in the relations among persons: in the trust and trustworthiness, responsibilities, obligations, expectations, norms, and sanctions that tie people

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[284] Theories on the various forms of capital originate with Bourdieu (1997). He defined social capital as one of many capitals (economic, human, educational) humans can acquire through social connections, which may then be converted into economic (or other pragmatic) capital. Because I focus on the adoption of social capital amongst refugees, I do not discuss Bourdieu's theories in detail in this work – see Bourdieu (1997) and Durkheim (1992) for further theoretical discussions.

together" (ibid.), and manifests in the tangible support and sharing of resources within a social network (Cheung and Phillimore, 2013: 523-4). The wider and more established a social network is, the greater are the tangible functions these relationships provide – at least in the case of Bhutanese refugees. Unnayak and the Mali brothers have far-reaching social networks within and external to the Bhutanese refugee community, and thus have better access to resources and other 'functions' social capital can provide, such as participation in training and workshops (increasing educational capital).

Moreover, language competency (as educational capital) plays a key part in RCO power relations: many new arrivals from refugee camps have poor English language skills, and lack understanding of British bureaucracy and legal procedures (Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 685). Most adult Bhutanese refugees have limited contact with people outside of the Bhutanese refugee community, which some of them directly link to the lack of English. This leads to a 'vicious circle': Bhutanese refugees do not communicate with the local English-speaking population due their lack of language skill – but because they do not speak English with anyone outside of their community (and thus, only speak Nepali), they cannot improve their language skills. As one of my informants remarked: "I have no English friends, and only hang out with the [Bhutanese] community. That's why I cannot speak English".

Older members of the community find it particularly difficult to acquire sufficient language skills, and rely heavily on children and young people. One of the older refugees in the community remarked:

> "The kids are in a learning age. But my brain is old, and I cannot learn very well anymore. They [children] learn English very quickly, and make friends. But we [parents] have problems learning the language, and we make many mistakes".

On the one hand, this puts pressure on young refugees to assist their older community members. At the same time, it allows young refugees to gain status and authority within *samaj*. Before resettlement, this powerless group was

under the control and authority of elder men within the community. In the UK, youth and young adults acquire status within the community, as they become 'liminal experts', discussed in the following section. Liminal experts are *an* authority, because they have various forms of capital, networks and expertise which legitimizes their status as *neta* (guide, advisor), and their advice is perceived as valid and reliable[285].

Liminal experts

Bhutanese refugees who acquire English quickly, are highly respected individuals within *samaj*, as they can form social networks with non-Nepali speakers, and thus enhance their social capital[286]. As mentioned above, Bhutanese refugees with good language skills and a background in higher education were the ones approached by UK service providers to found RCOs, as it is assumed that they can effectively serve as brokers between the community and external bodies. Unnayak, Kavi, Ram, the Mali and Pathak brothers, as well as Binita gained their status because of their ability to communicate effectively with non-Bhutanese refugees, *and* because they have the ability to communicate *back* to the community members. Moreover, education and know-how of British bureaucracies increase social status and networks (Zeus, 2011: 262) within *samaj*, and allows those individuals to play key roles within RCOs.

But Ram and Binita – as young refugees under the age of 18 – could not have assumed these roles before resettlement, in which status and authority was in the hands of elder (over 50) men, although Evans (2010) already notices the changes of leadership structures in the refugee camps. As discussed in Chapter 4, Bhutanese refugees and their social hierarchies are strongly

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[285] However, they are not *in* authority, which would require a "special institutional role with a co-ordinated sphere of command" ((Philip, 1996a: 43). Only RCO board members can claim de jure authority, as they hold positions of power within these formalized communities.

[286] This is particularly important than when it comes to employment – the wider the social network stretches (especially with the British South Asian community), the more job opportunities become available, allowing Bhutanese refugees to access the labour market predominantly through the social relations they have established.

influenced by the social re-engineering employed by Western humanitarian and aid agencies, as well as by British service providers.

From an anthropological perspective, these transitions of power and status structures are characteristics of individuals in a liminal phase (see Introduction and Chapter 3). This reflects Simon Turner's (1999) claim that refugees in camps question and challenge "traditional hierarchies and understandings" (cited in Williams, 2006: 876). As Mortland (1987: 390) argues societies operate by "social restrictions which hold people in their classes", which are "formal and explicit, unwritten and implicit, and they are understood by all residents". Individuals operate within these dimensions of hierarchies, and research suggests that refugees attempt to replicate these structures in a state of liminality in, for example, refugee camps (ibid.: 389). But these internal social differences, such as age and gender, are "obscured" by aid and policy intervention, rendering all refugees in a camp (or in resettlement) as 'equals' vis-à-vis non-refugee service providers and agencies (ibid. 389-90). What becomes relevant to obtain authority is not the 'traditional' status someone has within the refugee community (e.g. age, gender), but how effectively an individual can communicate with non-refugees and accumulate various forms of capital.

Evans' (2010: 46) research in the Bhutanese refugee camps shows that it was predominantly young people who engaged with politics and decision making within the camps, which changed the power dynamics both within their families and the Bhutanese refugee community as a whole. This allows young and previously marginalized individuals to "trespass into new roles" (Turner, 1999 cited in Williams, 2006: 876) as they "make use of this suspension of social structure to change things to their own advantage", making them into "liminal experts" (ibid.). They have the necessary language skills, education, know-how and political determination to serve as brokers between refugees and non-refugees, and thus to assume official roles within RCOs in resettlement. Williams' (2006: 876) research with refugees and asylum seekers in the UK confirms this shift:

"Some young men have considerable power and authority in their networks of weak ties that are above and beyond what they could have achieved in traditional settings".

Liminal experts within the Bhutanese refugee community have ascribed status by being consulted by individuals for life-changing decisions: should we move from Leeds to Manchester? Should I apply for this job? Should I enter university? These and other such questions are directed at Ram, Binita, and many other young people in *samaj*, and these liminal experts try their best to advise or provide answers, information and even resources, such as money[287] and time. Ram, for example, travels far and wide in Greater Manchester to assist individual community members with job applications and CVs, and offers free translation for visits to e.g. health facilities. Binita assists families with enrolling children for school, and liaising individuals with non-refugee Christians. The Mali and Pathak brothers hold workshops for Bhutanese refugees, advising them about 'integration' (also see above) the British education system and "how to live a healthy life"[288]. Other young refugees visit families to assist and advise, especially new arrivals, as the arrival scene in Chapter 6 demonstrated.

These 'liminal experts' have 'achieved' their status within *samaj* by accumulating social, educational, and other forms of capital, and therefore increased trust in interpersonal relations. That is, their advice can be trusted, *because* they are experts. The information they provide is considered reliable by other Bhutanese refugees, because of the assumed mutuality, following the shared understanding that "we are all the same" and "we have to help one another". Social and other capital can be and are used to gain authority within RCOs (Philip, 1996b: 660). Liminal experts tend to speak up during RCO

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[287] Research with refugees and asylum seekers across the UK shows that statistically, young refugees under the age of 30 find it easier to access the labour market (see e.g. Cheung and Phillimore, 2013: 530). This allows them to accumulate money – in comparison to those who rely solely on welfare and benefit payments. This was reflected in my fieldwork, in which almost all refugees from 18 to 30 were in (both legal and illegal) employment, mostly gained through their social networks with South Asian communities.

[288] As mentioned above, during the BWA workshop in summer 2013, Bhutanese refugee were advised about healthy nutrition, the benefits of regular health checks, and the "dangers" of tobacco, drugs and *paan*.

meetings, assist with the organisation of events, and suggest projects and activities.

For example, during the BRFP managed by Takin, it was young people and teenagers who were keenest to assist 'behind the scenes': they asked the questions during interviews, and arranged the preparations of the rooms in which filming took place. Manendra – at the time of my fieldwork 15 years old – took charge of the filming and bossed around participants and onlookers, often being very forceful in expressing how and what he wanted, especially to refugees many times his age, who (according to Manendra) were "too stupid to understand". Manendra's behaviour towards older community members was often condescending, and I found myself surprised that despite Manendra's insolent conduct, he was a well-regarded and often consulted individual, especially for older Bhutanese refugees who lack IT skills. Manendra is the first person to contact with any IT issues – from computer hard- and software to website design (he designed and manages the Takin website). He acquired IT expertise after resettlement, and the Bhutanese refugee community regards him as an expert on these matters, earning him respect from both young and old refugees. Manendra is aware of this authority, and makes use of his status within the community by means of language or requests for resources. He is not the exception – Ishita, Ajay, Dharendra and Gatha are all teenage refugees who have excellent language skills and expertise in certain areas (acquired through having access to formal education in the UK), which they use to gain status within *samaj*, and who are closely involved in Bhutanese RCOs. Ankha, an 18-year-old Bhutanese refugee, who completed his A-levels during my fieldwork, and worked in several part-time jobs next to his educational commitment, highlighted the importance (for him) of getting involved in the community, but also the prestige and status that comes with it:

> "I would like to do more than what needs to be done for the protection and improvement of the community by being a successful community worker. Once I make sure I have succeeded in everything as planned and aimed, it will be the remarkable moment where I will be well-known in the community and this will be the best

way to stay in touch with people and hopefully, I will always be remembered by the people even when I pass away as the effect of the developments I brought for the community will still be touching them".

Similar to Manendra and other young refugees, being involved in the community not only serves the support of community members, but also his own increase in social status.

These liminal experts have to be juxtaposed with those who used to have status and authority, but are losing their position, which particularly affects older (over 50 years old) men. In Bhutan, and even in Nepalese refugee camps, their authority was ascribed due to their gender and age, having expertise in areas that were relevant at the time. Buddhi, for example, was an agricultural expert with more than four decades of experience in toiling on the land in Bhutan. His children recalled that Buddhi was consulted from all across south Bhutan on matters of farming, selling cash crops and investing in agricultural tools. This gained him power in the community, and a few refugees remarked that Buddhi was a "chief" in the Bhutanese village where he used to live with his family. But in the camp, Buddhi's knowledge was no longer relevant, and his status declined to a point where he became nothing more than an "old man", as he once explained, who has "nothing to say". In resettlement, Buddhi's expertise in farming is equally redundant. Buddhi has status in the community and in Takin because of his age and reasoning, tinted with an exceptional sense of humour that makes even the most serious visitor burst into laughter. But in the UK Buddhi is utterly reliant on his family and community members to negotiate his life. Buddhi may be one of the few refugees who can read and write Nepali and Dzongkha fluently – which gave him status and power in Bhutan and Nepal – but he cannot read Latin/Roman script or Arabic numbers (and thus read or write in English), making him dependent on others who are literate in English. Buddhi's prestige as an educated expert, with financial means and property (which was confiscated by the RGB) only applied to his life in Bhutan, and provided him with status within that specific community. In resettlement, his expertise is rendered irrelevant,

and other forms of educational, economic and social capital take centre stage, bestowing status to those who have the pragmatic know-how to negotiate life in the UK. Williams (2006: 876) puts it most succinctly: "[p]eople who were previously independent and powerful now have to seek help and assistance from those who were their traditional inferiors", because they find it difficult to adapt to their new lives in resettlement.

However, different forms of capital attained before resettlement influence structures of authority in resettlement. For example, wealthy, land-owning families in Bhutan were able to send their children to English-medium schools and access higher education, which has given these individuals a significant advantage in resettlement due to their educational capital[289]. Others benefited from the free education in the refugee camps in Nepal, and brought with them ideas, values (influenced by social re-engineering) and competences (e.g. in the English language) which has allowed them to become liminal experts in the UK.

In summary, liminal experts in the UK gain status within both *samaj* and RCOs, through their expedient knowledge and social networks, and therefore authority and status dynamics are shifting. These new dimensions of internal hierarchies are based on capital that serves pragmatic purposes, can be traded within the community, and establishes connections outside of the community. As the illustration above shows, this engenders a perpetual circle of increased authority and status of those who gain authority through RCOs, as they can further expand their capitals by gaining access to training and resources unavailable to those who do not hold positions in RCO boards.

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[289] However, due to the loss of land and financial capital when they had to flee Bhutan, hardly any Bhutanese refugee brought with them economic resources that would allow them to gain higher economic status in resettlement. As time progressed, those who obtained financial resources in resettlement have been bestowed with more authority within the refugee community.

Conclusion

The CDA and RCO development project in refugee resettlement is said to serve the purpose to provide cost-effective, individually tailored services to refugees, allowing marginalized people to 'help themselves' rather than depend on governmental or non-governmental aid. In theory, this participatory approach offers refugees the possibility to define their own needs and resolve problems from within. In turn, the formalization of RCOs continues the social re-engineering of refugees started in refugee camps, making refugees into democratic, independent persons, who easily assimilate into the mainstream of the host society. In practice, however, RCOs can only serve these functions marginally, due to a lack of funding and effective cooperation with service providers and other RCOs.

