

**POLITICS OF WAITING AND HOPE: EXPLORING EMBODIED EXPERIENCES OF TIBETANS  
LIVING IN INDIA AS GUESTS AND CITIZENS**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

This PhD Thesis explores a critical understanding of the embodied experiences of Tibetans living in exile in India, between guests, migrants, and temporary residents with quests for Indian citizenship. The aim of this PhD research is to explore the meanings and experiences associated with being a Tibetan in India in contemporary times. The research questions interrogate how Tibetans make sense of their current political status and identities in India in current times, the practices and possibilities of Indian citizenship for Tibetans, and the localised and individualised narratives of Tibetans living in India.

In this PhD Thesis I borrow methods, strategies, and techniques transdisciplinary and I use them creatively, applying ethnographic and theatre approaches, self-reflexivity, and embodied and collaborative methods. I employ disruptions and the blurring of boundaries between traditional categories of literature, methods, data, theory, and dissemination.

The key findings of this PhD research show how Tibetans in India share similar experiences of waiting for better governance with groups such as Indian youth. This PhD Thesis demonstrates that the Identity Paperwork for Tibetans constitutes an act of citizenship and a common experience with populations in India, such as internal migrants, and other people who hold documents and those who do not. The PhD Thesis shows that, by using theatre approaches and collaborative enactments of performances, new possibilities for hope and transformation emerge, where Hope means a plethora of intersecting assertions about identity, agency, impermanence, empathy, solidarity and kindness and the symbolism of a suitcase.

This PhD Thesis contributes to contemporary stories with, about, and by Tibetans, collaborative and participative stories enacted as performances, in which Tibetans became political subjects and co-authors of the stories. This study makes a unique contribution to the power of writing against narratives of exclusion, silencing, and othering and advocates for collaborative stories about hope.

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## **List of abbreviations**

**AAP** - Aam Admi Party ('The Common Man's Party')

**BJP** - Bharatiya Janata Party ('People's Party')

**CAA** – Citizenship Amendment Act

**CCCU** – Canterbury Christ Church University

**CSLG** - Centre for the Study of Law and Governance

**CTA** – Central Tibetan Administration

**CWG** - Commonwealth Games

**FRRO** - Foreigner's Regional Registration Office

**GB** – Green Book

**IIAS** – Indian Institute of Advanced Studies

**IGov** – Indian Government

**JNU** - Jawaharlal Nehru University

**LTWA** - Library of Tibetan Works and Archives

**MHA** – Ministry of Home Affairs

**MEA** - Ministry of External Affairs

**MP** – Member of Parliament

**ND** – New Delhi

**NDA** – National Democratic Alliance (of political parties in India)

**NRC** – National Register for Citizens

**NRPF** - No Recourse to Public Funds

**OCI** - Overseas Citizenship of India

**PM** – Prime Minister

**RC** – Registration Card

**RTI** – Right to Information Act

**SEP** - Special Entry Permits

**TAR** – Tibetan Autonomous Region

**TGovE** – Tibetan Government in Exile

**TIPA** - Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts

**TW** - Tibet World NGO

**UCL** – University College London

**UNHCR** – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**YC** – Yellow Card

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'I believe that we need more stories about present-day Tibetan lives. We can keep calling ourselves "Tibetans" as long as we have Tibetan stories being published'  
(*The Tibetan Suitcase*, 2019)

'There is no 'us versus them', the Other is, in truth, my brother, my sister. The Other is me'  
(Shafak, 2019)

## Prologue

This PhD Thesis explores the politics of waiting and hope in India and the embodied experiences of Tibetans living in India as guests and citizens. The PhD Thesis is born from a decade of academic and personal quest to understand experiences of migration, displacement, refuge, and citizenship. This quest is based on my experiences of living in India at different periods of time, witnessing political movements first-hand, and transitioning from living in several countries, and ‘becoming’ a citizen. In this PhD Thesis I intertwine the personal and the political, by relating my own experiences with the research, and associating my encounters with the Indian and Tibetan people and institutions with the experiences of the research participants.

India has historically been a generous host and tolerant society for asylum seekers, such as the Sri Lankans, Tibetans, Burmese, Somalis, Afghans, Palestinians. India has no national refugee legislation and is not a signatory country of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol (Tibet Justice Center, 2011, 2016). The governing of refugees is therefore based on ad hoc policies. The Foreigners Act (1946) constitutes the only legal instrument that regulates the conduct of all foreigners. The fact that India has no refugee law, but offers *de facto* protection, leads to a precarious state of refugee populations in the country.

India hosts the largest number of Tibetan refugees, scattered across 39 settlements (2019). Approximately 80,000 Tibetans followed the 14th Dalai Lama to exile and fled to India since 1959, after China occupied Tibet (Yeh, 2007). The population of Tibetans in India has been estimated to be around 90,000 (CTA, 2012), the most recent figures show 108,000 (MPI, 2020; UNHCR, 2020), but other sources mention higher numbers reaching 150,000 (Yeh, 2007). Tibetans have been considered the most privileged group of refugees in India, in the 20th century and the most successful community in exile, based on their self-reliance and preservation of their culture. Tibetans living in exile in India have been considered a successful case of a refugee population that managed to keep their culture and language alive, to reconstitute their institutions in exile and to create transnational networks (MacPherson, et al, 2008). They managed to maintain their identity in exile for 60 years. Since recently they seem to be positioned between two aims: remaining Tibetan refugees or becoming Indian citizens. In 2010 the first Tibetan, a 26-year-old young woman, won her case for Indian citizenship in the High Court and challenged the Ministry of External Affairs.

Regarding the status of Tibetans in India, one of the main arguments in the literature is that Tibetans remain stateless: India does not recognize them, legally speaking, as refugees under either

international law or its own national laws and it does not enable them to become Indian citizens—with the exception of those born on Indian soil between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987 (Tibet Justice Center, 2011, 2016). Tibetans are ‘guests’ in India, residing based on a Registration Card issued to them upon arrival in India and renewable every year and since 2014, every five years. Reports show that Tibetans have a mixed attitude towards their host country, they are grateful, however they feel that their status is marked by impermanence (Gulati, 2015).

This PhD research aims to foster an understanding of a particular time (2015-2020) and a specific perspective of the life of Tibetans in India: the fluidity of their current political status and their position vis-à-vis acquiring Indian citizenship that has become possible since the first Tibetan won her case in the Indian High Court (December, 2010).

The PhD Thesis seeks to explore a critical understanding of the current meanings and practices of fluid citizenship and migrant identities in a non-Eurocentric framework. I use the term ‘non-Eurocentric framework’ to denote two important arguments for my PhD Thesis. First, I highlight how the theories of migration and refugee studies have been generated primarily in the Western academia and overlooked the South Asian experience (Ghosh, 2016). The South Asian states included in this region are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. They are both refugee/migrant receiving and sending countries. To date, this region has the unique distinction of having no legal regime to guide its migrant/refugee policies. No South Asian state, except Afghanistan, has signed the UN Refugee Convention of 1951. Nonetheless, none of these states has been unwilling to provide shelter to its refugee/migrant guests, albeit having limited resources in place (Ghosh, 2016). This is an important argument for highlighting the overall generosity of the South Asian region towards refugees/migrants, but also for illuminating another particular feature of the region: because of the absence of legal regimes in these countries, often the categories designed in the Western-based academic circles are mixed up and ‘migrants, refugees, illegal settlers, or stateless persons become one and the same’ (Ghosh, 2016, pg. XX). I argue that this is a key idea in stating an important distinction between the Eurocentric understanding of migrants and refugees and the South Asian region where these categories are deconstructed by the historical experiences of these countries.

Secondly, I situate this PhD Thesis in a non-Eurocentric framework by referring to the concept coined by Bhabra (2014): ‘connected sociologies’ as a project that brings together both postcolonial and decolonial arguments to challenge the preconceptions of historical narratives and traditions that place European knowledge production at the centre (Bhabra, 2014, pg. 115). In this PhD Thesis I place at the centre the experiences of migrant, diasporic and refugee populations situated in India,



particularly the Tibetans, as subjects and co-authors of knowledge production, acknowledging that these populations are ‘on the frontiers between cultures and nations’ and in these spaces the cultural and political identities are constructed and contested (Bhabha, 1994).

I introduce disruptions and the blurring of boundaries in this PhD Thesis. I invite the reader to expect transgressions, ruptures, creativity and transformation that disrupt established notions of research roles and relationships, traditional approaches to data collection and analysis, dominant notions of representing and disseminating research findings and rigid methodological boundaries and frameworks (Brown, et al., 2014; Ivanova et al., 2020). Being disruptive in research signifies embracing fluid identities and being transparent about how the research emerged from the researcher’s personal biography and lived experience, and how these guided and shaped the research questions and methodological perspectives (Brown et al., 2014). Disruption and creativity are tools used to challenge and disrupt conventional methodological approaches and to contribute to dismantling the ‘western’, neoliberal hegemonic social narratives and ideologies (Ivanova et al., 2020).

In this PhD Thesis I advocate that ‘we must not merely change the narratives of our history but transform our sense of what it means to live’ (Bhabha, 1994, pg. 256). Therefore, I conceptualise culture as a practice situated between arts and politics, and from this narrative position and framework I affirm and extend a new collaborative dimension ‘within the margins of the nation-space and across boundaries’ (Bhabha, pg. 251-252) and beyond disciplinary boundaries. I thus borrow concepts which propose forms of contested subjectivities in the act of erasing the politics of binary opposition within an attempt to construct a new theory of social imaginary (Bhabha, 1994).

The strategy of disruptions supports the key arguments of this PhD research. I argue that new knowledges created through performances contest the boundaries between sciences and the arts and re-join them with the help of theatre approaches and self-reflexivity. This corresponds to a modality of radical knowledge coproduction that disrupts authorship, self, linearity, and traditional knowledges (Vidali, 2020). Secondly, I demonstrate throughout this PhD Thesis that by employing theatre approaches and self-reflexivity in the PhD research I disrupt the boundaries between traditionally distinguished categories of literature, methods, data, theory, dissemination, as each section of this PhD Thesis is written in a disruptive way that combines literature review with theoretical arguments, methodological statements and modes of analysis.

**The aim of this PhD research** is to explore the meanings and experiences associated with being a Tibetan in India in the period 2015-2020. **The main research question is** How do Tibetans make sense of their current political status, identities, and positions in India in current times (2015-2020).

The associated research questions explore: 1.) What are the current meanings, practices, and possibilities of Indian citizenship for Tibetans and 2.) What are the localised and individualised narratives of Tibetans living in exile in India.

**The structure** of the PhD Thesis is organised in **Acts, Scenes, and Intervals**, starting with a **Prologue**, and ending with an **Epilogue**, language borrowed from theatre and performance. I use this language and structure to express and justify how and why this PhD Thesis is a performance of academic and intellectual work, that shows how narratives of identity are fluctuating and performative and how my self-reflexivity is part of this performative act. The PhD Thesis is written in a disruptive way that borrows terms, concepts, and ideas from multiple disciplines. The Intervals help introducing disruptions between two Acts or two Scenes. The interval or the 'act change' is a technical theatre term which denotes a change of either scenery, lighting, costumes, or other elements between the acts of a theatre play, usually during a short break for the actors and the audience, and allows the audience to reflect on and consider the ideas of the previous act before launching into the next series of ideas in the following act(s) (Stagewhispers, 2012). The concept of Interval has been used interchangeably with intermission and Interim and it signifies a dramatic strategy based on a continuous flow of action that will introduce changes, transitions and sometimes a new set of problems (Dessen, 1989).

In Act 1 I introduce the complexity of the legal, political, and social positioning of Tibetans living in exile in India. In Scene 1 I identify key literature and concepts that help explaining their current political status as guests / migrants / refugees living in India, with quests for Indian citizenship. In Scene 2 I introduce the disruption of narratives and I turn towards theatre and performance as embodied knowledges and autobiographical elements which informed and inspired my PhD research.