What formalized RCOs do, however, is to create new forms of hierarchies within *samaj*, transforming some refugees into liminal experts. These new structures of hierarchies are based on pragmatic advantages, rather than 'traditional' markers of difference, such as age and gender. Therefore, although RCOs may not be as effective as anticipated by policy makers and service providers, they have a real, tangible impact of how Bhutanese refugees perceive themselves and their role within *samaj*. RCOs also continue to be the most reliant support network for Bhutanese refugees.

However, the formation of RCOs impacted negatively on community cohesion – one of the main aims of CDA and the RCO project. In the following chapter, it will become evident that communities operate by means of 'othering', and Bhutanese refugees operate within frameworks of similarity and difference, putting into question the adeptness of refugee resettlement policies.

Chapter 9 - A Community Divided

In the previous chapters, I explored the notion of community from various perspectives. We have seen that both international relief agencies and UK service providers tend to take an optimistic view of community as a facilitator of support during a time of uncertainty for migrants, employing a *Community Development Approach* (CDA). One outcome of these policies is that the differences Bhutanese refugees create between each other is elided and therefore given inadequate attention by service providers. As I have demonstrated throughout this work, Bhutanese refugees are a diverse social group, with varying values and meanings, who are internally divided since the refugee camp.

Although I do not argue that these issues have been 'imported' into resettlement in the UK, internal conflicts between Bhutanese refugees are also common in resettlement in Manchester, jeopardizing the assumed (by service providers) advantages of the RCO project. Rather than serving as a reliable support network on which refugees can draw once service providers cease their support, these formalized associations can become battlegrounds on which personal and communal animosities are played out, rendering these small RCOs powerless to compete in an ever-decreasing, competitive funding regime (see below). Here, we should be reminded of Cohen's notion of community as a symbolic construct, operating by creating sameness and difference. Community, as Cohen (1985: 12) states:

> "[s]eems to imply simultaneously both similarity and difference. The word thus expresses a relational idea: the opposition of one community to others or to other social entities. Indeed … the use of the word is only occasioned by the desire or need to express such a distinction. It seems appropriate, therefore, to focus our examination

of the nature of community on the element which embodies this sense of discrimination, namely, the boundary".

In the previous chapter, I have outlined how Bhutanese RCOs are structured and how authority within RCOs are gained. In this chapter, I shift the discussion to the internal divisions between Bhutanese RCOs. In order to understand this 'othering' employed by Bhutanese refugees, I outline the formation of RCOs amongst Bhutanese refugees in Manchester. Starting from my own experiences with community divisions, I trace the emergence of three RCOs amongst Bhutanese refugees in Manchester, and present the 'origin-myth' of Takin Association (TA), which serves to legitimize the RCO's position and power for its board members. By drawing on several ethnographic examples, this chapter argues that RCO divisions based on personal animosities may have an impact on what RCOs can achieve, and in turn put into question the assumed positive attributes of community development amongst forced migrants.

Fieldwork in a 'Divided' Community

A few weeks into my fieldwork in 2012, I was invited to accompany a group of Bhutanese refugees to London, where they attend the 'Refuge in Film' festival at the British Film Institute (BFI), Southbank (London), to present their five minute short-film "Life Beginning" (see Chapter 6). The festival organizers invited all Bhutanese refugee participants to visit London for the premiere at the film festival, although they could only provide financial support for this excursion to five individuals. Unnayak was asked by the organizers to serve as the responsible adult, accompanying the teenage refugees, and prior to the event contacted the parents of participants to request permission to take them to London.

Figure 25: Takin Logo at the 'Refuge in Film' festival 2012

During the event in London, festival attendees were able to participate in a T-shirt printing workshop. Five young Bhutanese refugee boys together with Unnayak were keen to create shirts with a TA logo they created spontaneously (see Figure 25[290]). On my return to Manchester after the event, I visited the Sinha household in Bury for *Deepawali* celebrations, whose two teenage daughters participated in the project. As a novice in the field – similar to new arrivals of refugees – I had not been aware of animosities between RCOs, wrongly assuming that all Bhutanese refugees share one RCO – Takin Association UK – with whom I had established first contact when entering the field. Therefore I did not question Unnayak on why the Sinha girls were not attending the event with them. During the celebrations in Bury, the Pathak family visited the Sinhas, as they are related through marriage and live close by. Kush, one of the seven Pathak brothers (who is married to the Sinha's oldest daughter) asked me about the London event, and without hesitation, I showed them the photos I have made during the event, including ones from the T-shirt printing workshop. When images of the TA shirts were displayed, Kush took my phone and showed it to everyone around the table with a sour look on his face. "They say the film is from Takin?", Kush asked calmly, to which I (in hindsight carelessly) replied that the attendees did indeed advertise TA to the audience. A discussion ensued around the table, most of which with an angry undertone, remarking on Unnayak and "his" Takin. "You know, we are not with Takin", Rani explained, which puzzled me. The rest of the evening passed rather uncomfortably, and I have never been invited to the Sinha household again, despite my attempts to meet the Sinha girls.

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[290] Image is author's own.

Several weeks later, as I got more involved in the management of TA, helping with for example website design and providing free English language lessons, my informants in Longsight decided to initiate another film project – the *Bhutanese Refugees UK Film Project* (BRFP) – for which they required funding. I offered to help with their funding application, and began organising the project with a few TA members. During these planning days, Kavi (the secretary of Takin, see Chapter 8) contacted me to emphasize: "I don't want [the Pathaks and Sinhas]. When they are in the project, I don't want to be in the film. I don't work with Welfare". After these comments, two of my informants sat down with me, and explained that not all refugees in Manchester are with TA, but that there is another RCO called *Bhutanese Welfare Association* (BWA), headed by a Mr. Shaan Mali, together with his brother Pran, as well as the Pathaks. They explained that the organisations are not working together and are "rival" community organisations.

A few months later I found myself again in the centre of the conflict between the two RCOs: during the filming of the BRFP, the film crew – consisting of TA members – and I were confronted with the Pathak brothers, who denied us access to BWA members' houses[291]. Jibro Pathak brought it to a point when turning to me, exclaiming "we are not part of anything that has the Takin logo on it", followed by "our members can't do this film with you and Takin". Indeed, the Pathaks have called on all BWA members not to let us into their houses, leading to some interested parties cancelling the interviews we have scheduled with them. On the very same day, prior to the encounter with the Pathaks, we visited Raja and his family. As mentioned in Chapter 6, I got to know Raja as a confident, outspoken individual, who would not surrender himself to any RCO leader or membership. Before filming the interview, Raja explained that he received a call from the chair of BWA prior to our arrival, being told that he is not "allowed" to participate in the film project. Raja emphasised:

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[291] Interestingly, Mr. Sinha himself – who expressed his interest in participating in the project and arranged the interview date with us – was not present, leaving it to the Pathak brothers to cancel the interview. As outlined in Chapter 8 this is an example of how power-players (in this case, the Pathak brothers on behalf of BWA) 'claim to speak' for all RCO members, to a point where ordinary members yield personal decision-making to individuals who they regard as 'being in charge'.

"I told him on the phone: 'who are you to tell me what I should do? Are you my king or my father?' Who has the right to tell me what to do? I do what I want to do, and I think the project is a good idea. I want to talk about our experiences and the suffering. I don't care about the organisation, I care about telling my story".[292]

These examples demonstrate the internal divisions *within* the Bhutanese refugee community in Manchester, impacting on project participation and the realization of RCO aims. The events I describe above and below also illustrate that migrant and refugee communities are not a homogenous "communitas" (Taylor, 2002: 360) of equal individuals, but that 'othering' is inherent in community-formation. Akin to *samaj*, RCOs are defined and structured by mutuality, trust and reciprocity – or, more importantly, the lack thereof – which determines the difference between 'us' and 'them'.

During my fieldwork service providers working with Bhutanese refugees disregarded these internal divisions, and, due to a lack of critical research and feedback on migration policies, these conflicts are not adequately addressed by bureaucratic bodies in the UK. In fact, service providers in Manchester were reluctant to discuss community divisions with me, arguing that there is "nothing [they] can do" to impede these conflicts. This view is problematic as the service providers themselves are responsible for establishing RCOs (as discussed in the previous chapters).

But how can we explain these internal community divisions, and the emphasis on membership, as well as the related divisions and tensions arising from competing membership?

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[292] Raja's refusal to comply with the BWA leaders' demands reflects the discussion on authority in Chapter 8, demonstrating that rather than holding absolute power over Bhutanese refugees, RCO leaders have authority, which may or may not be adhered to by RCO members (Gissurarson, 2003: 39).

Tracing divisions

In order to understand this issue arising during my fieldwork, we have to explore how three distinct Bhutanese RCOs emerged. In order to do so, we have to go back to 2010 – two years before my fieldwork began – when the first Bhutanese refugees arrived in the UK.

RCO divisions can be traced back to these first arrivals, and the origin story outlined below is based on hearsay and various narratives. It is, however, important to keep in mind that due to my lack of access to BWA, the origin story can only be told from the perspective of TA members. The narrative of the events leading up to the organisation-split can be seen as a myth of origin, perpetually revised and retold in order to legitimize the continuous rivalry between TA and BWA in the present[293], as well as internal power structures and stratifications.

For some, the symbolic boundaries between TA and BWA are unbridgeable, prohibiting social interactions and cooperation. For others, these boundaries are less relevant. Amongst Bhutanese refugees in Manchester, rivalries and animosities do not remain unchallenged, and especially young people (children and teenagers) do not limit their social environment according to RCO affiliations. Many individuals question the community division and actively move in and between the various RCOs to gain advantages, being part of all whilst being a 'member' of none[294]. The three RCOs amongst Bhutanese refugees in Manchester may have been divided to some extent, but the shifting relationships between the RCOs shows that their divide is neither permanent nor based on actual differences.

In the following section, I explore (what I call[295]) the Takin 'myth of origin' – that is, how Bhutanese refugees formed several, instead of *one* RCO in

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[293] Following Malinowski's (1954, in Barnard and Spencer, 1996: 492) functionalist approach of myth and collective narratives as legitimizing, supporting and preserving the status quo.

[294] As discussed below, membership is an important element of RCOs, especially when it comes to duties and responsibilities such as membership fee or attendance at Annual General Meetings (AGMs).

[295] The terms 'myth of origin' or 'origin story' are both mine, rather than used by my informants.

Manchester[296], reiterating my argument that the RCO project is not as straightforward and unproblematic as UK policy makers and service providers assume. Similar to what Kiptinness et al. (2011: 84) describe for Bhutanese refugees in the USA, new arrivals in the UK fully rely on established refugees to become part of an already existing social network, and thus to gain access to information, facilities and support in order to navigate through the unfamiliar social, economic, political and cultural environment. For new arrivals, TA members recall an origin story of how TA was founded, that begins in the first few months of resettlement of Bhutanese refugees.

The 'Origin Story' of Takin Association UK

In late August and early September 2010, the first group of Bhutanese refugees arrived in the UK with the *Gateway Protection Programme* (GPP). The Bagales and Gadals, two families related through intermarriage, as well as the Malis and the Pathaks, were the first to arrive - followed by the Chettris, the Thapas, and various other families. The first group of Bhutanese refugees in the UK was the largest in the resettlement project of Bhutanese refugees in the UK, as the numbers peaked at around 150 individuals at the end of 2010, and most were housed in Manchester, although some were sent to Sheffield and Leeds[297]. Following the welcome and introductory events by UK resettlement agencies in the first few weeks of resettlement (see Chapter 6), this large group of new arrivals was also instructed on the formation of RCOs, and encouraged (by service providers) to form their own formalized associations in order to "help themselves" once governmental services are stopped or outsourced.

Before Bhutanese refugees arrived in the UK with the GPP, Refugee Action and Refugee Council approached Hari, his wife Anusha (whom we have met in

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[296] Due to my lack of access to BWA and HNC members (see Introduction), I cannot provide a detailed outline of the other two RCOs' origin stories and perceptions of the internal divisions.

[297] Bhutanese refugees have been resettled in the Manchester area due to the availability of services and accommodation (see Chapter 6).

Chapter 3), as well as Ved and Yumi – all Bhutanese refugees who arrived in the UK before 2010, and already obtained British citizenship and high-skilled, governmental employment (see below). They were approached by service providers for two reasons. Firstly, they were invited to provide additional information and support to British social workers before the refugees arrived. Hari and Ved, for example, have given lectures to service providers on the 'history of Bhutanese refugees' before resettlement began, to help social workers understand the background of refugees, and thus to better discern their needs. Secondly, they could serve as translators and support workers for the new arrivals, offering services not only in a familiar language (Nepali), but also by individuals who "have the same experience"[298], as Ved once explained. These, what I call 'native support workers'[299], were important sources of information during the first few weeks after arrival, and continue to be consulted by resettled refugees – a point of contention that I discuss further below.

Service providers trained native support workers to encourage the formation of RCOs, and offered funds to host a welcome party in late 2010. The event was intended as a meet-and-greet for Bhutanese refugees, who mostly did not know one another before resettlement, as they arrived from different camps in Nepal. As a community development worker explained (private correspondence), relationships (that is, a *samaj*) between resettled refugees have to be established before RCOs can be formed in the cooperative fashion as envisioned by service providers. With the received funds, Yumi, Hari, Anusha and Ved organised a welcome party at a Methodist church hall in Sheffield. My Takin informants later recalled that they appreciated the event, which included long speeches and Nepali food, allowing refugees, as one of my informants put it, "to feel like at home".

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[298] However, except Hari, who taught in a school in Beldangi II refugee camp for many years before claiming asylum in the UK, Bhutanese refugees did not know Anusha, Ved or Yumi before meeting them in Manchester.

[299] I do not intend to discuss the notion of the 'native' here. What I call 'native support worker' (which is my term rather than my informants) signifies individuals who are themselves Bhutanese refugees, and who acquired competence and trust by service providers to serve as support workers for Bhutanese refugee resettlement. Since 2010, some Bhutanese refugees (notably with excellent English language skills), receive training (by e.g. Refugee Action) to become 'native support workers'.

I could never determine what led to the argument between the Pathaks and the other guests, but at one point during this event the mood turned sour. As Unnayak recalled from this day (and which has been retold several times by other informants):

> "[T]hese people [Pathak family] went to Hari, Ved and Yumi and said 'you should not have done this. We do not want this party. We are going'. ... [Hari, Ved and Yumi] were so upset, and said 'this is the thanks we get for organising this?' – I understand them. It was so good of them to make this party. And these people [Pathak family] are just rude to them. I don't like them".

According to some of my Takin informants, the point of contention was that these native support workers did not arrive in the UK with the GPP, and therefore should not be involved with Bhutanese refugees who came here through organised resettlement. This harks back to the animosities towards pro-resettlement refugees in the refugee camps. As outlined in Chapter 3, many refugees who left the refugee camps either to settle in Nepal or India, or who sought asylum in other countries, were often portrayed as 'traitors', who were against the 'cause' to be repatriated to Bhutan. Referring back to this trend in Bhutanese refugee camps, it can be assumed that Hari, Ved and Anusha[300] may have been considered as 'traitors' by some newly arrived refugees (such as the Pathaks) as these highly educated individuals left the camps for a 'better life' abroad.

Interestingly, a contradiction emerges here. For example, the Pathaks and BWA work closely with Dr. Sharma and Dr. Poudel - both medical doctors who (as Bhutanese refugees) sought asylum in the UK in 2006, and now work at hospitals in Sheffield and Doncaster – inviting them to give presentations at BWA events and workshops (see Chapter 8). Due to my lack of access to BWA, I never fully uncovered the reasons for this discrepancy. The Nepali

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[300] Interestingly, Yumi cannot be included in this, as she left Bhutan even before the ethnic conflict really began, and married a Briton. BWA members nevertheless grouped her with the others, who arrived in the UK as asylum seekers.

student Aadit, who is familiar with all Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester, guesses that personal animosities may be the root cause for these arguments. If so, it verifies Amit and Rapport's (2002, Loc 508; see Chapter 7) claim that communities are "ego-based", and thus prone to individual likes and dislikes.

Although the 'seed of mistrust' was planted during the welcome party in 2010, service providers pressured both Bhutanese refugees and native support workers to continue working with each other. With the help of a community development worker (CDW) from Refugee Action, new arrivals were encouraged to establish a formalized organisation together.

All Bhutanese refugees were somehow involved in this one organisation at the beginning, except the Christian community - the Himalayan Nepali Church (HNC) - which already established their own organisation with the help of British Christian churches. In late 2010, Bhutanese refugees in Manchester came together to discuss the foundation of *Bhutan Welfare Association* (BWA). The name was suggested by Kavi to emphasise the main aim of the association[301]: to support Bhutanese refugees and therefore to ensure their welfare and wellbeing. Moreover, it references Bhutan, in order to legitimize the purpose of the RCO[302].

However, this meeting resulted in arguments over details such as membership fees, and the RCO constitution (see Chapter 8 and Appendix 2). Because of these disputes, no RCO chair was elected, and no one obtained responsibility for the RCO bank account, increasing the hostilities that led to the final split between BWA and TA described below.

According to TA members, antagonisms were fuelled by the arrival of Shaan Mali in late 2010, a political power player amongst Bhutanese refugees both in Nepal and in the UK. Stories about Shaan's involvement in corruption and

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[301] Even the RCO-name became a reason for argument: some were in favour of 'Takin Association' (the takin is the national animal of Bhutan – a goat-antelope living in the Himalayas), which others rejected on the ground that Bhutan should not be referenced "too much".

[302] As discussed in Chapter 5, the legitimization of my informants' refugee status and in turn their RCOs has a significant impact on funding opportunities and projects.

embezzlement in the Bhutanese refugee camps in Nepal (see Chapter 4) spilled over to the UK. Regardless of whether the accusations are true or not, they continue to have leverage amongst many of my TA informants, including new arrivals who entered the UK during my fieldwork. Prasad, for example, did not want to be affiliated with the Mali brothers on arrival, explaining that "they have a bad name" amongst Bhutanese refugees. The Christian community, also questioned Shaan's credibility, and insisted that whilst being affiliated with BWA, a Christian community member should serve as BWA's treasurer. Binita (then treasurer of BWA, now one of the key players of HNC, see Chapter 8) confided in me, that she would never trust BWA members or "the Pathaks and Malis" with money, such as the membership fees, because of the "stories people tell". In fact, arguments over funding money led to the final split between BWA and HNC in mid-2013 (see further below). This shows, again, that trust is an important feature of both *samaj* and RCOs – although mutuality is given (they are all Bhutanese refugees), the lack of trust impacts negatively on my informants' relationships with one another.

With Shaan's arrival, the divide between the rival fractions became unbridgeable. TA members recalled that when Shaan arrived, he immediately attempted to take over the leadership of BWA. His first course of action was to visit Bhutanese refugee households across Manchester and collect money for "projects". As stated above, gossip spilling over from the refugee camps fuelled people's suspicions about what the funds would be used for, and many households refused to provide donations, leading to the Pathaks publicly naming and shaming those who gave no money, leading to further conflicts amongst Bhutanese refugees in Manchester.

Following this and other small "scandals", the native support workers, the Gadals, Bagales and Chettris wanted to stage a 'coup' and remove Shaan from his self-assumed position as chair of BWA. However, they were overruled by the Pathaks (a fairly large family with seven adult sons, each with their own families). Moreover, the Christian refugees supported BWA, as it was,

according to one Christian informant, "easier" than founding a new organisation[303].

Thereafter, the Gadals, Bagales and Chettris, as well as other Bhutanese refugees mistrustful of the Malis, held their own meeting, deciding to split from BWA and found Takin Association UK. As the native support workers Hari, Anusha, Ved and Yumi have been trained on community development, they helped TA to create their own constitution[304], and open an RCO bank account. As the official CDW already provided support to BWA, service providers only offered minimal support to TA, and later argued that they "hoped these issues would resolve themselves" and that the split would only be temporary (private correspondence).

In early 2011, Bhutanese refugees in Manchester were divided into three RCOs. Most refugees were or became members of BWA, chaired by Shaan and the Pathaks. HNC was, although largely independent, part of BWA. TA became the smallest RCO, mostly comprised of Bhutanese refugees who lived in Longsight, Salford and Bolton. However, the split is not a total one, and many TA, BWA and HNC members feel part of every group, and freely mingle with all RCOs. The division is mostly visible on the leadership level, but as these chairs (as outlined in Chapter 8) do not hold total authority over Bhutanese refugees, they are unable to prohibit their RCO members from crossing the 'boundaries' of RCOs.

For example, TA and BWA still work together for several projects initiated by external parties, such as the film project mentioned above organised by Refugee Youth in 2012. In the first few months of my fieldwork, TA members were invited to BWA events and vice versa, and attended these except for the 'hardliners' who refused to mingle. Baumann (1996: 160), who observed similar community divisions amongst his informants in Southall, outlines

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[303] I emphasize that the Christian community has their own RCO in cooperation with Pentecostal Churches in the UK, through which they also receive their own funding (for religious purposes) and RCO venue for worship (see below). HNC operates independently of service providers and other RCOs, and is more closely affiliated with British Christian groups. It can therefore be classified as a religious group, rather than a formal RCO such as TA or BWA.
[304] See Appendix 2 for a revised version from 2012.

comparable "resistance to leadership", as one of his informants remarks: "[o]ur lives will not be defined by community leaders. We will take up our rights to determine our own destinies".

Yet, as resettlement continued, a fierce competition for new members was initiated, as membership numbers impact on funding opportunities, as I outline further below. Before exploring 'othering' in detail, I briefly narrate the final split between BWA and HNC, highlighting the importance of trust (or the lack thereof) for community development.

The split between BWA and HNC

In 2012, HNC members removed themselves more and more from BWA. The points of contention between the two sides were not based on religious differences (between Hindus and Christians). Rather, mistrust increased through accusations that BWA board members (the Malis and the Pathaks) mismanage the RCO and their funding.

The 'official' split occurred in the middle of my fieldwork in 2013, when HNC members declared that they relinquish all positions and memberships in BWA, and will remain in their own RCO. The separation was regarded as a "scandal" in the Bhutanese refugee community, the news quickly spreading both in the community in the UK and globally within an astonishingly fast time frame. As it was revealed to me, the breakdown of relations was based on disagreements on how obtained funds should be used. HNC believed that BWA leaders used obtained funds exclusively for Hindu festivals, rather than for 'cultural' events embracing both Hinduism and Christianity. This is reflected in other research, in which "conflicts over resource allocation" (Sigona et al., 2004: 8) result in disunity within RCOs.

HNC moved closer to TA due to the BRFP, produced and filmed in early August 2013. In comparison to BWA, whose members refused to participate in

the TA project (see above), many HNC members were happy to become an active part of the project, and allowed TA and me to film one of their sermons. Moreover, HNC members visited Scarborough on a day trip organised and managed by TA in late August 2013, and TA members happily followed HNC's invitation for a day trip to the English west coast in early September 2013.

As depicted in the figure above, community relations between the three RCOs shifted in mid-2013, and remained more or less like this until the end of my fieldwork. TA and HNC attempt to cooperate in some matters, but the board of TA and HNC remains separate, and neither involve themselves in the other RCO's decision making process.

The relevance of Bhutanese RCO origin stories

For Bhutanese refugees – at least TA members – the events above are an 'origin myth', retold again and again amongst themselves and for new arrivals. Here, it is important to emphasize that my informants, contrary to other ethnographies on refugees (e.g. Chatty, 2010; Halilovich, 2013; Malkki, 1995), do not engage in story-telling about their 'imagined homeland' Bhutan[305]. As I demonstrated in Chapter 5, their 'origin' in Bhutan is only relevant to legitimize their refugee status externally. In the absence of any other 'origin myth' related to Bhutan, my informants created a new founding myth – a shared history of 'othering' common amongst refugees, that has powerful creative, political and personal functions (Colson, 2003: 9). Community development necessitates the establishment and collective recognition of mutuality *and* boundaries (Cohen, 1985). As emphasized throughout this work, communities operate by constructing the 'other', who is in turn excluded from the social network (Amit et al., 2002: Loc. 985; Shaw, 2008: 29).

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[305] It is 'imagined' in Anderson's notion (2006) of 'imagined' belongings to a community (see Introduction). Bhutanese refugees do not invent an "imagined homeland" or "locality of origin" to which they feel to belong and return to. For my informants, it is not Bhutan that serves as the "unifying symbol" (Chatty, 2010: 42), but rather the creation of 'identities', such as Bhutanese Nepalese-ness, Bhutanese refugee-ness and the refugee-label (see Chapter 5).