Act 2 places the research about Tibetans and their experiences of migration and citizenship in India in the context of how India defines and governs its citizens in contemporary times. In Scene 1 I connect the experiences of Tibetans living in India with other populations, migrants, internal migrants, and other sections of the society. In Scene 2 I place the question of Indian citizenship in the current political scenario and then I disrupt these arguments by what I call spaces of hope, resistance, and theatre in times of crisis.

In Act 3 I present the strategy and the rationale of this PhD research, the conceptual framework, and the tools and procedures for collecting, analysing, and interpreting the data. In Scene 1 I outline the main theories and approaches I employed to answer to the main research questions, how I collected, analysed, and interpreted the data. In Scene 2 I discuss the disruptions to this

methodological process produced by the use of performance and theatre approaches through the interpretation of the research data (2017) in the form of a theatre play titled 'Amma la' (meaning 'mother' in Tibetan) and enacted with the research participants and young Tibetans in India (2019).

In Act 4 I discuss the analysis and interpretation of the ethnographic data that emerged in 2016, based on a three-month fieldwork conducted in India. In Scene 1 I show how and why this PhD research is a personal story intertwined with a political one. In Scene 2 I demonstrate how this PhD research started with settling in the field and negotiating uncertainties. In Scene 3 I explain how I explored and learnt first-hand, first time information about who Tibetans in India were. In Scene 4 I present the data interpretation in the form of an imaginary letter titled 'Letter to India'.

In Act 5 I discuss the findings that emerged from the 2017 data ethnographic collection and analysis. In Scene 1 I explain how I became a 'friend of Tibet'. In Scene 2 I discuss the main themes that emerged from the 2017 data collection and analysis.

Act 6 presents the analysis and interpretation of the sharing of this PhD research findings in the form of the theatre play 'Amma la', during the third ethnographic fieldwork in India, in 2019. Scene 1 situates the play 'Amma la' and its enactment in the framework of 'mixed theatre approaches'. Scene 2 is a multi-layered analysis of the 'Amma la' performances in India (2019) based on six layers of analysis.

Act 7 contains the final discussion of this PhD Thesis. I explain how the findings shared as the collaborative 'Amma la' performance with the participants in 2019, confirm, contest, and transform the findings of this PhD Thesis. This discussion ends with summarizing the contribution of Act 7 to the PhD Thesis.

#### **Explanatory notes:**

1. I use the terms 'refugee', 'migrant' and 'asylum seeker' in the context of India interchangeably in this PhD Thesis.
2. I refer to CTA as the TGovE and use these terms interchangeably in this PhD Thesis.
3. I refer to Tibet as the homeland of Tibetan people, and I chose to use this term and not others, such as TAR, as an act of solidarity with Tibetan people, throughout the PhD Thesis.
4. All names of all people involved in this PhD research have been anonymised or replaced with other names and their identity kept confidential, except those persons who specifically mentioned that they would like their name to be mentioned in this PhD Thesis.

## Act 1. The Context: Tibetans in India.

### Disruption of Narratives

*We must not merely change the narratives of our history, but transform our sense of what it means to live – Homi K Bhabha (1994)*

#### About Act 1

This PhD research explores the politics of waiting and hope in India and the embodied experiences of Tibetans living in India as guests and citizens. Act 1 places the research in the context, introduces the key narratives about Tibetans in India and the disruption of these narratives. In Act 1 I introduce the complexity of the legal, political, and social positioning of Tibetans living in exile in India. The aim of this PhD research is to foster an understanding of a particular time (2015-2020) and a specific perspective of the life of Tibetans in India: the fluidity of their current political status and their position vis-à-vis acquiring Indian citizenship that has become possible since the first Tibetan won her case in the Indian High Court (December, 2010).

The Act 1 is structured in two sections, *Scene 1. Narratives in exile: Geopolitics of knowledge production*, an Interval, and *Scene 2. Theatre and performance as disruption of narratives: Embodied knowledges*. In Table 1 below I present a summary of the structure of Act 1 that I discuss in the following pages.

Table 1. **Structure of Act 1. Scenes and Interval**

<b><u>Act 1. The context: Tibetans in India. Disruption of narratives</u></b>
<b><u>Scene 1. Narratives in exile. Geopolitics of knowledge production</u></b>
I. Geopolitical context of Tibetans in exile in India. Narrative of Indian hospitality
II. The 'Tibetan problem/question'. Narrative of suffering and victimization
III. Identity and belonging in exile. Narrative of agency and subjectivity
IV. Narrative of statelessness, diaspora and citizenship
<b>Interval</b>
<b><u>Scene 2. Theatre and performance as disruption of narratives. Embodied knowledges</u></b>
I. Performing the body, exile as theatre. 'Manus' (2017)
II. Theatre as citizenship practice and identity construction. 'Me? I just put Birtish' (2019)
III. Narratives of displacement in refugee-actors performances. 'The Queens of Syria' (2016)
IV. Visual arts: Dead Reckoning Project (2016), Crossing the Mediterranean Sea by Boat (2017)

Source: author's own

## **Scene 1. Narratives in exile. Geopolitics of knowledge production**

In Scene 1 I present the academic literature that informed my early understanding of the PhD research questions focused on how Tibetans think and feel about their status in India in current times and about the question of Indian citizenship. The Tibetans claiming Indian citizenship constitute a very particular case of sociological analysis for several reasons. They are a refugee population who has lived in exile for the past 60 years, whose homeland had been occupied by force and transformed by another country. Their struggle for regaining their homeland is now coupled with the quest for the right to become citizens. I organise the selected literature in four themes that I refer to as narratives. I do this based on a reading of the literature that enables a critical positioning of each theme as a debated and contested narrative. In this Act 1 I refer to narrative as “a form of social life, a form of knowledge and a form of communication” (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 13). The use of narratives in understanding human and social life is both a source of insight and a “mode of knowing” (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 7) that involves, I argue, negotiation, contestation, and interpretation.

### **I. Geopolitical context of Tibetans in exile. Narrative of Indian hospitality**

The number of Tibetans living in India varies, depending on the source of the data. According to the Demographic Survey of Tibetans in Exile conducted by the CTA, there are 92,000 Tibetans living in India (Press Trust of India, 2015). A total of 128,014 Tibetans live outside Tibet, and 94,203 reside in India (Refworld, 2013). Other sources mention a total of 150,000 in 2002 (Yeh, 2007). The Planning Commission of CTA reported a total of 100,451 Tibetan refugees in South Asia and 46 refugee settlements across India (Prakash, 2001). Media sources reported a decline in the number of Tibetan refugees in India, from 150,000 to 85,000 in the period 2011 – 2018, with a large number migrating to the USA or returning to China/Tibet (Tripathi, 2018).

The main reasons for the hospitality of the IGov towards the Tibetans are due to “widespread sympathy in India for the Tibetan cause” (Mishra, 2014, pg. 33), also cultural affinities with Buddhist Tibet and geopolitical considerations: hospitality, asylum and assistance are offered “as compensation for [Jawaharlal] Nehru’s political inability to do anything for Tibet on the eve of its invasion by China” (Norbu, 2001, cited in Mishra, 2014, pg 33). This has then led the IGov to making a compensatory decision of allowing Tibetans refuge in India. The preferential treatment of the Tibetan refugees by India is evident in the Tibetan autonomy over public education, receiving wide public support, with Tibetans learning in Tibetan schools, with emphasis on Tibetan language, culture, history, religion. For these reasons, “Tibetans and their leaders continue to voice gratitude

for Indian hospitality” (McPherson et al., 2008, p. 10). The hospitality India has shown Tibetan refugees has historical, ideological, and strategic components. Tibetan Buddhist monasticism traces its roots to the high period of Indian Buddhist monasticism between 300 and 1100 CE. In addition, most of the revered early founding teachers of Tibetan Buddhism were Indian (McPherson et al., 2008 pg. 12). However, India does not recognize the Tibetans or any other asylum-seeking population as refugees since it has no national refugee laws, specifying their rights and governing their treatment (Bhattacharjee, 2008). According to Tibet Justice Center (2011, 2016), the response of the IGov to the Tibetans requesting asylum since 1959, when the XIV Dalai Lama fled China occupied Tibet, varied according to the time of their arrival. There were five waves of Tibetan refugees arriving in India, with a shift in 1990, these are summarised in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Responses / policies of the IGov to Tibetans arriving in India: 1959-2016**

Time period	Type of policy / response	No. of Tibetans	Outcome	Reason / implication
1959 – 1979	policy of hospitality / executive policy of discretion	Approx. 80,000 led by the XIV Dalai Lama	Placing Tibetans in remote areas, not to attract international attention + Issuing RC, renewable yearly.	Popular + I.Gov. support for Tibetans + Hope of diplomatic solution with China to allow return soon to Tibet.
1980 – 1993	blind eye policy	Approx. 25,000	Allowing refuge of Tibetans fleeing Chinese Cultural Revolution, its reprisals, and human rights abuses.	India-China border became a disputed territory
1990	Shift in policy	N/A	I.Gov + CTA encouraged voluntary repatriation to Tibet of Tibetans who studied in India in monasteries/nunneries	Growing no. of arrivals, + tensions with locals + claims that Tibetans were taking advantage of Indian hospitality.
1994 – 1999	voluntary repatriation policy	Total: 7,943 in 1996-1999.	I.Gov + CTA allowed adult Tibetan (18-30y) to stay for 3 – 6 months / 1 year for education + pilgrimage. Children allowed to study in Tibetan schools.	Tibetans issued a Special Entry Permit (SEP) by Indian Embassy in Nepal, renewable yearly.
2000 - 2007	mixed policy	Between 1500 - 3500 arrivals yearly until 2008	Preventing anti-China activities + Tibetans allowed to enter India via Nepal + issuing them Special Entry Permits	External pressure to limit Tibetans’ freedom of speech + India warmed rel. with China - became less hospitable for Tibetans - some new arrivals accused of being Chinese spies and jailed.
2008 - 2016	mixed policy	2006: 2,600 arrivals/2008: 652 arrivals/2014:100 arrivals	Anti-China protests in Lhasa, Beijing, India in 2008, + India arrested Tibetans protesting internally	China preventing Tibetans to escape via Nepal – cooperation with security forces at Nepal border

Source: Tibet Justice Center (2011, 2016) - selected key ideas and dates

India practiced a dual policy towards Tibetans in exile and towards China, termed “ambivalent diplomatic position” (Mishra, 2014, pg. 34). In 2003 India signed the “Declaration of Principles of Relation and Comprehensive Cooperation” through which India recognized Tibet as part of China, but it continued to offer asylum and welfare assistance to Tibetan refugees (Mishra, 2014).

The key questions that I seek to answer in my PhD research focus on the changes in the agency of Tibetans after 22 December 2010, when the first Tibetan claimed and obtained Indian citizenship. Her case, I argue, opens the door to a new stage in the history of Tibetans living in India and their relationship with the Indian state.

The fluid status of Tibetans living in India as migrants, refugees, or stateless people, or sometimes termed as “guests”, interrogate the narrative of hospitality that India has been praised for (Gulati, 2015). This narrative is supported by a fluid, unstable and ad-hoc refugee policy that India practices, a policy which privileges the Tibetans and is determined by political relations with China. Therefore, the concept of Tibetans living as guests in a hospitable Indian state presumes that hospitality, like tolerance includes boundaries of belonging that guests cannot transgress (Wemyss, 2009 cited in Yuval-Davis, 2011). And so, being a guest means being forever grateful to the host for their hospitality, at least until the ‘Tibetan problem’ is solved. This discussion helps introducing the next sub-section about the ‘Tibetan Question’ and the narrative of suffering in exile. These narratives aim to paint a non-linear, non-unitary picture of the Tibetan story in exile, since identity narratives are not a unified and singular subject (Fortier, 2000).