For my TA informants it is irrelevant if the 'origin myth' recalled above is accurate or invented. Referring back to Anderson's (2006) central argument of 'imagined' communities (see Introduction), the boundaries that Bhutanese refugees create between 'us' (for instance, TA) and 'them' (BWA or HNC) are 'imagined' and collectively agreed upon. However, the imagination of similarity and difference is highly flexible, negotiable and sometimes even contradictory: who is excluded in a specific context today, may be included in the community in another context tomorrow – the Rochdale Boys (Chapter 7) are just one example of this permeability of boundaries.

This creation of boundaries and the resulting divisions between Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester is contrary to the CDA envisioned by service providers, who assume that Bhutanese refugees would overcome differences in order to form one cohesive community based on mutuality, solidarity and cooperation. Their failure to adequately address RCO divisions prevents the realization of RCO aims, such as providing a strong and reliable support network in the absence of governmental service provision. This is mirrored in other research with refugee and migrant communities in the UK (e.g. Baumann, 1996; Hall, 1996). For instance, in their work on Central African migrants in Birmingham, Sigona et al. (2004) highlight that their informants founded RCOs to cope with decreased service provision and the increased competition for scarce funding. At the same time, however, their respondents were divided within, due to internal disagreements over the boundaries of RCOs (that is, who is and who is not a legitimate member) and the utility of formalized associations. In turn, this prevented the realization of projects and the effectiveness of the support network, rendering RCOs powerless to support their members.

But 'othering' does not only occur in RCOs, or between Bhutanese refugees and the host society. In the following section I explore internal 'othering' - that is, how my informants create boundaries amongst themselves, in order to determine who *is*, and who is *not* a Bhutanese refugee. Here I explore the creation of similarity and difference *within* a community.

'Othering': Who is a Bhutanese Refugee?

Bhutanese refugees imagine boundaries not only between themselves and non-refugees, such as the British host population, migrants in the UK, and other (non-Bhutanese) refugees (see Chapter 5). My informants also construct similarity and difference within the category of Bhutanese Nepalese-ness. That is, not all Bhutanese Nepalese are considered Bhutanese refugees amongst my informants, and this complicates the notion of unity relevant for the formation of RCOs as envisioned by UK policy makers and service providers.

As Shaw (2008: 29) notes, rather than "generating harmonious social relations, community can create, or at least reinforce, social polarization and potential conflict; differentiation rather than unity". The formation of both *samaj* and RCOs is largely dependent on the individuals' and the groups' perspective of who *is* and who is *not* eligible to be a member of these communities – that is, who is a Bhutanese refugee, and who is not (see Chapter 5). In my fieldsite (on a small, local and face-to-face level) the intricate details of one's autobiography, affiliations and relationships are of immense significance for others.

In the ethnographic vignette above, I emphasized that one point of contention between BWA and TA members is the role 'native community support worker' should play in RCOs. For example, if a Bhutanese refugee arrived in the UK not with the organized resettlement programme - such as Hari or Shaan Mali, who both arrived from the refugee camps as asylum seekers long before resettlement began – can and should they be part of the Bhutanese refugee community, and involve themselves with Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester?

As we have seen above, Hari's and Anusha's (as well as Yumi's and Ved's, see below) role in the RCOs is contested and was one of the reasons why BWA split from TA. Hari and his wife may have experienced the conflict in Bhutan, but they left the camps in Nepal in the early 2000s, to seek a "better

life" in the UK. They lack the shared experience of organised resettlement, and therefore – in some Bhutanese refugees' views – cannot be part of the community. However, there is a stark contradiction is this explanation: the same people who were against Hari and Anusha, welcomed Shaan Mali in their community, a man with a very similar biography (he also left the camps before resettlement began, and sought asylum in Germany) to Hari and his wife, and even made him chairperson of BWA.

What distinguishes Hari from Shaan and what is it that makes the 'other' different? Although I cannot provide detailed evidence for my claim, I maintain that this contradiction is based on two elements. Firstly, Shaan is related to the Pathak family, who manages BWA. More importantly, during my fieldwork, Shaan's brother Pran assumed the role of chairperson of BWA. Hari, on the other hand, lacks these kinship connections to resettled Bhutanese refugees in the UK (most of his family lives in the USA). This emphasizes the importance of *pariwar* as outlined in Chapter 7 – kin relations are an important signifier of similarity, and thus, engender belonging to a *samaj* and RCOs, regardless of one's biography.

Secondly, personal characteristics, preferences and biographies are essential factors determining the boundaries between who is and who is not an eligible member of *samaj* and RCOs. In the ethnographic example above, I showed that Shaan was (and still is) unpopular with many Bhutanese refugees in Manchester, due to rumours spilling over from the refugee camps in Nepal. This nurtured mistrust in the community, until the final split between BWA and HNC in 2013. Hari faces other obstacles due to his outspoken, and sometimes patronizing personality[306]. One reason why BWA members were so opposed to him in 2010 may have been due to his personal character. Here, we have to recall that RCOs require strong leadership - someone all members can support - in order to run it effectively (Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 1315, see Chapter

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[306] Hari is well known in the community for "telling things like they are", as some of my informants admired. There were numerous incidences during my fieldwork, in which Hari told people off for e.g. not speaking enough English and thus not improving it; not to impart enough discipline in child-rearing; or "waste money". I always perceived Hari's comments towards Bhutanese refugees as good advice, but the way he delivers it may be misconstrued as condescending.

8). Internal fights and criticism of leadership (by, for example, Hari) may lead to disunity, and thus the loss of these advantages. Therefore, in order to run a successful RCO, internal criticism has to be deliberately silenced in order to portray the RCO as one, cohesive social group (ibid.). To have strong personalities like Hari, the Pathak brothers and the Mali brothers in one RCO, may jeopardize the efficiency of an RCO. When debating this with a young TA member, he nodded in agreement, and remarked: "imagine – they would fight all the time, and nothing gets done".

Along the same lines, Ved's and Yumi's position was contested amongst some BWA informants. A Nepalese Bhutanese, Yumi arrived in the UK some 25 years ago, after marrying a Briton, and soon after tensions between the *drukpas* and the Nepalese Bhutanese began in the late 1980s, assured that her mother and her brother Ved (with his wife) were granted asylum in the UK. On the one hand, Yumi and her family are Nepalese Bhutanese, and thus share a similar 'ethnic' background[307] (see Chapter 5) with Bhutanese refugees who arrived with the GPP. However, some Bhutanese refugees argue that what creates similarity is not this 'ethnic' classification, but the shared experiences of refugee-ness, which includes the shared history of conflict in Bhutan, "life and struggle" in the refugee camps in Nepal, *and* organized resettlement to the UK. As Yumi and her family lack these experiences (for the most parts), some BWA members do not regard them as members of both their *samaj* and their RCO.

This differentiation is emphasized for Nepalese Bhutanese who stayed in Bhutan, rather than fleeing to Nepal. Some even go as far as to refer to them as "traitors" (also see Chapters 2 and 3) or "*drukpa* lovers", who are said to have made "arrangements" with the *drukpas* in order to be allowed to stay in Bhutan. They argue that there is no other explanation for why these Nepalese Bhutanese were allowed to stay, whilst others had to flee. For example, Madur, whom I met briefly during his six months' internship as a journalist in the UK, was a Nepalese Bhutanese whose "loyalty" was put into question by many of

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[307] As discussed in Chapter 5, I do not argue that Nepalese Bhutanese-ness is an ethnicity, I use the term 'ethnic' or 'ethnicity' in inverted commas to highlight the problems in adopting these term.

my informants. Although directly related to the Gadal family (with whom he briefly stayed in October 2012), Madur's parents and he remained in Bhutan despite the ethnic conflict. Madur argued that the reason they were "allowed to stay" was that his family lives in the north of the country, rather than the targeted south with its large population of Nepalese Bhutanese (see Chapter 2), and as he put it "the army couldn't be bothered to walk five hours from the closest road to [their] village in the mountains". Many of my informants, however, did not believe this explanation, and claimed that Madur's family must have made deals with the *drukpa* authorities, perhaps even provided information to the government leading to the expulsion of some Nepalese Bhutanese. Therefore, no trust could be bestowed on Madur, and during his stay in the UK, he remained marginalised from the Bhutanese refugee community. That is, he remained a *pahuna* throughout his stay (and thus treated with respect, see Chapter 7), but was never fully welcomed in either *samaj* or the RCOs.

The examples above demonstrate the active creation of (imagined) sameness and difference: Nepalese Bhutanese may share a language and socio-cultural traits (religion, fashion, etc.), but similarity is also based on the shared experience of forced migration, life in the camps, and resettlement. Moreover, individual actions, decisions, affiliations and autobiographies impact on who is and who is not considered a member of *samaj* and RCOs.

However, as I show in the following section, the most notable difference between *samaj* and RCOs is the flexibility of boundaries. Whilst *samaj* lacks clear boundaries, and people cross in between and maintain various different *samaj*, RCOs have rigid restrictions on membership and (on paper, at least) clear differentiations between members and non-members (Azarya, 1996: 114). This is necessary in order to be eligible for funding.

The Battle for Members

As highlighted in the previous chapters, one of the main rationales for founding RCOs is that they are the only means to secure funding from governmental and non-governmental funding bodies, charitable and private organisations (such as the *National Lottery Community Fund*), or various neighbourhood, and community grants from (Manchester) city councils (Griffiths et al., 2006: 890). Service providers such as RAUK or MRSN rely on governmental and public financial support, and struggled with underfunding during my fieldwork, which meant they were forced to reduce support to refugees (such as translation services, event organisation, legal advice), and outsource service provision to formalized RCOs to save resources. This outsourcing is then portrayed as the successful 'integration' of refugees. As one caseworker explained (private correspondence): RCOs that successfully obtain funding, or are able to organize an event by themselves, are said to have achieved independence and self-sufficiency (the aims of 'integration', see Chapter 4), and are seen as epitomes of the successes of the RCO project. As these RCOs are effectively 'integrated' into the British bureaucratic system, it is assumed that no further support is needed by governmental services, as RCOs now serve as the main service providers to their refugee 'clients' (Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 689; 694; also see Mosse, 2005).

However, RCOs operate within so-called 'funding regimes', with certain (bureaucratic) requirements for RCOs[308] (Griffiths et al., 2006: 889). Funding bodies have their own agendas[309] (in order to increase their donations), and RCO leaders have to adopt the language of these funding organisations (ibid.). Moreover, RCOs have to show that they have enough members that would benefit from the obtained funding.

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[308] I outlined the service providers' assumptions on the role of RCOs in Chapter 4.
[309] This circle of aid money and funding for community organisations is an interesting one, but a detailed discussion does not fit in the scope of this work. See Crewe and Harrison (1998); Crewe and Axelby (2012) and RC (2010) for further details.

Funding regimes

Rather than fostering a "political culture based on individual civil rights" that addresses the refugees' actual needs, RCO aims have to be tailored to the funding bodies' agendas (Baumann, 1996: 71; Farley and Garcia, 2006: 184). In their work on RCOs in the UK, Griffiths et al. (2006: 890) caution that "accountability to funders appeared to have taken precedence over maintaining contact with the needs of the refugee clients or 'users'". Successful funding applications depend on the knowledge of RCOs (leaders) about relevant political, ideological and public discourses endorsed by funding bodies (Baumann, 1996: 65-6). For example, projects that emphasize 'integration', community cohesion, female empowerment and education[310] are popular for funding bodies. When applying for the *National Lottery Fund* in 2013, Takin adopted these catchphrases to be 'attractive' to the funding body, whose aim is to "help people and communities who are most in need" (National Lottery, 2011: 4). In their funding application, Takin stated:

> "[M]ore than 90% of Bhutanese refugees have no contact with the British population at all[311], although they *desire* to build friendships with their hosts, and *integrate* themselves. Despite the greatest efforts … to host *inclusive* events to bridge these gaps, efforts have failed mainly due to a *lack of financial support*. … [W]e believe that it is of … importance to *integrate* our community with the British community as a whole. .... Many refugees feel *marginalised* from the community that surrounds them, especially due to language-barriers and a lack of *awareness*. Coming from a small-scale, rural lifestyle, we believe in a *community-spirit* with neighbourly *help* and *care*. ... We are convinced that only by coming together will we be able to tackle issues faced for all people in the UK, and gain *mutual support*. ... Only by actively engaging communities from different backgrounds will we be able to shed light on the issues faced by

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[310] However these concepts are defined by funding bodies, see Chapters 4 and 5.

[311] This percentage is based on my informants' own assumptions, rather than on research. I argue that the adoption of statistical information is another tool to pander to the service providers' and funding bodies' terminologies and methods.

marginalised communities, and work together to initiate *change*, further *integration* and foster a *diverse* and *tolerant* society" (my emphases).