## **II. The ‘Tibetan Problem/Question’. Narrative of suffering and victimization**

The term ‘Tibet Question’ has been coined by Melvyn C. Goldstein, an anthropologist who wrote extensively on the Tibetans in exile, author of three volumes on the History of Modern Tibet. He defined the ‘Tibet Question’ as the dispute over the right of Tibetan people to independence against the People’s Republic of China (Goldstein, 1998). The concept ‘Tibetan problem’ has been framed in the context of Tibetan-Chinese relations in particular after the Dalai Lama and the delegation sent by the TGovE commenced negotiations with the Chinese leaders in 1979, after two decades of silence on both sides. On 21 September 1987, the Dalai Lama presented for the first time a Five-Point Peace Plan on “solving the Tibetan problem” to the U.S. Congress. This plan called for honest negotiations with China on the future status of Tibet. In 1988 The Dalai Lama presented his proposal to the European Parliament for “a negotiated solution to the Tibetan problem” (International Campaign for Tibet, 2016).

The relations between China and Tibet can be traced approximately 1,500 years back but the contemporary conflict, according to Goldstein (1988), dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of 19<sup>th</sup>

century. Prior to 1951 Goldstein argues that Tibet functioned as an independent nation, without interference from China or any other country. However, China continued to claim that Tibet was part of its own territory. The People's Republic of China in 1949 had the military force to impose this view. In 1951 China, Tibet and India signed the *17-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet*. This agreement granted Tibetan recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet for the first time in history while recognizing the right of the Dalai Lama's government to continue to administer Tibet (Goldstein, 1998). Nevertheless, in 1959 an uprising began in Tibet and despite assistance from CIA, the Chinese army used force to disperse it and the Dalai Lama fled to India, followed by about 80,000 Tibetans in the same year. What followed was a structural transformation of Tibet by China, starting with the abolition of feudalism, of the monastic system, and during the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s, the prohibition of all religious activities and destruction of monasteries (Goldstein, 1988). Goldstein's analysis is very useful for the audience who is interested in the historical development of the "Tibet Question" but it does not provide insights into the rationale of India's treatment of the Tibetan refugees, arriving at different points in time. This gap is addressed by the French historian Claude Arpi (2012), who underlines the lack of Tibet policy in India after Independence, particularly before the 1962 War with China. The nonexistence of such a policy is, according to Arpi, the main cause that led to the Chinese invasion of Tibet.

Arpi (2012) presents a set of policy recommendations for the IGov regarding a better life and recognition of Tibetans value: long term residential permits to be provided to the Tibetans settled in India for a long time, the possibility to apply for an OCI scheme under the MHA and to facilitate admission of Tibetan students in Indian educational institutions under a special quota. Some of his suggestions are already in place at the time of writing this PhD Thesis, such as the long-term residential permits for Tibetans living in India, which have been implemented since 2014 and the admission of Tibetan students in Indian schools.

Another perspective on the 'Tibetan Question' provides a complex analysis of the Tibet – India – China relation and the impact on the Tibetans living in exile in India (Sarin, 2015). Former Indian diplomat and writer, Sarin (2015) provides a detailed geo-political and historical analysis of the context that lead to China invading Tibet in 1950 and the complex situation that Tibetans found themselves in after fleeing to India, arguing that the source of the problems in India-China relations is *not* Tibet, but *how China perceives Tibet* and the fact that India gives refuge to Tibetans, which is perceived by China as anti-China policy. Sarin (2015) states clearly that Tibet was linked to India historically through culture, religion, trade and in particular that Tibetan Buddhist identity originates in India, since Gautama the Buddha was born in India and the famous tree under which he contemplated is in today's state of Bihar. The close relationship between the two cultures is



emphasized by other researchers (MacPherson et al., 2008), as a partial reason for which the IGov showed generosity towards the Tibetans and the Dalai Lama. The other rationality is more practical and has to do with the territorial position of Tibet and through this, the control that India gained over former Tibetan Buddhist kingdoms of Ladakh and Sikkim, where large parts of the population in today's India have Tibetan origins and follow Buddhism (MacPherson et al., 2008).

'The tragedy of Tibet' (Sarin, 2015, pg. 33) has geopolitical background and implications: the colonization and exploitation of Tibet is tacitly approved by Western powers, especially the USA, which would not have any gain from Tibet's independence but would rather profit economically from China maintaining its colonial power in Tibet. This status quo would then "guarantee the stability and order necessary for the international capitalism to operate" and the investment and opportunities of global capital in China (2015, p. 33). Tibet became a "militarized zone", with 300,000 Chinese troops stationed on the territory of Tibet Autonomous Region (Sarin, 2015, pg. 17). On a similar note, Brauen (2010) warns of the economic power that China represents nowadays on the political scene. Runesson (2011) points out that the potential military assistance from the West to the opposition in Tibet would harm the West's relation to China, seen as too important an economic and powerful partner to oppose by the West. China's securitized and militarized rule in the autonomous provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang Uyghur in Northwest China has been framed as 'modern colonialism' (Anand, 2018) and 'Chinese colonialism' (Choesang, 2014, p. 82). And the lack of intervention by political forces was classified as 'Western neo-colonialism' (Runesson, 2011).

On the contrary, Sautman (2006) writes against the term "colonialism" to describe Tibet under China's occupation, arguing that the Tibetan Movement in India circulated this narrative to show that China carried out genocide and practised colonialism in Tibet. China's efforts over the past six decades to erode Tibetan cultural identity by gradually implementing policies that promote a national Chinese identity constitute attempts to address the "Tibetan problem" with the solution of development and assimilation (Delehant, 2012). However, China does not have one single national identity, but is a multi-ethnic country, as shown in Table 3 below. Based on the 2010 Census, China has a population of 1.34 billion people (Minorityrights.org, 2017). The ethnic minority population is approximately 114 million, one of the largest in the world, but considered from a different perspective, the 55 officially recognized ethnic minority groups constitute only 8.5 percent of China's population (Maurer-Fazio and Hasmath, 2015). The definition and classification of ethnic minorities or nationalities in China is the result of historical processes of state intervention and does not truly reflect their self-identification or the reality of China's ethnic diversity within China's boundaries (Minorityrights.org, 2017; Maurer-Fazio and Hasmath, 2015).

**Table 3. Main minority and indigenous communities in China**

Name of minority group	Population size (million)	Percentage of total pop China
<b>Zhuang</b>	16.9	1.3 %
<b>Manchu</b>	10.4	0.77 %
<b>Hui</b>	10.6	0.79 %
<b>Miao</b>	9.4	0.71%
<b>Uyghur</b>	10	0.75%
<b>Yi (Lolo)</b>	8.7	0.65%
<b>Tujia</b>	8.4	0.63%
<b>Mongol</b>	6	0.45%
<b>Tibetan</b>	6.3	0.45%

Source: Minorityrights.org (2017), based on National Population Survey of China, 2010

‘The Tibet question/ problem’ has been associated with a narrative of suffering and victimization in exile (Kruger, 2008). The creation of a certain image or representation of Tibet in the world as mysterious, a source of old wisdom, religiosity, non-violence (*ahimsa*), respect for nature, gender equality and unique culture started with the early British colonialists and was reiterated by the current TGovE. The preservation of unity and identity in exile is, according to Kruger (2008), divergent from the reality in which majority of Tibetans live in China. The six million Tibetans who live in current day Tibet have become more and more Han Chinese and less Tibetans for the past 56 years. Kruger’s work (2008) aims to prove that the TGovE recreated an image of a victimized Tibet with the agenda of gaining compassion and support from Western countries and, simultaneously this created divergence with the Tibetans in Tibet. The result was to diminish the cause for Tibet Independence and failure to create a more politicized agenda. Nonetheless, Kruger (2008) does not elaborate on this agenda and how exactly it could be achieved.

A similar argument about a potential ‘narrative of victimization’ highlights the Tibetans’ dependence on a narrative of victimization as another symptom of protracted refugee syndrome and a means to generate sympathy, and to sustain a model that attracts support from donor agencies (Moynihan, 2012). The protracted refugee syndrome refers to those populations who cannot gain access to secure and permanent legal statuses for long periods and thus are compelled to maintain an ambiguous and temporary legal status (Lori, 2017). Moynihan (2012) further underlines the need for a solution that would de-victimize the Tibetans and this solution must first address the issue of statelessness. The refugee syndrome equates with the dependency of the community on others, and in the case of Tibetans these included the IGov and foreign aid. The cultural identity of the Tibetan

community is thus becoming a narrative focused on religiosity and suffering (Moynihan, 2012). I argue that the narrative of victimization and suffering in exile is contested by a narrative of agency and subjectivity that Tibetans have shown during their long stay in India. This topic will be addressed in the following section.

### **III. Identity and belonging in exile. Narrative of agency and subjectivity**

A complex concept in the language of social scientists, identity offers a framework that “can suggest ways in which people conceive of themselves and are characterised by others” (Vertovec, 2011, p. 573). Identities are generated and constructed through an interplay of internal (self-attributed) and external (other-ascribed) factors and attributes (Jenkins, 1996). “Identity has its subjective root in the person, but it manifests itself objectively as a social product through the mobilization of collective self-consciousness” (Singh, 2004, pg. 215). The maintenance of a collective Tibetan identity has been one of the major topics of research in early studies focusing on Tibetan populations in India. Lynn Pulman (1983) describes the economic, social and cultural aspects of the exiled lives of Tibetans in the first Tibetan settlement in Karnataka, with an emphasis on the success of the community to preserve their identity, culture and traditions while maintaining a self-sufficient economy based on agriculture and a tolerant relationship with the local Indian community. This success is, therefore, largely attributed to the external recognition of identity and it highlights a strong sense of agency and subjectivity.

Identity has also been understood in terms of belonging, which is seen by scholars today as a political and cultural field of contestation. The notion of belonging often describes an emotional attachment to a homeland, a place of origin, whether this is real or imagined. But ‘home’ is not always conceptualised as a specific location (Sigona et al., 2015). The self-constructed definitions of belonging resonate with new spaces of culture, freedom, and identity (Yuval-Davis, 2011). The life stories of Tibetans often relate to both the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan homeland (Houston and Wright, 2003) and more recently, to the Indian land of opportunities for a life of freedom. These spaces are conducive of narratives of multiple belongings. The Dalai Lama constitutes both a narrative and a name that has been constantly attached to the Tibetan identity since ‘the persistence of names is the condition of every “identity”’ (Balibar, 2003, p. 9). The ‘portability of national identity’ among migrants (Sassen, 1998 cited in Vertovec, 2001, p. 575) leads towards claiming membership in more than one place. In the same line of thought, people who live in diverse ‘habitats of meaning’ (Hannerz, 1996 cited in Vertovec, 2011, p. 578) are not territorially restricted. The experiences gathered there accumulate to create people’s cultural repertoires, which then influence the construction of identity – or multiple identities. Together, the concepts used for explaining contemporary lived experiences in multiple spaces, across borders and ethnic belongings,

help better positioning the ambivalent identities of Tibetans living in various 'transnational social fields' (Glick Schiller et al, 1998b), 'transnational social spaces' (Pries, 1999), or 'translocalities' (Appadurai, 1995). The 'multi-local life world' (Vertovec, 2001) is often inhabited by various exiled and migrant populations. Tibetans are loyal both to their spiritual leader and their lost homeland, but also to their new home in India, a country that recently offered them citizenship as a form of belonging. I argue that this nexus of places and spaces of belonging affect the ongoing construction, negotiation, and reproduction of their social and political identities.

A visible form of political identity for the Tibetans living in India is the Registration Card issued and renewed every five years by the Indian authorities. The Tibetans also need permission from the IGO to travel internally and internationally and have to report to the local police within three days from arriving to a new place that is not their home (Tibet Justice Center, 2011, 2016). Their movement is closely monitored and for traveling abroad the Tibetans need an Identity Certificate, valid for two years that is recognized as a passport by a small number of countries. Obtaining an Identity Certificate can take from three months up to three years and in order to return to India the Tibetans require a Visa from the local Indian consulate and a stamp with "No Objection to Return to India" (Tibet Justice Center, 2011, 2016).

These institutionalized forms of control over the Tibetan population via bureaucracy, various documentations and authorizations show how the nation-state tries to assert its power over a migrant community living on its territory and to define the limitations of their identity and agency. However, where there is power, there is resistance and agency (Inda, 2005). Therefore, I aim to highlight the Tibetans' response to these institutional practices in forms of agency and collective and individual identity. This in turn has the potential to create a narrative of agency and subjectivity, with the emphasis on the cultivation of self and identity.