This excerpt from Takin's funding application demonstrates my informants' adoption of terminology used in political and public discourses in the UK, such as "inclusiveness", "integration", "marginalisation", "awareness" and "tolerance" (emphasized above). Through experience with funding applications, RCO board members have become acutely aware of the significance of these terms and the refugee-label (see Chapter 5), and successfully received funding by using these narratives[312]. Along the same lines, when BWA applied for funds in 2013, the Big Lottery Fund website[313] proclaimed that the funds are used for the organisation of a "celebration event of Bhutanese culture for the wider community. This will enable the organisation to promote their culture and bring *unity* between them" (my emphasis). Contrary to this statement of unity, the event led to the split between BWA and HNC (see above), and except me, no non-Bhutanese refugee attended the event in Central Manchester.

These examples demonstrate the importance of 'advertising' to attract funding[314], and thus be able to hold community events. RCOs have to compete with one another for scarce resources, and as Baumann (1996: 65; 71) claims, "creative alliances, factional appeals and some in-fighting are inevitable strategies in this competition". However, Zetter and Pearl (2000: 686, 689) argue that this competition prevents not only the realization of RCO aims and purposes (therefore rendering it ineffective), but also inhibits partnerships and

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[312] The National Lottery funding Takin obtained for the BRFP resulted in a one-hour film and a screening event in Manchester, but was only shown to Bhutanese refugees. Because of my active involvement, I was able to screen the film both at Brunel University, and at the 2015 SfAA conference in Pittsburgh (USA), attended by several Bhutanese refugees who resettled in the USA. In both cases, the audience was comprised of academics, rather than service providers or the 'general' public. Therefore, the aims stated in their application were not actually fulfilled, but Takin was not obliged to provide any evidence for the 'success' of their funded project after it was completed, besides showing that all funds have been utilized by providing receipts.

[313] From http://gotlottery.uk/big-lottery-fund-bhutanese-welfare-association-6-414983

[314] This 'advertising' continues in the virtual world (on the internet), and RCOs have to carefully orchestrate and monitor their online presence. Bhutanese RCO and information websites are (almost) exclusively in English (rather than Nepali) and are therefore mostly aimed at an external audience, such as funding bodies. Online visibility requires IT literacy, tying young people (who are the most knowledgeable in IT through their personal interest and access to education and training) into RCOs, giving them social capital and status within the wider community, as I showed in Chapter 8 in the discussion on liminal experts.

cooperation within and between various RCOs, charities and governmental services in the UK. Information, skills and know-how are strictly guarded capitals in RCOs: for example, under no circumstance would Takin share its knowledge and strategies (however limited) on how to obtain funding with BWA, and vice-versa.

Bhutanese RCOs have to compete for funds with other, much larger associations (ibid.: 64-5). However, Bhutanese RCOs are fairly small in comparison to other refugee communities[315], and therefore may not be as 'attractive' to funding bodies. The same issues are reported by Griffiths et al. (2006: 889) in their research with an Ethiopian association in London, which is unable to compete with larger organisations in the "voluntary and refugee sector" such as Refugee Council (also see Sigona et al.'s [2004] and Zetter and Pearl's [2000] studies). Bhutanese RCOs address these problems by attempting to increase their membership numbers. However, in order to do so, they have to compete with the other Bhutanese RCOs, which I discuss in the following section. It is here where 'othering' comes into play again, showing how Bhutanese refugees create 'imagined' differences in order to differentiate RCOs from one another.

Membership

Membership to RCOs has to be formalised to be eligible for funding. RCOs have to comply with top-down regulations, one of which is that in order to become a member of an organisation, one has to complete a membership form and pay membership fee. Who can 'apply' for membership is prescribed by the notarized RCO constitution (see Appendix 2).

For example, Bhutanese RCOs are construed as communities for Bhutanese *refugees* who resettled with the GPP, rather than asylum seekers and

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[315] For example, there are about 12,000 Palestinian refugees in the UK, vis-à-vis about 350 Bhutanese refugees. Even if only a fraction of Palestinian refugees organizes themselves as RCOs, they still vastly outnumber my informants.

voluntary migrants such as Hari, Anusha, Ved and Yumi. In order for Takin to include these individuals, they devised two forms of membership[316]. On the one hand, there is *Full Membership* exclusively reserved for resettled refugees, which entails certain rights and duties, such as paying monthly membership fees (£5/month during my fieldwork), attending the meetings, having the right to vote at meetings, and be able to stand for a position in the organisation (e.g. secretary, treasurer, etc.). On the other hand, there is *Honorary Membership*, open for everyone (for example, I am an honorary member). Honorary members serve as advisors and support workers, but have no right to vote or stand for a leadership role. This allows Takin to utilize the expertise of people who fall outside of the membership criteria.

Membership numbers determine how competitive an RCO is, and therefore it is in the RCOs' interest to attract as many eligible members as possible. But why would a Bhutanese refugee, who just arrives in the UK (as shown in Chapter 6), choose one Bhutanese RCO over the other? How do my informants decide on which RCO to join?

As we have seen in the previous chapters, RCOs serve to maintain *samaj*, and to foster a reliable support network. Thus, Bhutanese RCOs need to offer incentives to the Bhutanese refugee community, such as infrastructures and resources, to fulfil their members' needs. Moreover, as outlined in Chapter 7, social interactions are important for Bhutanese refugees, and RCOs are called upon to offer a platform to gather for social events – both for special festivals, such as for Nepali New Year, as well as for small social gatherings over food and *chai*. Furthermore, Bhutanese RCOs have to ensure the possibility to "realize [their] potential", as one of my informants explained, and showcase their talents. For example, many of my young informants (12-25) are keen singers, musicians and dancers, and enjoy performing in front of an audience. Therefore, they affiliate with RCOs that can provide the best and most regular

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[316] According to BWA informants, they have a similar system in place, allowing Nepalese Bhutanese who arrived in the UK as asylum seekers (e.g. Dr. Sharma, Dr. Poudel) or voluntary migrants (e.g. Shaan Mali), as well as Nepali migrants (e.g. Nitin) to become part of the RCO as honorary members. However, as discussed before, although Shaan cannot hold an official board role at BWA, he is the de facto chair of the RCO, orchestrating it via his brother Pran, which is very much supported by BWA members I have met during fieldwork.

platform for their performances[317]. For example, many non-Takin members participated in the film project (BRFP), because we filmed them dancing, singing and playing football[318]. Moreover, many young refugees frequently visit the Sunday service of the Christian refugee community in Rochdale (regardless of their religious affiliation), because they are able to perform in between prayers and sermons.

Sigona et al. (2004: 8) emphasize that refugee group affiliations are determined by "material and symbolic rewards" as well as by the "skills and capacities" an organisation offers. These pragmatic considerations play a part in the increased conversion rate of Bhutanese refugees from Hinduism and Buddhism to Christianity[319]. Gifford and Wilding (2013: 563), for example, attribute the high conversion rate to Christianity within the Karen refugee community in Australia to the fact that Christian churches are able to "provide economic and social support and act as a central organizing point for community life" (ibid.). Along the same lines, some Bhutanese refugees in the USA convert to Christianity because they have not established RCOs, and the "church is the only place where they can meet regularly" (Bhutan's forgotten people, 2014).

Similarly, the Bhutanese Christian community in the UK has the resources to support refugees, which BWA and TA are unable to provide (due to lack of funds). HNC has access to funding and facilities provided by British Pentecostal churches and Christian charities[320], and are the only Bhutanese RCO with their own community venue in Rochdale (provided by Christian churches), which the congregation can visit and use at any time (for

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[317] Performances also allow Bhutanese refugees to become part of other communities, such as the *Yeti Foundation* (Nepalese migrant association), the *Salford Women's Dance Group* or the *Manchester Refugee Football Team*, performing in various settings for diverse audiences outside of the Bhutanese refugee community.

[318] Here, we should recall the participating of the Rochdale Boys introduced in Chapter 7, and their insistence of keeping their contribution in the film, despite BWA's demand to remove the content.

[319] However, I do not argue that pragmatism is the only and most important reason for conversion to Christianity. Many of my informants who actively practice Christianity highlight the 'spiritual' and 'metaphysical' reasons for converting. Conversion may often originate in pragmatic considerations, but later transforms into spiritual conversion, as they become acquainted with scriptures and sermons.

[320] Non-Christians, such as most Takin and Welfare members, are not eligible to apply for these resources.

gatherings, rehearsals, etc.). Furthermore, HNC has access to a minibus[321], helping their congregation to move, go shopping or travel. They are also a popular support network for "troubled" individuals, such as Durba (introduced in Chapter 6), who experienced problems with alcohol and drug abuse on this arrival in the UK. Through his peers, Durba was introduced to the Christian community, and was invited to perform his musical talent (playing percussions and singing) during the services and workshops. HNC's emphasis on the prohibition of alcohol, tobacco and drugs forced Durba to give up his habits, and he found a strong support network in the Christian community, who helped him to enrol in English language classes and in Christian self-help groups to overcome his "bad habits". During my fieldwork, neither BWA nor Takin would have had the resources, expertise and networks to help Durba with these issues. Although just one example amongst many, it shows that HNC is attractive to Bhutanese refugees, who benefit from the availability of such resources and networks.

However, HNC employed controversial tactics to ensure membership for their community. On my very first visit to meet Bhutanese refugees at a community event in Sheffield in April 2012, Hari gave a passionate speech to new arrivals in the audience, reminding them that "the UK is free", and that they can practice their religions respectively. After the speech ended, I approached Hari to enquire why he emphasized this point so vehemently. He elaborated that some established Christian Bhutanese refugees visit new arrivals, and try to convince them to convert to Christianity, or the financial support from the British government would be stopped, as "Britain is a Christian country". Hari stated:

> "They are from our *own* [emphasized] community. They visit these poor people when they arrive - and they know nothing of England, … they don't know how it works. Then they tell them: 'join us, or the state won't give you any support', …. and [the new arrivals] believe them".

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[321] Hardly any of my informants had a driving license during my fieldwork, and thus no access to cars, making them reliant on public transport.

This reiterates the arguments in the previous Chapter 6, whereby Bhutanese refugees arrive in the UK to an already existing structure of community organisations, who try everything in their power to gain members, in order to be more competitive for funding bodies.

Hari's attempt to advice new arrivals that they do not need to convert in order to receive governmental support did not stop some individuals from converting – not for religious, but for the pragmatic reasons outlined above. This furthered mistrust and thus divisions in the community, which cannot be easily be bridged, even after several 'intervention' attempts, as I briefly address in the following section.

The struggle for unity

Several external parties have attempted to unite the factions, including some members of both TA and BWA. As the chair of TA put it, it would be better to be united in order to realise projects and to obtain more funding. Here I extensively quote from an interview with Aadit, a Nepali translator and student who lived in Manchester (also see above and Chapter 4), and closely worked with my informants. His statements serve as a summary of what all mediators have told me:

> "As a support worker, I tried everything to unite them. For two weeks, I went to all the houses, just to listen [to the problems], but it makes no sense. There is nothing positive about the divide, but they only talk bad about each other. It is like politics – it's the ego of people. … They cannot come together. I tried to unite them, and tell them, that they have more chance to get funds, to make events. But they don't listen. … They all suffered the same fate. They all lived in refugee camps. Now they have a new life. Why would they fight with each other? They bring these issues with them [from Nepal to the UK], and do the same stupid thing here. They should have learned

from what happened to them in Bhutan and in the camps … This is
what annoys me: the backstabbing and the leg-pulling. Not only
strangers, but also family members. One against the other. ... I gave
up on uniting them. But it's sad for me to see. I try to help, but they
do not want to. There is nothing I can do."

Attempts to mediate between the rival Bhutanese RCOs failed, and many
support workers (myself included) gave in. In turn, the issues that these
divisions bring about, such as lack of funding, and therefore a loss of
relevance of RCOs in everyday life, cannot be resolved. More importantly for
the discussion in this thesis, the divisions between RCOs described above
demonstrate that the UK government's and service providers' assumption that
community and RCOs can replace their service provision, and that community
is the best way to ensure 'wellbeing' and foster 'integration', is flawed.

At this point, I question whether RCOs are Bhutanese communities. That is,
RCOs are in part a representation of *samaj*, build on the same foundations of
mutuality, trust and reciprocity. But they are also an outcome of (British) social
policy and the (Western) social re-engineering that began in the camps,
making 'democratic citizens' out of refugees, who are assumed to be able to
'integrate' into the mainstream, adopting new systems of hierarchy and
communal representation. As I explore below, Bhutanese RCOs are British,
rather than Bhutanese communities.

Whose Community?

Bhutanese refugees founded RCOs to serve as a support platform once
resettlement agencies pulled out, and apply for the necessary funding to
realize communal goals. But in order to be allowed to do so, each community
organisation has to comply with the strict regulations for community
organisations and charities. Therefore, these particular formalized Bhutanese

refugee communities have only emerged in the context of refugee resettlement in the UK at this specific time, with the current laws and social policies. Bhutanese refugee organisations in other resettlement nations have different structures, and operate on different bases.

Bhutanese RCOs serve a purpose not only for the Bhutanese refugees, but also for UK service providers who aim to outsource services to these organisations. As Kelly (2003: 39) argues, the "basis for group formation may lie in the way British institutions create spaces for the recognition of groups rather than individuals", and refugees have to create formalized organisations "in order to enter into a dialogue with the state".

The standards, rules and regulations pertaining to RCOs are often highly complicated. This leads back to the discussions in Chapter 8 – only those Bhutanese refugees who have relevant educational and linguistic capital, as well as knowledge about British bureaucracy are able (and are elected by others) to lead. Here, my research findings put into question the paradigm of UK policy makers, that regards RCOs as platforms on which all refugees operate as equal, democratic members. For example, all three Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester subscribed (as per their constitution) to elections of leaders based on majority vote. But in reality, no such votes took place during my fieldwork: all RCO board members are in power since the organizations were first conceived in 2010-11. In theory, a committee of trustees elects RCO leaders, but during my fieldwork, none of the RCOs had such a committee, and hardly any RCO member seemed to question the leaders' positions. Their status is further perpetuated by service providers, who offer skills' training merely to board members, rather than ordinary RCO members.

Policies and practices may enhance the refugees' lives, but also accentuate differences within the refugee community, and further marginalisation, subverting the objective of RCOs to provide efficient, socio-culturally tailored and inclusive services and support to refugees. This is echoed in Zetter and Pearl's (2000: 688) research with RCOs in the UK, which critically reflects on

the accountability of formalized organisations, exposing the shortcomings of the RCO project.

The problems with the RCO project

> "[BWA] has been running vocational trainings and intensive English learning programs in the community with an aim of enhancing capacity and competence" (BNS, 2012).

Bhutan News Service – a website run by Bhutanese refugees in the USA, which shares news and information about Bhutanese refugees across the world – published an article about BWA's achievements in 2012. In reality, the training programmes mentioned in the article never took place. Similarly, Takin states in their constitution that they aim to provide Nepali lessons to children in order to "preserve our heritage", which were never realized. Both RCOs adopt the language of service providers in publications, in order to highlight the support they supposedly offer. However, similar to what Zetter and Pearl (2000: 686-7) found, Bhutanese RCOs do not have any "quality assurance measures" in place assuring that decreed functions are realized, and service providers in Manchester do not assess RCOs once they have been founded. As mentioned above, RCOs are measured (by service providers) by focusing on the amount of funding they are able to obtain.

These examples signify a gap between the functions of RCOs as assumed by policy makers and service providers, and the reality of effectively running an RCO on the ground. Again, we have to be conscious of the context in which RCOs operate: in a time of reduced public spending in the UK, service providers focus predominantly on cost-effectiveness and outsourcing of services rather than on quality and performance (see Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 685-8). What my research revealed, however, is that Bhutanese RCOs are unable to replace governmental services.

Yet, this is not to say that RCOs fail to be a support network for Bhutanese refugees. In fact, many of my informants remarked that "no one is left behind", and that all refugees are part of the community, which I can verify through my observations. Despite the animosities between RCOs, all Bhutanese refugees who arrived in the UK with the resettlement programme are part of *samaj* and RCOs, and are supported by individuals or the group as a whole.

But the broader functions of RCOs, such as generate funding, provide a communal space for social interactions, and foster integration both in the host society and the labour market, is not realized in Bhutanese RCOs. Again, Zetter and Pearl's (2000) research reflects my own findings: despite the assumed importance of RCOs, they only have a "limited voice" (ibid.: 688) and have "neither the institutional capacity and robustness, nor the national coverage to be able to restructure and scale up activities to meet the ongoing situation" (ibid.: 692).

The Bhutanese refugee community in the UK, comprised of only about 350 members, is too small to compete with larger community organisations, and is therefore unable to obtain funding and "break into existing 'power streams' and networks of local authorities and larger … associations" (ibid.: 688). Small groups such as Bhutanese RCOs are often unable to provide the same services or be as "visible"[322] as, for example, Middle Eastern RCOs, comprised of thousands of members. Thus, Bhutanese RCOs are not as 'attractive' to funding bodies as bigger organisations.

Moreover, due to increasing commitments in their personal lives, such as child rearing, education and employment, the level of participation in managing RCOs is fairly low and sporadic, limited to a group of "committed members" (ibid.: 685). This affects both the efficiency of Bhutanese RCOs, and their cooperation with other organisations.

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[322] The British public is not aware of Bhutanese refugees, as my own experience proves again and again. Both my informants and I constantly have to explain where Bhutan is, and what happened to them. In general, the refugee community of slightly more than 100,000 in total, is only a small fraction in comparison to, for example, the 6 million Palestinian refugees, or the more than 4 million Syrian refugees in 2015.

More importantly, intra-community divisions between Bhutanese refugees led to the split into three separate RCOs, which are small in number and thus even more ineffective. Overall, these issues decrease the relevance of RCOs, and in turn expose the failures of the CDA and the RCO project in refugee resettlement.

Conclusion

RCOs in the UK struggle to compete for the limited funds and resources available. However, as I observed throughout my fieldwork, and as illustrated with the ethnographic examples above, in-fighting in the Bhutanese RCOs in Manchester means that they may lose out both against the rival Bhutanese RCOs and more established and unified RCOs in the UK. Similar issues with community divisions have been observed by Werbner (2002: 22) amongst the Pakistani community in Manchester. She argues that the "internecine fighting, mismanagement of communal institutions and constant appeals for state handouts and recognition … [that] plagued communal affairs" prevented community organisations from attaining funding and realizing projects.

Limited funding in turn has an impact on what RCOs can do in order to "serve the community", by for example offering events that would allow Bhutanese refugees to meet and interact socially. Although, of course, Bhutanese refugees across the UK meet in smaller groups on an almost daily basis, larger gatherings are highly dependent on organization, management and most importantly, funding. The almost complete split between TA's and BWA's leadership makes it impossible to devise projects and events together. As a small community, they may not be attractive to funding bodies, and therefore Bhutanese RCOs find it difficult to obtain larger amounts of funding, in order to serve the perceived needs of their members.

As we have seen, the split between the three RCOs is a result of internal 'othering' and the creation of imagined differences between them. In an almost perpetual circle, this 'othering' leads to further competition between them (for funding, and thus members), which then again amplifies 'othering'. It shows that community development relies on a "symbolic discourse" of 'othering' (Rapport et al., 2000:63) that can be directed outwards "when facing what they perceive to lie beyond their boundaries" (Rapport et al., 2000:63), as I have shown throughout this work. But 'othering' is also employed inwards, by emphasizing trust (or mistrust), mutuality (or difference) and support (or the denial thereof). This fact of social relationships, is, as I highlighted throughout this work, too often ignored by service providers who facilitate resettlement, and therefore put into question the relevance of the CDA and RCO project in refugee resettlement.

Chapter 10 – Summary and Conclusion

Political, public and academic discourses on forced migration represent the refugees' experiences as 'unsettling', perceiving forced migrants as marred human beings (Turton, 2005: 278, see Introduction) who have to be aided (by humanitarian relief agencies, such as the UNHCR), managed (through social re-engineering) and controlled (through the use of classifications, and international and national policies). Within political and public discourses (in the global North) it is argued that forced migration removes refugees from their 'original' cultures and communities, and that forced migrants strive to return to 'normality' by re-inventing and re-creating singular 'traditions', identities and communities. As I have shown in this work, bureaucratic bodies in the global North argue that the creation of formalized communities (such as RCOs) as a reliable support network allows refugees to "develop a meaningful sense of social life and identity" (Loizos, 2000; cited in Mitchell et al, 2010: 95), and thus to 'overcome' their state of uncertainty and in-betweenness, and return to 'normalcy' in third country resettlement.

Focusing on the *Community Development Approach* and RCO project as a tool of Western relief and aid organisations and policy makers, I have shown that the assumed liminality refugees are said to experience is not something that has or *can* be overcome through resettlement and community development. Rather, forced migrants adapt to the context and environment in which they find themselves. Their history and past experiences are reworked in the process, engendering new meanings values, and new communities (Colson, 2003: 9), rather than re-creating their lives, views and social networks as they were before migration occurred.

As I argued throughout this thesis, Bhutanese refugees are active agents, who consciously use classifications and the RCO project, adopting the language and discourses of policy makers for their own advantages (for example to obtain funding for social events), and redefining meanings in accordance with

their personal use and the public discourse they engage in. As several researchers pointed out (e.g. Chatty, 2010; Colson, 2003), forced migration has an impact on both the refugees themselves and on international and national agencies and policy makers. It is not a top-down process over which refugees have no control and passively adapt to, although they operate within the confines of so-called opportunity structures (such as the labour market or welfare and benefit payment regulations). As Chatty (2010: 57) argues, refugees "may one day challenge the economic power systems and international politics", and actively produce "distinct patterns of migration".

More importantly, by highlighting the divisions that have arisen among Bhutanese refugees in Manchester, I have called into question the UK service providers' expectations that groups of refugees may overcome internal differences in order to form one coherent community for the benefit of all. Rather, my research revealed that (in my fieldsite) contrary to policy makers' and service providers' assumptions, RCOs may be the causes of issues (rather than addressing issues arising in resettlement, such as, for example, marginalisation and unemployment), and thus may not be able to replace governmental services once service providers cease support (see below).

I situated my research in three anthropological frameworks: the study of forced migration (utilizing the works of, for example, Baumann (1996), Chatty (2010) and Malkki (1992, 1995, 1997, 2002); anthropological investigations of community (drawing on Amit and Rapport, 2002; Anderson, 2006; Barth, 1998; Bauman, 1996: 14; Cohen, 1985); and ethnographic explorations of the policy-nexus (using the works of Baba, 2013; Colson, 2003; and Turton, 2005).

As highlighted in the introduction, ethnographic research on forced migration has predominantly focused on the refugee camp and the experience of asylum seekers in the global North. My thesis, on the other hand, has attempted to address the gap in the literature on the long-term experience of organized refugee resettlement, countering the argument that the experience of forced migration is overcome through resettling in a Western nation. I also followed the call of several researchers (e.g. Baba, 2013; Colson, 2003) to make

anthropological research more relevant for global social policies, especially on forced migration.

__Community in Context__

In this thesis, I focused on how Bhutanese refugees create and maintain community in resettlement, both within their own understanding of community as personal social networks (*samaj*) and as formalized community organisations (RCOs). Rather than exploring the re-invention of 'traditional' communities how they were before forced migration (if there ever was such a thing), I illustrated how my informants developed communities in line with Western policy and aid-intervention. I showed that refugee communities are not an exact replica of social networks before relocation occurred (Malkki, 1992: 35), and that Bhutanese RCOs are not Bhutanese Nepalese organisations, but bureaucratic British associations with non-British members. I demonstrated that Bhutanese RCOs operate within top-down funding regimes, and comply (more or less successfully) with the functions of RCOs as prescribed by UK policy makers and service providers. However, I also emphasized that Bhutanese RCOs are embedded in the same shared norms of mutuality, trust, reciprocity and social interactions (or lack thereof) as *samaj*, and are thus subject to 'othering' (see below) as well as internal and personal animosities, calling into question the UK government's aim to outsource support to formalized community organisations.

The creation of similarity and difference

As I have shown throughout this thesis, communities operate by means of creating similarity and difference. This complex process of 'othering' is essential for community development, both to determine internally who *is* and who is *not* a member of the community, and to delineate the boundaries

between one's community vis-à-vis other communities. By drawing on Barth (1998) and Cohen (1985), I demonstrated that this 'othering' is employed at the macro-level by nation states and international aid and relief agencies, as well as at the micro-level by small, personal social networks. For example, in order to assure sovereignty and maintain their power, Bhutan's *Ngalong* leaders bureaucratized the difference between themselves and Nepalese Bhutanese by means of creating the term *Lhotshampa* enshrined in Bhutanese law through various acts, which was then used to justify the expulsion of more than 100,000 people (by declaring them 'anti-nationals') in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Chapter 2). I then showed that in Nepalese refugee camps, Bhutanese refugees were perceived (by aid agencies) as liminal beings in need of intervention by (Western) laws, regulations and agencies such as the UNHCR (see Chapter 3), and these international aid and relief agencies employed social re-engineering to make the 'other' (the refugee) into manageable and controllable individuals (and 'us'), which can then be resettled into Western nations (see Chapter 4). In order to demonstrate that bureaucratic 'othering' occurs through the creation of simplified classifications, I discussed the use of the refugee-label by both my informants and international relief agencies (Chapter 5), which continues to be consciously used by Bhutanese refugees to legitimize their residency in the UK and their 'need' of support (vis-à-vis for example asylum seekers and voluntary migrants). As I outlined in detail in Chapter 6, Bhutanese refugees create a difference between 'established' refugees (who have resided in the UK for more than six months) and 'new arrivals', who then have to be incorporated into community members by means of competition and management of expectations.