Contemporary researchers (Basu, 2013) attempted to explain the Tibetans' approach to life in exile through the lenses of the Buddhist religion and their tolerant, non-violent view of the world. This creates the corner stone of inner strength and subsequently, capacity for agency. For Tibetan refugees, arguably the dominant framework for thinking about and attempting to understand exile is the Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation and its promise of eventual release through good action and compassion (Basu, 2013). Inspired by the Dalai Lama, many Tibetans work hard through focused spiritual practice to regard the predicament of exile as a source of inner strength.

The Dalai Lama is an advocate of uncompromising non-violence and his leadership followed the principle of non-violence, non-enmity, compassion for all, the importance of human rights and the goal of reconciliation with China. The importance of non-violence is relevant in the response of the

Tibetan leadership to the Chinese invasion and annexation of Tibet, which translated into a series of peace proposals, such as the Five-Point Peace Plan, summarized below (King, 2009).

1. Transforming the whole of Tibet area into a zone of peace.
2. Abandoning the policy of population transfer currently practiced by China on Tibet.
3. Respecting the fundamental human rights and democratic freedom of the Tibetan people.
4. Restoring the natural environment of Tibet, China abandoning the production of nuclear weapons.
5. Starting the negotiations about the future of Tibet (King, 2009, pg. 68-70).

However, instead of treating concepts such as identity, nationalism, and diaspora as something given, we must explore and understand them as contested and problematic (Anand, 2000). For instance, the Tibetan identity formation in exile should be studied in terms of 'political and cultural processes and discursive practices' (Anand, 2000, pg. 275). I now turn towards the fourth narrative about Tibetans living in India, conceptualised in terms of statelessness, diaspora, and citizenship.

#### **IV. Narrative of statelessness, diaspora, and citizenship**

Stateless is a category first defined in 1954 in the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons by the UN Economic and Social Council Relations as a person who is not considered a national by any State under the operation of its law (Ghosh, 2016, pg. XXIII). A person can be stateless *de jure* – having no nationality at birth or having lost it later on, and *de facto* – a person who left their country of nationality and no longer enjoy the protection of their national authorities (Ghosh, 2016, pg. XXIII). The meaning of statelessness is closely associated with the meaning of homelessness in a broader sense of not belonging to any place that can be called home (Ignatieff, 1994). The multiple meanings of statelessness have been explored regarding populations, such as the Palestinians or the Kurds, who do not have a recognised nation state to secure them a nationality. For the Palestinian people living in France, Sweden and UK, statelessness means being homeless, landless, and voiceless. In their accounts, statelessness is simultaneously a legal, political, and existential condition, albeit some of them are EU citizens, they consider themselves stateless on a collective level (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2015).

In South Asia and particularly in India statelessness emerged a result of partition, decolonisation, territorial reorganisation, and persecution of minorities. All these human experiences, however, cannot be always divided into such neat categories (Banerjee, Chaudhury and Ghosh, 2016, p. 3). Statelessness is also an acknowledgment of the flawed concept of citizenship that was designed and interpreted in terms of nationality, to the extent to which in the current age citizenship appears inseparable from belonging to a nation (Balibar, 1998, p. 726). For Ong (1999), 'flexible citizenship' in

South-East Asia can be understood as “creative juggling of identities across borders imposed by different regimes of nation state and capital” (cited in Yeoh and Willis, 2004, pg. 197).

Mapping the processes of citizenship in India and the making of the OCI status, Roy (2010) traces the Citizenship Act of India (1955) from its origins to the subsequent amendments, in 1986, 2003 and 2005, showing how citizenship unfolded among differentially located individuals and communities. Roy’s (2010) main argument is that there has been a steady movement towards identifying blood-ties and descent, religion, and social caste, as the main criteria for citizenship in India. Therefore, citizenship is defined in India “in exclusionary terms and emerges as the bastion on which the nation-state asserts its sovereignty”, argues Roy (2010). A longer discussion about Indian citizenship follows in *Act 2. The Political question of Indian citizenship*.

Arguably, in 1970 the IGov offered citizenship to all Tibetan refugees living in India, offer declined by the CTA (Sarin, 2015). Furthermore, an official from the Tibetan Administration is reported to have expressed regret over the refusal of this offer while the argument for rejecting it was the belief that Tibetans could soon go back to Tibet (Sarin, 2015, pp. 40-41). A different claim is that few of the Tibetans apply for Indian citizenship because of the widely shared belief that their exile in India is temporary and the possibility to return to Tibet is still open (Human Rights Network, 2008). Similarly, Singh (2009) reiterates the idea that Tibetans, subtly encouraged by the strategies and techniques of the IGov, maintain the possibility to return to Tibet in the future. The Tibetan refugee settlements in India in the 1960s were deliberately designed to recreate Tibetan society with its core values intact, however, the same policy comes under increasing criticism in early 2000 and the need of the current times seems to call for Indian citizenship for Tibetans living in exile in India (Moynihan, 2012).

Recent research questioned the distinction between concepts such as stateless/refugees/citizens, for instance the case of Urdu-speaking refugees in Bangladesh illustrates the nuances of political identity and spaces of statelessness (Redclift, 2013). The strict opposition of the concepts statelessness and citizenship is no longer relevant, according to Redclift (2013), who argues for the fluidity of the limits of political community. It is important to acknowledge another argument here, made by Indian sociologists, who write about how India has been exposed to cultural contacts with other civilizations since millennia. Thus, the country has been continually making adaptive changes in its cultural forms as it encountered other cultures: India has a “history of accommodating identities” (Singh, 2004, pg. 216). Therefore, in this accommodating land of many cultures, ethnicities and religions living together for millennia, there might be enough space and tolerance for just another group: the Tibetans.

Tibetans in exile have been considered a successful case of a refugee population that managed to keep their culture and language alive. The Tibetans succeeded to reconstitute their institutions in exile, to create transnational networks and to form a “key emerging diaspora” (MacPherson, Bentz and Ghoso, 2008). The meaning of the term ‘diaspora’ has been interpreted widely by observers and researchers. In a broader sense, diasporas have been defined as the embodiment of diverse historical and contemporary conditions, characteristics, trajectories, and experiences (Vertovec, 1999, p 3). The condition of diaspora is comprised of fluid representations that provide an ‘imaginary coherence’ for a set of identities that are continuously changing. Thus, in the age of cyberspace, a diaspora can, to some degree, be held together or re-created through the mind, through cultural artefacts and through a ‘shared imagination’ (Cohen, 1996, cited in Vertovec, 1999, p. 516). Cohen (1997) proposes a typology of the term diaspora structured based on the reason for people to live outside their homeland. The word diaspora is now being used in a variety of new contexts (Cohen, 2007, pg. 21), describing metaphorically different categories of people: expatriates, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and racial and ethnic minorities. For instance, the Kurds and Sikhs are a different case of diaspora with an imagined “ex post facto” construction of the homeland.

A diaspora is an authentic diaspora if certain conditions are met, such as, firstly, times passes by, in which the members of the ethnic group do not merge into the local community, lose their prior identity and achieve individualized forms of social mobility. Secondly, the group does not intermarry with the locals. And thirdly, members of a diaspora have not only a collective identity in a place of settlement or with an imagined or real homeland, but also a common identity with co-ethnic members dispersed in other countries (Cohen, 1997, pg 25). These criteria apply to the Tibetans living in India – and elsewhere on the globe – as they have been living outside their homeland for a long time, without mixing with the local population, especially in India. Also, the Tibetan diaspora maintains representative political bodies and cultural links worldwide, the CTA with the headquarters in India maintains Tibet Offices in ten countries. These are offices of culture and information and provide also consular help to Tibetans living abroad (CTA, Tibet.net, 2015). While Tibetans may be considered a diasporic group, they also make use of strategies by which they adjust to the meaning and dilemmas of exile, and, especially, the meaning of home (Zetter, 1999). Thus, the so-called ‘myth of return’ in terms of ‘homeland attachment’ has been transformed into a political issue, especially for the second and third generation of refugees (Bolognani, 2007). The ‘myth of return’ is an important concept mostly for the first and second generation of older Tibetans who were born in Tibet and who long for the lost nation in a passive or sometimes active way (Oberoi, 2009). In contrast, for the younger generations, Tibet represents rather a collection of customs,

cultural practices and traditions and they look at a future in which the boundaries are becoming fluid, the fixed categories such as home land or nationalism become contested (Oberoi, 2009).

Postmodern views of diaspora reveal new concepts and new ways of defining it, for instance the term 'hybridity' that has been used by Rushdie, Hall and other postmodern authors "to denote the evolution of new, dynamic, mixed cultures" (Cohen, 1997, pg. 131). Hall (1992) links the development of hybridity and the changing character of (postcolonial) diaspora, arguing that cultural identities are emerging which are in transition, a process of evolution of 'cultures of hybridity' (cited in Cohen, 1997, pg. 131). For Chambers (1994), "all identities are formed 'on the move', at the unstable point where subjectivity meets the narrative of history", a journey with 'no fixed identity or final destination'" (cited in Cohen, 1997, pg. 133). The discourses of nationalism, ethnicity or 'race' are examples of models of belonging which attempt to root the individual within conventional ideas of 'home' and 'belonging', in clearly defined, static notions of being 'in place' (McLeod, 2000, p. 214). Bhabha (1995) uses the concept of hybridity as an important tool and as a way of thinking 'beyond exclusionary, fixed, binary notions of identity based on ideas of rootedness and cultural, racial and national purity' (cited in McLeod, 2000, p. 219). Bhabha's concept of the border, the 'beyond' considers the opportunity for new, hybrid forms of knowledge. 'Traveling cultures' is another postmodern concept coined by Clifford (1992) who argues that cultures 'travel' instead of migrate, are displaced or nomads, because of a two-way process, with cultural and interactive implications: 'Diasporas are positioned somewhere between nation-states and 'travelling cultures'" (Clifford, 1992, cited Cohen, 1997, Pg. 134).

Diaspora is a deeply political idea because of two factors (Sigona et al, 2015). First, it refers to a kind of 'identity': social identity that is born from constant debates about who belongs to specific groups, who does not, and the power relations deriving from these questions. Secondly, diaspora identity is especially political, because it inhabits a grey zone between different definitions of 'insider' and 'outsider'. This 'grey zone' frames the space where inquiries, contestations and (de)constructions of the political identities of Tibetans living in India take place, and this is what I aim to explore in this PhD research.

The academic literature discussed in Scene 1 highlighted the historical and geopolitical context of Tibetans living in exile in India. I explored the contested narratives about the hospitality of the Indian state towards Tibetans, the concepts of identity, belonging, suffering and agency, citizenship, diaspora, and statelessness of the Tibetans living as guest / migrants / refugees/ potentially citizens in India. The following section, Scene 2, will commence after the Interval.



## Interval

In Act 1 of the PhD Thesis the interval signifies a transition from Scene 1 to Scene 2.

The interval invites the reader to consider and reflect on the previous Scene and to prepare for the disruptions that will follow in Scene 2.

During this interval, the reader may also take a short break before returning to *Scene 2: Theatre as disruption of narratives*.

## Scene 2. Theatre as disruption of narratives. Embodied knowledges

In *Scene 2* I introduce the disruption of narratives and I turn towards theatre and performance as embodied knowledges and practices of research which informed and inspired my PhD research. I refer to theatre and performance as a disruption of narratives using two supportive arguments. First, I refer to Bhabha's preposition arguing that 'we must not merely change the narratives of our history, but transform our sense of what it means to live' (Bhabha, 1994, pg. 256). Therefore, I conceptualise culture as a practice situated between arts and politics, and from this narrative position and framework I affirm and extend a new collaborative dimension 'within the margins of the nation-space and across boundaries between nations and peoples' (Bhabha, pg. 251-252) and beyond disciplinary boundaries. I thus borrow concepts from the postcolonial framework which proposes forms of contested subjectivities in the act of erasing the politics of binary opposition within an attempt to construct a new theory of social imaginary (Bhabha, 1994, pg. 256).

Secondly, I use 'disruption' as a tool borrowed from the field of literature and history. Disruption is a literary tool that situates the perspective in which a historical event is placed, indicating its presentation as a closed event in the social, individual and political sphere, for instance novels about the disruption produced by the Second World War (Atack, 1990). Disruption represents the opposition of normality or peace, which shows the war breaking into the continuity of history. The notion of 'disruption' designates the nature of the opposition and belongs to a narrative (Atack, 1990). Therefore in *Scene 2* I chose to disrupt the narratives presented in *Scene 1* by re-situating the perspective from the narratives of knowledge production understood in terms of migration, identity, refugees, citizenship and diaspora, towards forms of embodied and auto-biographical knowledges supported by theatre making and the blurring of boundaries between theory, data, method, authorship and subjectivities in research.

In *Scene 2* I introduce the disruption of narratives in the form of theatre performances and autobiographical elements. This strategy of disruption reiterates the key arguments of this PhD research: first, new knowledges created through performances contest the boundaries between sciences and the arts and re-join them with the help of theatre approaches and self-reflexivity. This corresponds to a modality of radical knowledge coproduction that disrupts authorship, self, linearity, and traditional knowledges (Vidali, 2020, pg. 1). Secondly, I demonstrate throughout this PhD Thesis that by employing theatre approaches and self-reflexivity in the PhD research I disrupt the boundaries between traditionally distinguished categories of literature, methods, data, theory,

dissemination, as each section of this PhD Thesis is written in a disruptive way that combines literature review with theoretical arguments, methodological statements and modes of analysis.

In Scene 2 I discuss three theatre plays and two visual research projects that emerged from research conducted with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in different countries and locations. These performances are important as they reveal new understandings of key concepts discussed in Scene 1 in relation to Tibetans living in India: narratives of identity, subjectivity, migration, refuge, and citizenship, in a performative framework. The reasons for choosing to present these performances are both academic and personal: they constitute examples of academic research intertwined with the arts that present another, disruptive form of narrative that inspired me in the journey of my PhD research. And I was personally involved in some of these projects, by getting to know the participants and / or attending the events. These performances focus on life in refugee camps, in detention and exile and life at the margins of citizenship.

### **I. Performing the body, exile as theatre: *Manus* (2017)**

In this section I introduce *Manus*, a theatre play written by playwright Nazanin Sahamizadeh in 2017. I have had an interest in Australia's asylum policy since 2010, when I graduated with a Master's degree in Anthropology and was preparing my PhD application to study in Melbourne and focus on the dehumanizing treatment of asylum seekers in Australia, a project which in the end I did not pursue. Fast-forward to 2019: I connected with Behrouz Boochani, the detained writer and Iranian asylum seeker on Manus island, via his social media profile and followed his posts, despite the physical distance between our geographical locations. This helped me reflect on the transformative potential of writing, research, and theatre that I could apply to my own PhD research about Tibetans living in exile in India.

I start by outlining the most recent developments of the immigration and asylum policies in Australia that constitute the background of writing the play *Manus*. The Australian government started to operate offshore immigration detention centres in the Pacific islands in 2001, at the time of the 'Tampa incident', when the Government refused to allow the Tampa vessel to unload the survivors of a sinking vessel packed with 433 would-be asylum seekers on Australia's Christmas Island and instead ordered them to be transported to Nauru (Rajaram, 2003). Therefore, asylum seekers arriving by boat in the Australian maritime borders were directly sent to one of the Pacific islands, where they were detained for an indefinite time while they awaited the processing of their asylum claims. The lack of external regulation and the fact that no media was allowed access to these facilities has contributed to creating 'a culture of secrecy' in which human rights abuses occurred but were hidden from the public by the Australian government (Rea et. al., 2018, pg. 480). The remote

prison-like centres, which isolated those seeking asylum, created a powerful discourse that constructed asylum seekers as threats to Australia's physical safety, territorial integrity and national identity (McNevin, 2008).

In this political context the theatre play *Manus* was written by playwright Nazanin Sahamizadeh in 2017. The play is a performance of the stories of eight Iranians who fled for Australia and were detained in inhumane conditions on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island (Flitton, 2017). It follows their lives in the detention camp for more than four years, their experiences and the reasons for leaving Iran, the way they struggled to reach Australia, and how they were sent to the offshore detention camps at Manus and Nauru, following Australia's off-shore asylum policy (Thrissur, 2018). The play narrates their lives on the islands and the uncertainty over their future, the indefinite detention time, as well as the theme of violence in the camps and the deteriorating mental and physical health of its inhabitants (Doherty, 2017). In this theatre play interviews with Iranian asylum seekers living in limbo on Manus and Nauru are relayed verbatim by a cast of eight actors. Since no journalists or researchers have access to the island, the stories and interviews were conveyed to the media and social activists via social media and sent out via the asylum seekers' mobile phones. Social media has therefore emerged as an important tool for detained asylum seekers to connect with journalists, advocates, activists, legal representatives, and their families (Rea et. al., 2018). Personal stories and profiles become public and available through individual social media accounts and via collaborations with Australian activist groups. These profiles expose human rights abuses and are part of a process of 'self-represented witnessing' (Rea et. al., 2018, pg. 479). These self-represented witnesses are the subjects of the play *Manus*, which was performed in Tehran (TehranTimes, 2017), Figure 1 below, and at the Adelaide Festival, Australia, in March 2019.

Figure 1. ***Manus***. Theatre play directed by Nazanin Sahamizadeh. Australian Premiere, March 2019



Source: [web.archive.org/web/20190201011734/https://www.adelaidefestival.com.au/events/manus/](https://web.archive.org/web/20190201011734/https://www.adelaidefestival.com.au/events/manus/)

The play was also staged at the International Theatre Festival of Kerala, India, in 2018 (Ramanath, 2018). Sahamizadeh, the playwright, declared in an interview with the Indian media:

Maybe art can bring those shunned from the centre back into focus. We see theatre as a great medium through which people can reach a new understanding of events, not by being fed the verdict but by seeing the reality of the situation. And there is no easy answer for the questions at hand (Thrissur, 2018)

One of the lead characters of the play is the Kurdish-Iranian writer Behrouz Boochani, detained on the Manus Island since 2013. Boochani won Australia's Victoria non-fiction literary prize in January 2019 for his book 'No Friend but the Mountains' (2018), written one text at a time on his mobile phone and sent to a friend and translator in Australia who helped putting it together and publishing it (Wahlquist, 2019). Boochani was in daily contact with the playwright Nazanin via the phone as the play was being written and said in a media article:

We worked together for more than a year, I sent her information about what is happening in Manus, like the court news, the Australian election, the changes inside the detention centre, even when people attempted suicide. I was reporting almost every day. My role in this project was to take Nazanin into this prison by describing life in Manus. It was important that Nazanin understood well how life is in Manus to tell the story in artistic language (Doherty, 2017).

Thus, the theatre play *Manus* can be understood as the production of a story originating in and seen through the eyes of exiled and detained bodies and expressed in their own words (verbatim). What the director did was to give it an artistic shape and to reach out to a multitude of audiences, in several countries, conveying a powerful message about the absurdity of Australia's off-shore asylum policy, as reflected in the life of asylum seekers detained indefinitely. Performing their own stories was not possible for these asylum seekers, as they were detained on the Manus Island and denied freedom and mobility and so their stories were enacted by professional actors.

The lived experience of exile and detention performed on stage in the play *Manus* reached audiences beyond the Manus island and mainland Australia including Iran and India. This illustrates how the experiences of marginalized groups can reach the centre of social and political life through arts, performances, and theatre. And this powerful idea helped me reflect on using theatre and performance in my own PhD research.

## II. Theatre as citizenship practice and identity construction: *Me? I just put British* (2019)

I have followed the development of the two-year research project culminating in the theatre play *Me? I just put British* since November 2017, when I took part in the PASAR Conference in London and met the researchers as well as the participants: migrant women who enacted a short performance about their lived experience. Fast-forward to January 2019, I was a spect-actor (Boal 2008) in the theatre performance *Me? I just put British*, enacted as Forum Theatre on a stage in East London. While watching the theatre play live, I reflected on the academic connections between this performance and my own PhD research about the Tibetan migrant-refugee population in India. I began to consider how my research about their quest for Indian citizenship could be written as a short drama and possibly enacted by the research participants.

Arguing for the transformative potential of participatory theatre, Erel et. al. (2017) emphasize how theatre is part of a broader endeavour to democratize the practices and theories of citizenship and the relationship between the researcher and the participants. Participatory theatre shows how marginalized groups can engage in social transformations (Kaptani and Yuval-Davis, 2008) and how the participants themselves constitute political subjects, articulating and performing their knowledge and experiences. The theatre play *Me? I just put British* (Figure 2, below) is a performance based on a two-year collaborative research with artists, social scientists and human rights organisations working with migrant families on the question of 'Theatre as citizenship practice' (Kaptani, 2019). The play is a story of a citizenship contest, raising the question about what a good citizen is, how can a woman, a black body, a mother, an immigrant ever become a British citizen and focuses on how the political and social system in Britain treat migrant women as undeserving and as a threat to social and cultural cohesion (Erel et. al., 2017). The participants-actors in this play have been living in the UK for 10 or 20 years and have contributed to the society in various ways. However, the recent policy of the UK Government, No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), means that migrants subject to immigration control cannot access social services, tax credits or housing assistance and are subjected to precarious jobs (Erel et. al., 2017). Section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 states that a person will have 'no recourse to public funds' if they are 'subject to immigration control'. The response to this Policy given by the migrant women-actors in the theatre play stated:

I proved all these years, that I get my children to school, I pay taxes, I go to park, I go to church, as you citizens do. Still I have to declare any private intimate parts of my life to any (social) case worker good or bad. If only when you make your decisions you could imagine with how much skill and art I am practicing this citizenship you deny me... (Extract from the theatre play 'Me? I just put British'. 2019)

Figure 2. *Me? I just put British* – theatre play performed in East London on 31 January 2019



Source: <https://richmix.org.uk/events/me-i-just-put-british/>

Overall participatory theatre in sociological research provide new knowledge, in a theoretical framework where knowledge is situated in a deconstructive and reflexive perspective. This new knowledge is ‘embodied, dialogical and illustrative’ (Kaptani and Yuval-Davis, 2008, pg. 9), an imaginative engagement with the social world, using a range of visual, performative, verbal, and non-verbal forms of representation. Writing and performing one’s story of exile, detention, identity and contested citizenship is the enactment of a creative relation between a bodily experience and a physical reality. This illustrates how theoretically, enacting stories of life in detention, in exile and at the margins of citizenship can be a powerful means of re-constructing identity through performativity.

### III. Narratives of displacement in refugee-actors performances: *The Queens of Syria* (2016)

The performance *The Queens of Syria* (2016) was inspiring for my PhD research since the refugees turned actors performed their own narratives of displacement, in their own language. In September 2018 I took part in a Laboratory of the Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) Conference at the University of Oxford, titled ‘Listening and performing together: emotions, experience, and ethnopoetry’. The convenor of this session, Asuf Majid, later introduced me by email to his friend, Reem Alsayyah, a co-Fellow at the program with The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics.<sup>1</sup> This Laboratory is an initiative at Georgetown University that uses the power of performance in order to humanize global politics, by creating and presenting innovative high quality work from around the globe situated at the intersection of politics and performance. Reading about her profile, I learnt that Reem was born in Damascus, Syria and fled for Jordan with her family at the break of the war in Syria,

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<sup>1</sup> The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics: <https://globallab.georgetown.edu/people/reem-alsayyah/>

in 2012. She is studying and living in the UK. Reem participated in the workshop and performance of *Syria: The Trojan Women* (2013), a theatre play about the stories of Syrian women refugees in Jordan. The cast performed the play under its new name, *The Queens of Syria*, on a tour in Switzerland and the UK in 2016 (Figure 3 below).