However, I highlighted in the introduction that communities also operate by means of establishing similarity and coherence (rather than only 'othering'), and emphasized in Chapter 7 that Bhutanese refugees create *samaj* by fostering mutuality and cooperation. These personal relationships are less about formalisation of social groups into one homogeneous, all-encompassing organisation based on commonality, and more about personal interactions (Amit et al, 2002: Loc 253, 552). However, in the last two Chapters 8 and 9 I

explored the flip-side of processes of 'othering', illustrating that rather than perceiving refugee communities as coherent social networks, they are complex and contradictory groups of individuals, who have to compete not only with other RCOs, but also with other Bhutanese refugees. This internal creation of difference complicates the formation of *samaj*, and impacts negatively on what Bhutanese RCOs are able to achieve.

Furthermore, as I have emphasised throughout this work, these processes of creating boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are based on 'imagined' differences (Anderson, 2006) and made tangible by the creation of 'narratives of 'othering' (Chapter 9). That is, membership in a community is determined by *discourses* on which shared history and experience and behaviour *should* signify similarity (Rapport and Overing, 2000: 63). The debate on whether *all* Nepalese Bhutanese are members of the community (Chapter 9) is just one example of this. Moreover, I demonstrated that individuals are part of many social networks, and adapt their 'cultural identity' to the environment and context in which they find themselves (Chapter 5), and therefore (as Stuart Hall argued) form multiple, hybrid identities and communities with elastic and contestable boundaries that can change over time.

This thesis, then, has tried to critically engage with UK policy makers' assumptions of the notion of community as unified social networks that benefit the 'good of all'. Rather, I showed that there is no coherent, bounded group of Bhutanese refugees, but distinctive individuals, with different values, norms, multiple identities and perceptions, who are influenced by history, forced migration and aid intervention. They employ 'othering' in order to determine who *is* and who is *not* a Bhutanese refugee, and thus an eligible member of both *samaj* and RCOs. As I have maintained throughout this work, Bhutanese refugees are in a constant process of reinterpreting and reworking their perceptions (of e.g. community) and behaviours (including the creation of similarity and difference) – a transformation that is ongoing since I have left the field.

Furthermore, this thesis has called into question anthropological discussions of community as a taken-for-granted unit of analysis, and made the notion of community itself the focal point of research, as I briefly summarize in the following section.

The problem with community

In the past, anthropologists perceived community as something fixed, predictable and reifiable, based on a static, unconscious 'habitus', and enduring, hegemonic systems of power with stable and restrictive boundaries (Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 253; 3543). Community was an *a priori*, taken-for-granted unit of analysis, and ethnographic research was said to be conducted in localized, bounded social groups. Since then, anthropology has shifted its gaze to the relationality and discursive practices in which social reality is taking place, and made the notion of community itself the focus of analysis. In line with existing ethnographic accounts, I have attempted to shed light on the meanings and values people ascribe to community, how these meanings are contested, debated and contextualized, and how community-membership and boundaries are defined (see 'othering' above), ascribed and negotiated by both members and non-members (ibid; Rapport and Overing, 2000: 62).

However, I argue that what we find in anthropological discourses on forced migration is the assumption that community is something that forced migrants *have to* re-invent and re-create in order to overcome their prescribed liminality. The same misconception is apparent in political and public discussions on the relevance of community, which I outline in the following section.

The pitfalls of the CDA and RCO project

I have demonstrated throughout this work that international and national policy makers, relief agencies and service providers employ the CDA and RCO project in order to provide a reliable support network for forced migrants. In political, public and development discourses in the global North (such as the UK), community becomes the solution for issues that arise due to resettlement (Baumann, 1996: 20; Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 681). In Zygmunt Bauman's (2000, cited in Gemie, 2010: 32) words, this conception of community seems to promise a "safe haven, the dream destination for sailors lost in a turbulent sea of constant, unpredictable and confusing change". UK policy makers and service providers are surely aware of internal conflicts, but expect that the positive functions of RCOs would transcend difference, and that the skills and resources RCO members possess (for example, language skills for translations, social capital, or organizing social activities) would be shared equally within the community (Spicer, 2008: 507; Zetter et al, 2000: 683).

However, I have shown that Bhutanese refugees do not re-create a coherent, all-encompassing community in resettlement. Rather, their social networks are characterised by constant change and heterogeneity, and the values bestowed on the notion of community depends on individual circumstances, interpretations and interactions (Amit and Rapport, 2002: Loc 253). Contrary to some ethnographies that link forced migration to *rites de passage* (e.g. Muggah, 2005), refugees do not simply re-assimilate and re-integrate into a community once they have 'overcome' their state of liminality. They rather create new communities out of old *and* new social networks, re-interpret their values and meanings within the context, and negotiate their boundaries through internal and external influences (see above).

The RCOs they create are not Nepalese Bhutanese communities, but are formalized British organisations with non-British members, which are created, controlled and limited by international and national policies, service provisions and infrastructures. To return to Chapter 4, policies focused on forced migrants, such as the CDA and RCO project, remind us of the well-known

proverb 'give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime'. But service providers and policy makers teach them how to 'fish' the 'Western' way, rather than being sensitive to and acknowledging 'native' concepts and interpretations of 'fishing'. That is, refugees are encouraged to found RCOs in order to support themselves once governmental agencies reduce and cease their assistance, but these RCOs have to comply with British policy standards, not emic conceptions of community.

RCOs also serve to help refugees 'integrate' into the highly bureaucratised relationship between the 'citizen' (or resident) and the 'state' (Griffiths et al, 2006: 893). It is as if social re-engineering is continued in resettlement – but this time from within the refugee community, rather than through direct aid intervention. Therefore, Bhutanese RCOs are tools of the British nation state to manage and control migrant groups within their territory.

Moreover, RCOs are constrained by various internal and external forces. As I have illustrated in ethnographic detail, Bhutanese RCOs are divided due to internal animosities based on ''othering'' (see above), preventing many of the assumed positive attributes of community development and support. However, RCOs are also limited by decreased funding opportunities and reduced public services, and are therefore unable to address the needs of their members. Rather than focusing on the problems refugees experience (such as lack of employment and language classes), RCOs are forced to re-define their aims and values to pander to the funding bodies' agendas, in order to be 'attractive' in an increasingly competitive funding regime (Baumann, 1996: 67; Griffiths et al, 2006: 893; Zetter and Pearl, 2000: 681, also see Chapter 8).

The Role of Anthropology

Faced with this practice-policy gap, researchers such as (amongst other) Baba (2013), Colson (2003), Griffiths et al (2006), Shore (2012), Zetter (2007) and Zetter and Pearl (2000) call for more in-depth research with refugees in resettlement nations. Whilst there are numerous ethnographies on refugee camps (first and foremost Chatty's and Malkki's work), there are hardly any qualitative studies on the outcomes of organized refugee resettlement.

Griffiths et al (2006: 884) highlight that thus far, research and literature has focused on idealised, functional notions of refugee communities, resulting in a lack of understanding amongst policy makers and service providers about the factual problems of RCOs, such as questions of marginalisation, representation, accountability and internal conflicts. Rather, research should *and* must question the "dominant paradigm" (ibid.) of the CDA and RCO project, and shed light on internal dynamics and external influences that may prevent the positive functions of community development.

In the Introduction, I posed the question how anthropology can understand and address issues arising due to forced migration and refugee resettlement. Although I am cautious to present my qualitative data as applying to all migrant and refugee groups in the UK, I maintain that ethnographic research brings to the fore the complex, ambiguous and performative bureaucratic processes affecting 'subjects' of policies, and how policies reflect the various interests of individuals and organisations (Baba, 2013: 7; Shore, 2012: 92). These questions are not moral judgments of 'good' and 'bad' policy, but focus on, for example, how efficient (or inefficient) RCOs really are for the refugees themselves (Fischer, 2014: 14). Anthropological research, such as that presented in this work, has the advantage of teasing out the individuals' hopes, needs, aspirations, values and meanings, which cannot be easily quantified. The contradictions, animosities and personal life-stories of refugees are often ignored in literature focused on international development and policy

intervention (ibid: 5). With this work, I aimed to address this gap in the literature, and add to the growing body of anthropological works that intends to be relevant not only for academic circles, but also for policy makers.

The focus on this particular group with its comparatively small size (only about 350 individuals) is both beneficial as well as problematic. On the one hand, by engaging with one, exclusive group of resettled refugees, I have been able to provide exceptional detail about my informants' experiences. On the other hand, the data I have obtained may not reflect research findings amongst other groups of refugees, or may not be easily translated to what other (perhaps larger) groups of refugees experience in the UK. Future collaborations with research peers will provide the possibility to reflect on the similarity and differences between Bhutanese refugees and refugees from other nations living in the UK.

The Emic Perspective

Throughout this thesis, finally, I stressed that Bhutanese refugees come from all social, economic and educational backgrounds, that they have agency (rather than being 'victimized'), and that they are capable of reflecting on their own situation, making their own informed decisions and engendering transformation within the wider 'opportunity structures' in which they find themselves. I argue that refuges actively reshape and adapt their values, meanings and interpretations through their experienced with forced migration and aid-intervention, and create new forms and shared principles.

Some of my informants asked me to show them my work, and I received interesting and inspiring feedback from them. Therefore, the last words of my thesis should not be mine, but those of my informants. I end this work with an extract of the response I have received from one teenaged Bhutanese refugees, who read one of my papers on Bhutanese refugee community

293

development, which I presented at Brunel University in 2014. I believe that he is best equipped to sum up what community is for Bhutanese refugees in resettlement in the UK.

"Community for me is a friendly and a fun environment where there are generous and helpful people, sharing their positive thoughts and feelings with each other, so that it will help the community to be developed. The people in the community should have a feeling of sharing, so that the community will never be left behind. It needs a unity of all the people to eradicate and eliminate problems, and this is how community is important".

"If we put our heads together and co-operate we can become stronger, powerful. But if we are divided, we will fall".

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Appendix 1 - List of Nepali and Dzongkha terms

aamaa	NP	mother
baa	NP	father
bahini	NP	younger sister
bhai	NP	brother / close male friend
Bhai Tika / Tihar	NP	Hindu sibling ritual
bideshi dalal	NP	foreign agents, spies
Bikram Sambat	NP	Nepali calendar
Bon	DZ	Himalayan animist and shamanistic religion
bhuṭani nepaliharu	NP	Bhutanese Nepalese / Nepalese Bhutanese
chai	NP	tea
chhora	NP	son
chöje	DZ	aristocracy of Bhutan (lit. 'lords of religion')
chori	NP	daughter
dalpati	NP	commander, absolute leader
Deepawali	NP	Nepali *Diwali* – Hindu festival 'of light'
Dashain		(most important holiday in the Hindu year
deusi	NP	Hindu religious songs sung during Hindu festivals
dhal	NP	Lentil or bean curry
dharma	DZ, NP	religion
didi	NP	older sister
Driglam Namzhag	DZ	traditional Bhutanese (*Ngalong*s) dress, behaviour and etiquette
druk gyalpo	DZ	'Dragon king' of Bhutan
Druk Yul	DZ	Bhutan (lit. *Land of the Thunder Dragon*)
drukpas	DZ	Bhutanese people (majority *Ngalongs*)
Dzongkha	DZ	Bhutan's official language
dzongs	DZ	Buddhist fortresses (defence and worship)
ganja	NP	cannabis
Holi	NP	Hindu festival of colour
je khenpo	DZ	Buddhist religious leader of Bhutan
jhara	NP	(obligatory) labour services
lakh	NP	one hundred thousand
Lhotshampa	DZ	'Southern boarder dweller' (here: Nepalese Bhutanese)
Losar	DZ	Bhutanese New Year
mandir	NP	Hindu temple
mit	NP	Close relationships with non-kin friends
momos	NP	Nepali dumpling filled with cabbage and

		spices
neta	NP	leader, guide, chief
ngolops	DZ	rebel, mutineer, here: 'anti nationals'
Nwaran	NP	Hindu name-giving ceremony for newborns
paan	NP	Betel nut
pahuna	NP	guest
pariwar	NP	family (also *bhitriya* or *jahan* in Nepali)
paskanu	NP	to serve food
Prabhashi Nepali	NP	immigrant Nepalese
puja	NP	Hindu prayer (conducted at home or in the temple (*mandir*)
saag	NP	Green-leaf vegetables, similar to spinach
samaj	NP	Community, social group
sati	NP	friend
satyagraha	NP	civil disobedience action
sel roti	NP	Nepali, doughnut-shaped snack prepared during festivals and celebrations
shabdrung	DZ	Secular ruler of Bhutan (lit. *'at whose feet one prostrates')*
tangyas	DZ	contractual workers
Teej	NP	Hindu festival for women
tika	NP	A thick paste made of (cooked) rice, red powder and water (or yoghurt) applied to a person's forehead during (Hindu) religious festivals
tsawa sum	DZ	"The three of Bhutan" (king/government; country/nation; people/citizens)
Upanayana	NP	Hindu 'rite of passage' for young boys

Appendix 2 - Takin Association UK Constitution[323]

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<u>TAKIN ASSOCIATION UK</u>

</div>

<u>CONSTITUTION</u>

Established & adopted on 21.11.2010 / Modified and adopted 16 January 2013

1   <u>NAME</u>

The organisation's name is: **"TAKIN ASSOCIATION (UK)"** – **Connecting Bhutanese in Diaspora**. It is a non-profit, community-based organisation. The association uses the abbreviation TA UK.