Figure 3. *The Queens of Syria*, directed by Syrian theatre director Omar Abusaada (2016)



Source: Financial Times, <https://www.ft.com/content/4f6e3a0c-4948-11e6-b387-64ab0a67014c>

The significance of *The Queens of Syria* lies in the enactment of the women-refugees' own narrative using theatre as a powerful means to convey a message, a narrative of exile, a personal story, a tale of loss, displacement, but also hope and resettlement. *The Queens of Syria* tells a modern tragedy and contemporary story of fifty women of all ages from Syria forced into exile in Jordan and hosted at the Zaatari camp in Amman. They came together in 2013 to create and perform their own version of *The Trojan Women*, the Ancient Greek tragedy about the lives of women in war time (Eagar, 2016). First staged in Amman in 2013 with Syrian director Omar Abusaada, the work was then adapted to the visual arts and transformed into a documentary film in 2014 (Rizzo, 2018, pg. 121).

Fusing elements from the documentary with theatrical performance, *The Queens of Syria* is an Arabic version of Euripides' tragedy, adapted in theatre workshops to tell the story of Syria's population dislocation (Remoundou-Howley, 2017). A trailer of the play and brief information about the performance is available online<sup>2</sup>. *The Queens of Syria* was on a tour to Oxford, Brighton, Liverpool, Leeds, Edinburgh, Durham, and London in July 2016 (Clapp, 2016). As I only learnt about it in 2018, I have not seen their performance yet. 'There is a real need to hear from people who are experiencing things first-hand', said Zoe Lafferty, the theatre producer who worked in Syria and the Middle East and conducted the workshops for this performance in Amman, creating the revised version of the play with the women-refugees-actors from their own life stories (Eagar, 2016, no page

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<sup>2</sup> <https://dothouse.org/cinema/screenings/queens-syria-ga>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KOknXeJRpo>



number). In the liminal space between autobiography and theatre, the women refugees were able to mirror their own political status and bring together personal narratives in public performances of a mixed status: witness/artist/refugee (Remoundou-Howley, 2017, pg. 18-22). The significance of performance is that it brings people together in a public space to experience an event collectively and thus, the political meaning of these productions is partially grounded in the collective experience of live performance (Zapkin, 2018, pg. 23). Both the documentary and performance *The Queens of Syria* represented a life-changing opportunity for the refugee women performers and an authentic experience for the audiences, in particularly in Britain, where the play was performed in Arabic with English subtitles (Rizzo, 2018). As one of the refugee-actors said:

Now I understand why this is important (...) If you want people to understand you, you have to speak their language. We are people like you, who had houses, businesses, colleges. We just lost it because of a war. Maybe this play will never save a life, or return people to their homes, but it is better to light a candle than live in darkness. (cited in Eagar, 2016, no page number)

The lives of the refugee-actors women changed since 2013, some cast members claimed asylum in Canada, others fled by boat to Germany (Eagar, 2016). Nonetheless, while the performers of *The Queens of Syria* acquired some degree of freedom and mobility, travelling with the theatre team and performing their story in multiple locations, and/ or moving elsewhere, most other refugees remained in the same circumstances, with their options for movement limited by political situation and bureaucracy (Zapkin, 2018, pg. 20)

The performances *Syria Trojan Women* (2013) and *The Queens of Syria* (2016) were initially launched as a joint therapeutic drama workshop and advocacy community project by Syrian female refugees to deliver a message to the world, 'to Arabs and to westerners alike' (Rizzo, 2018, pg. 20). In a nutshell, these performances enacted by women-refugees mirror the power of theatre to create new spaces for intervention, in which public narrative performances of 'autobiographical displacement and disposability of refugee bodies, belonging, memory, and survival' (Remoundou-Howley, 2017, pg. 17) become central tools of communication and representation.

#### **IV. Visual arts: Dead Reckoning (2016) and Crossing the Mediterranean Sea by Boat (2017)**

In this section I refer to two other research projects where the subjects of the research are migrants and refugees who crossed the Mediterranean Sea by boat in 2015 to flee war, poverty and persecution and reach Europe. These projects have a personal connection with my own journey, while I was living in Budapest, Hungary in 2015 and then moved to the UK at the end of that year to pursue my PhD studies. While living in Budapest I was working with a small NGO assisting migrants

and refugees in 2014-2015. It was in the middle of the 'refugee exodus' (Kingsley, 2016) that I met with some of the Syrian refugees stationed in Budapest shortly, before moving forward on their way to Austria and then Germany. They were young men and women, some of them with children, waiting at the Railway Stations for their trains to Western Europe, on hot summer weeks. We could do very little at the time, helping with water supplies and offering ice cream to the small children who were tired of the long journey. But their stories and their resilience stayed with me after they left the city and I also left the city to do my PhD elsewhere.

'Disposable lives' is a term used by the visual artist O'Donoghue to refer to the collective ambivalence shown towards the deaths of refugees and migrants at the borders of Europe in 2015. In his project *Dead Reckoning 2016*<sup>3</sup>, presented at the Tate Museum in London, each boat represents an individual who was recorded as drowned in 2015 in the Mediterranean Sea on the way to Europe (Figure 4, below). O'Donoghue used data collected by the IOM in their *Missing Migrants Project*, an ongoing project that keeps track of the number of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, who have died or gone missing in the process of migration towards an international destination<sup>4</sup>. In order to create his work of art as a symbolic representation of the people who migrated, O'Donoghue created small and colourful paper boats, each having written on them the relationship status of the person who went missing: "Every one of the 5,083 paper boats symbolises a loss of someone significant: a daughter, son, neighbour or friend" (O'Donoghue, 2018, no page number).

Figure 4. *Dead Reckoning Project 2016*



Source: <http://www.bernodonoghue.com/dead-reckoning/>

O'Donoghue explained the context, reasoning and motivations that led him to the creation of this project, in a time and political context when human lives have become disposable:

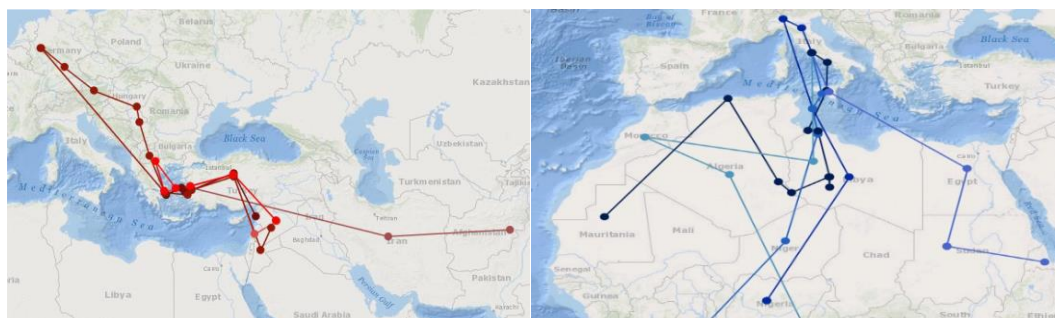
<sup>3</sup> [www.bernodonoghue.com/dead-reckoning/](http://www.bernodonoghue.com/dead-reckoning/)

<sup>4</sup> [missingmigrants.iom.int](http://missingmigrants.iom.int)

I originally began this project mid-April 2015, when two news reports six days apart showed that boats carrying refugees had capsized off the Libyan coast. I was stopped in my tracks by the fact that 1200 people had drowned. It was so shocking and distressing such a huge number of people had died in this way, but equally troubling was the pejorative language used by certain politicians and sections of the media in response to the accidents. I found it disturbing to see numbers used as a means of distancing people living in safety from the human tragedy and felt compelled to make some work to bridge that distance and began researching the refugee crisis. (O'Donoghue, 2018, no page number)

Contemporary migration politics are characterised by increasing numbers of displaced persons but also by practices of detention and dehumanising those on the move (Squire, 2018). These migration politics raise multiple questions of security and economics for the countries affected and this is reflected in the media representations of migration-related issues becoming prominent (Squire, 2018). It has been argued that in this climate, the active subjecthood of people on the move in precarious situations is less explored. Irregular migration struggles in this respect to raise crucial questions about “how to understand the agency of people who are marginalised” (Strange, et al., 2017, pg. 244). In an attempt to document and visually represent the agency of people on the move, crossing land and sea to find safety and a better life, the University of Warwick initiated the research project *Crossing the Mediterranean Sea by Boat* (2017), available online.<sup>5</sup> The project is built on a research work with 250 people who have entered the European Union, or who were contemplating making the journey, by travelling across the Mediterranean Sea since 2015. The interviews were conducted in four cities: Rome, Istanbul, Athens, and Berlin. The project collected these personal stories and presented them visually on an interactive map (Figure 5, below).

Figure 5. **Map: *Crossing the Mediterranean Sea by boat* Project 2017. The University of Warwick**



Source: <https://crossing-the-med-map.warwick.ac.uk/athens>

<sup>5</sup> [crossing-the-med-map.warwick.ac.uk](https://crossing-the-med-map.warwick.ac.uk)

The creative research practices presented in Scene 2 introduced disruptive narratives about theatre as citizenship practice, public performance narratives of refugees' displacement, documentary verbatim theatre and visual arts and maps espoused with social research. I argue that these new forms of narratives constitute disruptive, novel, powerful and politically transformative ways of doing research that brings those situated outside of traditionally centred subjectivities – migrants, women, refugees, exiled – back to the centre in academic research and in artistic performances, challenging hostile migration policies and impacting multiple audiences. And these were inspiring for guiding and shaping my PhD research about Tibetans living in exile in India.

### **Summary of Act 1**

Act 1 introduced the context of this PhD research arguing that this research aims to explore the experiences of Tibetans living in India in a non-Eurocentric framework that shifts and disrupts the narratives of knowledge production. Scene 1 situated the Tibetans living in exile in a geopolitical and historical context and identified key literature and concepts that helped explaining their current political status as guests / migrants / refugees living in India, with quests for Indian citizenship.

Scene 2 introduced the disruption of the narratives discussed in the earlier scene, by presenting embodied knowledges in the form of theatre and performance that argue not for changing the narratives of our history, but transforming the way we live and do research. Selected theatre performances demonstrated how the autobiographical writing form is intertwined with this PhD research and how embodied knowledges through public narrative performances and self-reflexivity disrupt the boundaries between traditionally distinguished structures and categories of literature, methods, data, and theory.

Act 2 will focus on *The Political Question of Indian Citizenship* and will commence after an Interval.

## Interval

This interval signifies a transition from Act 1 to Act 2.

The interval invites the reader to consider and reflect on the previous Act and to prepare for the disruptions that will follow in Act 2.

During this interval, the reader may also take a short break before returning to *Act 2: The Political question of Indian citizenship*.

## Act 2. The political question of Indian citizenship

‘Both people who have documents and those who are without documents survive in our country’- Indian Government official in charge of the Indian census 2001 (Sadiq, 2009)

‘Will they send me to jail? But I have my Aadhaar Card. Am I not Indian?’ (Ellis-Peterson, 2019)

‘How many people in India can produce “legacy documents”? Perhaps not even our PM, whose date of birth, college degree, and marital status are subject of national controversies’ (Roy, 2020).

### About Act 2

Act 2 focuses on the political question of Indian citizenship which constitutes a key component of this PhD Thesis that seeks to answer the research question about how Tibetans living in India relate themselves to the possibilities and meanings of Indian citizenship. Exploring the question of Indian citizenship is essential in the context of this PhD Thesis as it places the research about Tibetans and their experiences of migration and citizenship in India in the context of how India defines and governs its citizens in contemporary times.

Act 2 contains two scenes and an Interval. In *Scene 1. Paper Citizenship and Tibetans in India*, I situate and connect the experiences of Tibetans living in India with other populations, internal and international migrants and refugees and other sections of the society governed by the same migration and citizenship regime. In *Scene 2. Spaces of hope, resistance and theatre in times of crisis*, I place the question of Indian citizenship in the current political scenario and the global shifts in identity politics and then I disrupt these arguments by what I call spaces of hope, resistance, and theatre in times of crisis. I relate my own experiences of living in India at different points in time: 2011, 2016, 2017 and 2019 with the PhD research about Tibetans living in India and with the Indian citizenship question. I write disruptively in Act 2, weaving in theoretical arguments with academic literature, performance, and self-reflexivity. I present in Table 4 below the structure of Act 2.

Table 4. **Structure Act 2. The political question of Indian citizenship**

**Scene 1. Paper citizenship and Tibetans in India**

- I. Situating migration and refugee regimes in India.
- II. Shifting Citizenship regimes in India. Questionable citizenship
- III. Internal migrants, the act of voting and Indian citizenship
- IV. Paper citizenship and the case of Tibetans in India

**Interval****Scene 2. Spaces of hope, resistance, and theatre in times of crisis**

- I. Religious nationalism, Crisis of governance and Crisis of democracy in India
- II. The rise of BJP to power and the divisive figure of Modi
- III. Hopes, resistance, and theatre

Source: author's own

## Scene 1. Paper citizenship and Tibetans in India

In this Scene 1 I explain how I came to understand that Tibetans' experiences in India connect to other groups of people, including internal migrants, people who hold documents and those who do not, and how these experiences can be traced to the concept of 'paper citizenship' (Sadiq, 2009). I explain this argument in detail in this section, after situating the migration and refugee regimes in India and the shifting concept of citizenship.

### I. Situating migration and refugee regimes in India

The World Migration Report (2000) states that more than half of the world's migrants live in and move between developing countries, or South to South migration (Sadiq, 2009) and the largest number of international migrants are in Asia. More than 40 % of the world's international migrants lived in Asia in 2019 (111 million) and more than 50% (66 million) of these migrants were residing in other Asian countries (IOM, 2020). India continues to be the largest country of origin of international migrants (IOM Report, 2020). Based on the latest Census (2011) carried out by the Government of India out of a total population of 1,028,610,328, total migrations count for 307,149,736, which equates to 29.9% of the population and includes internal and external migrants, figure highlighted in red in Table 5 below. There are approximately 100 million circular migrants in India and the overall migrant labour is contributing 10% to the national GDP (Deshingkar and Akter, 2009). The total number of international migrants in India is 6,166,930 or 2% of the total population, highlighted in yellow in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Number of migrants by place of birth – India, 2011

	Category	Migrations by Place of birth	Percentage
A.	Total Population	1,028,610,328	
B.	<b>Total Migrations</b>	<b>307,149,736</b>	<b>29.9</b>
B.1	Migrants within the state of enumeration	258,641,103	84.2
B.11	Migrants from within the districts	181,799,637	70.3
B.12	Migrants from other districts of the state	76,841,466	29.7
B.2	Migrants from other states in India	42,341,703	13.8
B.3	<b>Migrants from other countries</b>	<b>6,166,930</b>	<b>2.0</b>

Source : Table D1 India, Census of India 2001.

Source: MHA, IGov (2011), [https://censusindia.gov.in/Census\\_And\\_You/migrations.aspx](https://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/migrations.aspx)

India hosts a total of 5,119,483 international migrants from the following top five countries of origin: Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar (Table 6 below).

Table 6. International Migrants in India, UNICEF 2013

#### Migrant stock by origin (2013)

Top 5 countries or areas of origin	Total
Bangladesh	3 230 025
Pakistan	1 126 796
Nepal	553 050
Sri Lanka	158 083
Myanmar	51 529
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 119 483</b>

Source: <https://esa.un.org/migmgmprofiles/indicators/files/India.pdf>

There are 244,094 recognized asylum seekers and refugees living in India (UNHCR, 2020), as shown in Table 7 below. Amongst these, Tibetans and Sri Lankans are directly assisted by the IGov, while the other groups including refugees from Myanmar, Afghanistan, and other countries are offered protection by the UNHCR office in India.

Table 7. Refugees in India (UNHCR, 2020)

Table 1. Recognized Asylum Seekers and Refugees in India, 2020

Place of Origin	Number
Tibet	108,005
Sri Lanka	95,230
Myanmar	21,049
Afghanistan	16,333
Other	3,477
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>244,094</b>

Note: Numbers from Tibet and Sri Lanka are for refugees registered and assisted by the government of India; others are for refugee and asylum seekers registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Source: UNHCR, "India: 31-January 2020," fact sheet, UNHCR, Geneva, January 2020, available online.



Source: MPI (2020)

However, the official estimates of migration data in India have several shortcomings: they underestimate short term movements such as seasonal and circular migration from rural to urban areas for work purpose; migration of women is not represented clearly because the surveys ask for only one reason for migration to be stated and for most women this is usually stated as marriage and the secondary reason, such as employment, is not mentioned; illegal migration and trafficking for work and various forms of child labour are not counted in the official statistics (Deshingkar and Akter, 2009). Any official data on international migration in developing countries are erroneous, due to the sensitive nature of the topic, and the invisibility of illegal migrants, amongst other reasons, and so, the real figures might be much higher (Sadiq, 2009). Moreover, it is in the states' interest to keep invisible or to distort statistics in order to project a certain image about the people who entered or resided in the country, which is a matter of political control, safety and security and thus central to the role of the state in protecting its borders (Sadiq, 2009).

UNHCR highlights how India has been historically welcoming towards people fleeing persecution, like the Parsis, in the 17th century, the Tibetan refugees in 1959, the Bangladeshi refugees in 1971, the Chakma people in 1963, the Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka in 1983, 1989 and 1995. Other refugees including Ahmadiyya Muslims from Pakistan and Bangladesh, Hazara refugees from Afghanistan, Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar, Tamil Muslims from Sri Lanka have also been reported to have taken refuge in India (Ahmad, 2017). While the Government of India deals differently with various refugee groups, in general it respects the principle of *non-refoulement* for holders of UNHCR documentation.

However, the Indian state recently shifted its approach towards a security-driven response to asylum protection. Recently India's concerns about security have had a more restrictive impact on asylum space in the country (UNHCR, 2011, 2016). Several other organizations expressed criticism over India's recent policy for refugees (JRS, 2015; Indian Social Institute, 2015). IGov practiced a "selective grant of citizenship" (Xavier and Sharma, 2015, p. v) to asylum seekers of Hindu and Sikh religion from Afghanistan and Bangladesh while little help has been offered to other refugee population like the Muslim Rohingyas from Myanmar.

Other criticism points to the lack of domestic legal framework in India for protecting refugees, this has led to an inconsistent treatment of refugee populations and a fluctuating protection regime "depending on the refugee's country of origin and the political relationship between India and their home country" (Xavier and Sharma, 2015, p. viii). These arguments support the claim that the governance of migrant populations relies on ad-hoc decisions of the IGov, decisions influenced by

questions of security, internal safety and order, which political party holds power at a given time and who the migrants are<sup>6</sup>. India handles its asylum seekers and refugee populations in three different ways, summarised in Table 8 below:

Table 8. **Handling of asylum seekers and refugee populations in India**

Category of asylum populations/refugees	Type of treatment	Examples
<b>Refugees living in camps</b>	Granted protection and assistance by the IGov	Sri Lankans <b>Tibetans</b>
<b>Asylum seekers not recognized by IGov</b>	Granted refugee status by the UNHCR + protected under the principle of non-refoulement	Burmese, Somalis, Afghans and Palestinians
<b>Populations seeking refuge assimilated into the local community in India</b>	Not acknowledged either by the IGov or by UNHCR	Tribal refugees, the Chin in the state of Mizoram

Source: JRS Report (2015, p. 18)

India grants certain rights and privileges to certain selected groups of refugees. The most striking contrast is between the treatment offered to Tibetan refugees as compared to the Sri Lankan refugees. While Tibetans live in settlements across India and enjoy a life of freedom almost like Indians, the Sri Lankan refugees are mostly kept in camps under close watch by the IGov and with restricted access to movement (JRS, 2015, pp. 18 – 22). The underlying reason for such a differential treatment that India continues to operate towards its different refugee populations is arguably India's geopolitical considerations.

## II. **Shifting Citizenship regimes in India. Questionable citizenship. Citizenship Acts 1955-2019**

In this section I discuss several approaches to the question of citizenship in India, I explore the narrative of the Indian state towards citizenship, and the changes to the Citizenship Acts 1955-2019. In table 9 below I highlight in bold the key dates related to changes to the Citizenship Acts and in blue the events related to Tibetans and Indian citizenship.

<sup>6</sup> Informal interview with Professor Amit Prakash, JNU, September 2017

Table 9. Key dates – Citizenship in India, key political events, and citizenship for Tibetans in India

Year	Citizenship in India
1946	Foreigners Act India: to provide for the registration of foreigners entering, being present in, and departing from, British India
1947	Indian Independence from the British colonial empire
1947	Partition of India and the creation of two countries: The Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
1950	Constitution of India
1955	<b>Citizenship Act: anyone born in India is an Indian citizen (no mention of class, caste, gender, religion).</b>
1959	Dalai Lama and 80,000 Tibetans seek refuge in India, they <u>are allowed to stay as 'guests' for indefinite period of time</u>
1971	Independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan – Bangladeshi refugees in India
1986	<b>Amendment to Citizenship Act: additionally, one parent must be Indian citizen.</b>
1991	Liberalisation of the Indian economy
1992	<b>Amendment to Citizenship Act: acquisition of citizenship via the <i>mother</i> (not only via the father) of an individual born outside India by descent, if she was a citizen of India at the time of their birth.</b>
2003	Introduction of the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) and Person of Indian Origin (PIO) for Indians living abroad and their spouse and children
2003	<b>Amendment to Citizenship Act: introducing the concept 'illegal migrant' and stating that a to be citizen of India both parents must be <u>citizens</u> or one is citizen and the other is not an illegal migrant.</b>
2010	<u>First Tibetan fought Indian citizenship case in the High Court, won her right to be an Indian citizen</u>
2014	BJP Government wins the elections in India, Narendra Modi becomes PM
2014	<u>Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy Act: Registration Card (RC) renewable every 5 years, not 1 year.</u>
2016	<b>Proposed Citizenship Amendment Bill: illegal migrants Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, <u>Parsis</u> and Christians, but not Muslims, from Afghanistan, <u>Bangladesh</u> and Pakistan eligible for citizenship.</b>
2016	Proposed Citizenship Amendment Bill OCI: cancellation of OCI registration for violation of any law, including minor offences.
2016	<u>The High Court orders all Tibetans born in India (1950-1987) are entitled to Indian citizenship and passport</u>
2019	Indian national elections – BJP re-elected in power
2019	<b>Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) – fast-tracked application for illegal migrants persecuted for being of Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh, <u>Parsis</u> or Jain religion (not Muslims), from Bangladesh, <u>Afghanistan</u> and Pakistan</b>
2019	National Citizens Register – started in the Assam state, asking every person to prove by documents that they are rightful citizens of India.

Source: author's own, based on selected literature (2020)

India is an interesting and unique case study of citizenship (Mitra, 2008) for several reasons: it is the largest democracy in the world and extremely diverse, with different categories of religious, caste-based and indigenous minorities coexisting in a relationship ridden with conflicts. These conflicts

include, amongst others, the human rights violations in Kashmir, the communal violence against minorities and women, as well as the forest dwellers or tribals and castes. These particularities and the innovation in the citizenship laws, including the OCI in 2003, paved the road for introducing the concept of citizenship in India as 'layered' (Mitra, 2008, pg. 345). This means that different categories of citizens, with various levels or rights coexist in the same territory, with competing claims and their access to entitlements derived from citizenship is contested. The argument about multi-layered citizenship in India is placed in the framework of the post-colonial state, democracy, and the rule of law. Citizenship in India has shifted from a liberal, secular, and inclusive basis to a more exclusive and ethnic-based notion, defined in terms of descent rather than territory (Mitra, 2008). Originally a combination of *jus soli* (the right of citizenship based on being born in a state) and *jus sanguinis* (citizenship inherited from parents), Indian citizenship is currently reorienting towards a descent-based notion (Sadiq, 2009), with changes and amendments to the Citizenship Act (1955).