2   <u>THE PURPOSES OF THE ORGANISATION</u>

Takin Association UK has the following aims:

➢ **Community cohesion**: Takin Association UK commits itself to foster integration and inclusion of Bhutanese in the UK, and to bridge the gap between the refugee community and the host population. In particular, TA UK aims:

❖ To promote social inclusion of our community members for the public benefit in order to relieve the needs of members and assist them to integrate in British society

❖ To raise awareness about UK rules and regulations for a smooth transition and towards effective integration and harmonious adjustment with the wider community

❖ To liaise with other organisations and Institutions through volunteering, skill-oriented training and education

➢ **Quality of life**: Takin Association UK aims to improve the community members' quality of life by supporting the development of skills,

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[323] Included in this thesis with permission of Takin Association UK.

access to training and education, as well as providing information and advice on life in the UK. TA UK focuses on:

❖ To involve members in collective efforts to gain confidence in their own abilities and their capability to influence decisions which affect them

❖ To provide, coordinate and facilitate training on core skills relevant for employment that would otherwise not be available to them

❖ To offer support and assist community members seeking employment and work experience / placements

➢ **Community Support**: Takin Association UK is committed to support the community and improve the members' wellbeing. TA UK aims:

❖ To encourage and empower women, children and young people

❖ To provide recreational, leisure and sport facilities for all members, especially women and young children

❖ To initiate inclusive projects to actively involve community members

❖ To develop and maintain the organisations webpage in order to disseminate and make public information about TA UK

❖ To help and support members in times of bereavement, hardship and similar situations

❖ To enable and support members to connect with their scattered family members and friends around the world and to reunite them if possible

➢ **Preservation of heritage**: Takin Association UK aims to preserve and promote culture, heritage and language, and to generate awareness of the Bhutanese and Nepalese culture amongst the host population. TA UK commits:

❖ To safeguard the mother tongue and bilingualism, and to take steps to impart it to the younger generation through direct teaching and other methods

❖ To foster cultural heritage such as music, dance, dress, etc.; and to create awareness of our traditions amongst the host population

3   CARRYING OUT PURPOSES

In order to carry out charitable purposes, Takin Association UK has the power to:

(1)   raise funds and donations

(2)   apply for funds and grants to carry out the work of the organisation

(3)   co-operate with and support other charities with similar purpose

(4)   work with all members in order to achieve the purposes

4   MONEY AND PROPERTY

All funds, donations, grants and properties obtained by Takin Association UK must only be used for the organisation's purposes and should serve the whole community. TA UK has the following guidelines in regards to money and property:

(1)   Received funds must be held in the association's bank account under the responsibility of the organisation's treasurer and assistant.

(2)   Individual members and trustees cannot receive money or property from the organisation if it does not benefit the whole community.

(3)   Expenses have to be approved by trustees and cheques have to be signed by at least 2 trustees.

(4)   Approved expenses are only refunded on production of a valid receipt.

(5)   TA UK is keeping updated accounts, which are available to view on request.

(6)   Donors and funding bodies are provided with information on how obtained funds and resources have been utilised.

5   **MEMBERSHIP**

Takin Association UK shall have two types of membership – the voting members, also referred to as 'full members', and honorary members.

5.1. Eligibility

❖ *Voting (full) members* are Bhutanese who live in the UK, are age 18 and above, and subscribe to the aims and objectives of the Takin Association UK. Any individual fulfilling these criteria can apply to the organisation in order to become a member. Once accepted by the trustees, membership lasts for 3 years and may be renewed. Every voting member has one vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

❖ *Honorary members* may join TA UK or are identified by the trustees. The trustees may invite or nominate distinguished persons, who are active promoters or supporters of the charitable cause of Takin Association UK. The honorary members shall constitute an advisory board of the organisation. The honorary members shall not have access to the organisation's financial resources, and do not enjoy voting rights at the AGM.

5.2 Subscription

The trustees shall have the power to levy membership and other fees, and the members shall pay such subscriptions or fees, as determined at the AGM.

5.3 Loss of Membership and Reinstatement

Any member shall forgo his or her membership in the following circumstances:

❖ **Resignation:** Any member may cease to be a member on tendering resignation in writing to the Secretary of the Organisation. Resignation shall not alleviate a member of unpaid dues or other charges previously accrued.

- ❖ **Termination and Suspension of Membership:** in case of violation of the organisation's constitution and guidelines, membership may be suspended or terminated by a 2/3 majority vote of the trustees. Member shall also forfeit membership due to non-payment of annual dues or expiration of membership.

  Membership is non-transferable and shall cease upon the death of the member.

- ❖ **Reinstatement** Revocation of suspension or expulsion of membership shall be determined by 2/3 majority of the trustees.

5.4 Personal Information

Takin Association UK is committed to keep an up-to-date record of all members. Members are required to complete a membership form which is available on request (or via the TA UK webpage). Records are handled strictly confidential, and only trustees have access to personal information. TA UK conforms to its Data Protection Policy.

6 TRUSTEES

Takin Association UK shall be managed by a committee of trustees who are appointed for one year and are elected by a two third majority at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the organisation. The organisation has a minimum of 7 trustees, who hold at least 8 meetings per year. In order to approve motions, the signature of at least 3 trustees is required. Trustee board members must be active, and attend at least 6 of the 8 meetings. If trustees repeatedly fail to attend meetings, they will be taken of the board, and new trustees will be elected by trustees until the following AGM.

7 MEETINGS

Takin Association UK is a democratically based organisation. All decisions must be ratified by its members. Members are responsible for electing the organisation's Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, and these

positions must only be held by full members of TA UK, fulfilling the membership criteria.

7.1. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Takin Association UK holds an AGM every year, following these criteria:

➤ The AGM must be held every year, with 14 days' notice given to all members informing them of the AGM's agenda

➤ There must be at least two thirds of members present to vote on motions and to elect trustees, and all decision require a two third majority

➤ Every member has one vote

➤ The trustees shall present the annual report and accounts

➤ Any member may stand for election as a trustee

➤ Members shall elect a minimum of 7 trustees to serve for the next year. They will retire at the next AGM but may stand for re-election

➤ A selected attendee of the AGM will keep the minutes of the meeting, and a summary of the AGM will be provided to all TA UK members

➤ Honorary members may suggest motions, but have no vote

7.2. Trustee Meeting

Trustees must hold at least 8 meetings each year. At the first meeting following the AGM, trustees will elect a chair, treasurer and secretary. Trustees may act by majority decision. The following criteria apply to trustee meetings:

➤ At least 3 trustees must be present at the meeting to be able to take decisions.

➤ Trustees must stand down at the next AGM, but may be re-elected.

➤ The trustees may suggest reasonable additional procedures to help run the organisation. These motions must not conflict with TA UK's constitution or the law.

> ➤ If trustees have a conflict of interest, they must declare it and leave the meeting while this matter is being discussed or decided.

7.3. General Meeting

If the trustees consider it is necessary to change the constitution, or the organisation itself, they must call a General Meeting so that all members of Takin Association UK may reach a decision.

> ➤ Trustees must call a General Meeting if they receive a written request from the majority of members or in order to consult membership.
>
> ➤ All members must be given 14 days' notice and be informed about the purpose of the meeting.
>
> ➤ All decisions require a two thirds majority.

8   POLICIES

Takin Association UK is committed to follow several policies. These are compiled in a separate document and voted on at the AGM.

9   DISCLAIMER

Takin Association UK adopted a constitution on November 21st, 2010. The constitution has been established and ratified by the members present.

Interested parties may obtain a copy of the constitution by contacting Takin Association UK.

Appendix 3 – Brunel University Research Ethic Checklist

(copy)

Research Ethics Review Checklist

This checklist should be completed for every research project that involves human participation, the collection or study of their data, organs and/or tissue. It is used to identify whether a full application for ethics approval needs to be submitted.

Before completing this form, please refer to the University Code of Research Ethics. The principal investigator or, where the principal investigator is a student, the supervisor, is responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgement in this review.

The checklist must be completed before potential participants are approached to take part in any research.

Section I: Project details

1. Project title: *The resettlement of Bhutanese refugees in the UK*
2. Proposed start date: May 2012
3. Proposed end date: December 2013

Section II: Applicant details

2. Name of researcher (applicant):	Nicole Ingrid Johanna HOELLERER
3. Status (delete as appropriate):	Postgraduate (PhD) student
4. Brunel e-mail address:	nicole.hoellerer@brunel.ac.uk
5. Telephone number:	-

Section III: For students only

6. Module name and number or MA/MPhil course and School:	PhD Thesis in Social Anthropology Research
7. Supervisor's or module leader's name:	Dr. Peggy FROERER
8. Brunel e-mail address:	peggy.froerer@brunel.ac.uk

Supervisor: Please tick the appropriate boxes. The study should not begin until all boxes are ticked:

x	The student has read the University's [Code of Research Ethics](#)
x	The topic merits further research
x	The student has the skills to carry out the research
x	The participant information sheet or leaflet is appropriate
x	The procedures for recruitment and obtaining informed consent are appropriate
x	A risk assessment has been completed.
	A CRB check has been obtained (where appropriate)

Comments from supervisor:

Section IV: Description of project

Please provide a short description of your project:
The study is concerned with Bhutanese refugees in the UK. The primary focus of the project is on how refugees experience and evaluate internationally aided resettlement-programmes to third countries, such as the UK. The study will explore the effects of these initiatives on refugees, their daily lives and their relationships in host countries. Particular attention will be given to the generation-gap between the old and the young, and the refugees' motivations to resettled to a third country. Furthermore, the project investigates how modern media, such as the internet, are used to maintain relationships across boarders (e.g. between the camps and resettled communities), and to what degree these means are used for political participation and activism. The study is forming part of anthropology of development, conflict and diaspora. The study is based on long-term fieldwork (minimum of 12 months) in resettled communities in the UK. Furthermore, the researcher is seeking permission to utilize internet-platforms by Bhutanese refugees. Research will be conducted by means of participant observation, interviewing, case studies, focus groups and qualitative questionnaires. Research will be overt, and informant consent will be obtained prior to data collection, with particular emphasis on the protection vulnerable and under-age informants. The study will comply to the ASA Ethics Regulations, as well as to research ethics in UN-led camps. Consideration will be paid to restrictions and the study will comply with the laws and regulations of the UK.

Section V: Research checklist

Please answer each question by ticking the appropriate box:

	YES	NO
1. Does the project involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g., children, people with learning disabilities, your own students)?	X	☐
2a. Will the study require the co-operation of another organisation for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited?	☐	X
2b. If the answer to question 2a is **Yes**, will the research involve people who could be deemed in any way to be vulnerable by virtue of their status within particular institutional settings (e.g., students at school, members of self-help group, residents of nursing home, prison or other institution where individuals cannot come and go freely)?	☐	X
3. Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (e.g., covert observation of people in non-public places)?	☐	X
4. Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g., sexual activity, drug use) where they have not given prior consent to such discussion?	☐	X
5. Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g., food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?	☐	X
6. Will the study involve the use of human tissue or other human biological material?	☐	X
7. Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants?	☐	X
8. Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?	☐	X
9. Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?	☐	X
10. Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?	☐	X
11. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	☐	X
12. Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS?	☐	X