Post-independence (1947) Indian citizenship began on a civic note, as a regime of *jus soli*, but with time it has evolved into a more exclusionary citizenship regime. Under the Citizenship Act of 1955, any person born in India was a citizen of India, irrespective of the nationality of his/her parents. (Sadiq, 2009, pg. 9). According to the Citizenship Act (1955) a person can be a citizen of India by birth, by descent, by registration or by naturalization (Ministry of Home Affairs India).<sup>7</sup> The citizenship by birth is conferred to every person in India born on or after the 26th day of January, 1950, the day when the Constitution of India came into effect.

From the 1980s onwards the legal and constitution notion of citizenship in India has been transformed through amendments to the Citizenship Act (1955), in response to political events (Jayal, 2019). This is summarized in Table 9 above. Over the years India diluted the effect of *jus soli* as it introduced restrictive legislation and measures based on the principle of descent, in the light of international events that produced high numbers of migrants and refugees who entered Indian territory, particularly following the independence of Bangladesh (1971) and the civil war in Sri Lanka, with the first wave of Tamil refugees arriving in India in 1983 and 100,000 Tamil refugees who arrived from Sri Lanka between 1983 and 1987 and the decade following that (India Today, 2016).

These developments led to the IGov taking steps to prevent the entry of persons illegally or irregularly into India and to make the provisions of the Citizenship Act 1955 relating to the grant of Indian citizenship more exclusionary, thus moving away from the original principle of *jus soli*. This led to the first Amendment (1986) to the Citizenship Act, that stated that any person can be a citizen of

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<sup>7</sup> Foreigners Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, <https://indiancitizenshiponline.nic.in/citizenshipact1.htm>

India if at least one of the parents was an Indian citizen at the time of their birth. Another essential change to the Citizenship Act (1955) came in 2003, under the five-year term of the BJP Government, in the form of the Citizenship Amendment Act 2003. This Act introduced for the first time the term 'illegal migrant'<sup>8</sup>. The Citizenship Amendment Act 2003 redefined citizenship by birth, stating that a person is a citizen of India if born in India between 1950 and 1987 and if both his/her parents are Indian citizens or if one of the parents is an Indian citizen and the other one is not an illegal migrant. Additionally, the next change in the Citizenship Amendment Act (2003) was section 7, which introduced a version of dual/ transnational citizenship for persons of Indian origin, in the form of "Overseas Citizen of India" (OCI) (Sadiq, 2009; Roy, 2010). While this move has been praised as a form of universalized, deterritorialized citizenship, it has been criticized for having at its basis the ethnic, blood and kinship relation (Roy, 2010). The OCI Amendment Act was claimed to be born out of the concern of the then Congress Party in power for the close emotional ties and cultural nostalgia of Indians living abroad as citizens of another country. However, when initially it was limited to the Indian diaspora in North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Thailand, it became obvious that the decision had much to do with material and economic benefits, insofar as the OCI was nicknamed "dollar and pound citizenship" (Roy, 2010, pg. 141). An OCI is, however, not eligible to vote or stand in local or national elections in India or to work in any government post. Dual citizenship is not permitted by the Indian state.

Thus, in the Citizenship Amendment Act 2003, there are two key transformations to the legal definition of citizenship: the new provision for overseas Indian citizens and, the introduction of the 'illegal migrant' figure, which adds to the provision relating to citizenship by birth, making it exclusive and conditional (Roy, 2010, p. 138). All these measures reflect a growing anxiety on the part of the Indian state towards outsiders, which highlight a shift towards security: 'the nation has to be protected from an ever-ready stream of illegal immigrants waiting to contaminate the fabric of Indian citizenship' (Sadiq, 2009, pg. 11). Citizenship is thus redefined in India "in exclusionary terms and emerges as the bastion on which the nation-state asserts its sovereignty" (Roy, 2010, pg. 136).

The 2016 proposed Citizenship Amendment Bill made illegal migrants who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians, but not Muslims, from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan eligible for Indian citizenship by naturalisation reduced from 11 to five years. And in 2019, in their second term in power, the BJP Government passed the 2016 Citizenship Amendment Bill into an Act.

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<sup>8</sup> (b) "illegal migrant" means a foreigner who has entered into India (i) without a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf; or (ii) with a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf but remains therein beyond the permitted period of time (The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003).

Thus, the 2019 Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) makes it easier for the non-Muslim immigrants from India's neighboring countries Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh to become Indian citizens. The Act communicates that people fleeing religious persecution as Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians, in these three countries are eligible for a fast track process of becoming Indian citizens that will take five years, instead of 11 years (Latif, 2019; Times of India, 2019). Critics argue the CAA 2019 undermines India's Constitution and the secular democracy. India's leaders shortly after the independence wanted to ensure that the country would not have an official religion, albeit around 80% of the country is Hindu, but India also has the third largest Muslim population in the world and one of the oldest Christian communities outside the Middle East (Safi, 2019).

Recent reports highlighted the exclusion from Indian citizenship of the second largest group of refugees living in India, about 100,000 Sri Lankan Tamils, amongst whom 60,000 live in refugee camps. The Sri Lankan Tamils are 'missing' from the new Amendment to the Citizenship Law (2019) in India (Chandran, 2019). 60 petitions were filed to the Supreme Court of India challenging the CAA (BBC, 12 Dec. 2019) and more than 700 Indian personalities, including jurists, lawyers, academics and actors, signed a statement condemning the bill, asking whether India needs the NRC to deepen divisions in the country instead of focusing on food security and employment (TheWire, 11 Dec 2019).

The BJP government defended the passing of the CAA by arguing that non-Muslim minorities often face persecution in neighboring countries Bangladesh and Pakistan, and so while persecuted Muslims have many other countries in Asia to request asylum from, such as Malaysia or Indonesia, those who are Hindus have only India, and so they and other minorities should receive priority for citizenship. The critics of the BJP Government, on the other hand, believe that the CAA 2019 is another political tool that adds to the BJP's vision of India as a primarily Hindu nation (Safi, 2019).

In August 2019, the Government of India published the National Register of Citizens (NRC) for the northeastern state of Assam, a document aiming to identify "legal" migrants that entered the state of Assam before March 25, 1971, when Bangladesh became an independent country, and have been living there since. The process monitored by the Supreme Court, which began in 2013, left out 1,906,657 persons from the list, who must prove their citizenship with papers to the Court (Jha, 2019). The demand for an updated NRC in Assam is not new, but more than 40 years old. And people in Assam have been collecting and holding on to their documents for 50 years (Roy, 2020). The NRC is based in a history of local tensions around identity and migration in Assam, however it has national implications, with the ruling BJP demanding an NRC across the country (Jha, 2019).

In the light of the above, and in conjunction with a planned NRC for all citizens of India, there are fears that the CAA (2019) helps protect non-Muslims who are excluded from the NRC and face the threat of deportation or internment. Moreover, the CAA (2019) might make the Muslim community in India insecure of their right to citizenship and would undermine the secular foundations of India by making religion the basis of citizenship (Ellis-Petersen, 2020). This view has been echoed across media articles, analysts, and commentators from India and beyond. “This citizenship legislation is at the core of their (BJPs’) Hindu nationalist project, where the relegation of Muslims to second-class citizens is fundamental,” commented Professor Niraja Gopal Jayal, Professor at CSLG at JNU in an interview (Ellis-Petersen, 2019). Other analysts argue that the BJP party’s strategy is intended to gain more votes in upcoming elections, with the NRC’s polarizing potential, while the CAA 2019 assures non-Muslims that they would not be driven out of the country (Jha, 2019). If the population have to register in each locality, according to NRC, potentially anyone: officials, neighbors, vigilantes can file an objection to the inclusion of a person’s name, in which case that person will be marked as a “doubtful” citizen or a “D-voter”, with the prospect of being sent to a camp or evicted from India, according to Professor Niraja Gopal Jayal (Subramanian, 2020). The aim of such practices is not to remove a population of 180 million Muslims from India which cannot be done for practical reasons, having no other place to go. Even those potentially identified as illegal Bangladeshi immigrants cannot be sent back home unless Bangladesh accepts them. What the BJP aims for is a country that is Hindu before anything else (Subramanian, 2020).

### **Questionable and documentary citizenship**

With the rise of the nationalist BJP to power in India in recent years, citizenship has become one of the central tools for political mobilization and for redefining citizenship. (Jha, 2019). I argue that the CAA and NRC 2019 redefined citizenship and identity in India to the extent that citizenship has become ‘questionable’ for all, those who have the documentary proof and those who do not, those deemed to be migrants or not, everyone is at risk of ‘proving their citizenship’. This is one of the key arguments that connects the discussion about citizenship in India, the new CAA 2019 and the case of Tibetans living in India, that I will return to later in this discussion.

On the practical level, critics argued that carrying out a nation-wide NRC would be impossible given the significant portion of the population that would be unable to provide the documents to prove ancestry (Jha, 2019). The list of documents that would be acceptable as ‘proof of citizenship’ has not been officially announced and is continuously shifting, depending on which BJP leader is speaking that day, and the possibilities include the birth certificate, Aadhaar card, voter ID card, PAN card, passport and so on (Dasgupta et al., 2020), documents which as demonstrated by Sadiq (2009) are

not accessible to all citizens, are not equally distributed by state officials, do not have a standardized design and are easily obtained by non-citizens in need of proving their 'legality' with the help of local networks, police officers and corrupt officials. The blurring of lines between who is a citizen and who is not may best be revealed in such an exercise as the NRC, if implemented widely.

There are also fears that the new Citizenship legislation: the CAA and NRC, and its implementation could intensify inequalities in the country, particularly patriarchy, where the identity of the father or the husband will be the sole burden of proof to claims made by women to belonging to the nation-state (Dasgupta et al., 2020). A high number of those who found their names missing from the list of the NRC in Assam are women and children, they belong to communities where women are married in their teenage years, and by custom have their names changed and they have no documents to prove their legacy because in practice, mothers' legacies do not count' (Roy, 2020, no page number). The other category is made of illiterate people whose names or parents' names have been wrongly transcribed in different documents over the years: a H-a-s-a-n became a H-a-s-s-a-n, a Joynul who became Zainul (Roy, 2020), all showing the technical complexities about being able to 'prove' citizenship, but also signaling a deeper erosion in how the question of belonging and citizenship as a nation has been addressed until now, when documents were not the key to life and living in India (Dasgupta et al., 2020). Registration of births and acquisition of birth certificates are rare practices in India (Dasgupta et al. (2019). How many people in India can produce "legacy documents"? asks Roy (2020). 'Perhaps not even our PM, whose date of birth, college degree, and marital status have all been the subject of national controversies' (Roy, 2020, no page number). 'Both people who have documents and those who are without documents survive in our country' declared an IGov official in charge of the Indian census in 2001, suggesting that 'India has to be flexible enough to accommodate the variety of conditions under which its citizens live' (Sadiq, 2009, pg. 71). The question is whether people with and without documents can still survive in India after 2019.

Since I was not in India at the time of the CAA and NRC in December 2019, I had many informal talks with my extended family members from India and with friends from India. They reiterated the opinion that no government in power in India can implement a political strategy of such grandeur, such as the NRC, given that 1.2 billion people live in the country. Producing documents proving their citizenship would not be realistic for such a giant population, where very few people even have a birth certificate. Illegal immigrants usually move freely from state to state and are absorbed into the native population, quickly getting access to some form of identity document, such as ration cards, that allows them access to food, and soon they send their children to school, thus are able to produce a school certificate. And even if some illegal immigrants are identified with the aim of



eviction, deportation or return to their country of origin, the manpower needed to enforce such acts is not enough to do such work. Furthermore, building detention centers requires resources, budget, and time and even if these are completed, there seems to be no gain in keeping people in detention and paying for their subsistence from government sources. Finally, returning illegal immigrants to their country of origin seems to be an impossible task, given the fact that a country like Bangladesh does not admit that there are any Bangladeshi immigrants living in India. These arguments are based on local knowledge of local affairs in India, political maneuvers, and the history of the country, by my immediate and extended family who have lived there and worked in the institutions of the IGov throughout their lives. Their opinion is not based on extended research; however, it resonates with some of the academic arguments that have been presented in this section. Sadiq (2009), Subramanian (2020), Jha (2019), Jayal (2019) and Dasgupta et al. (2019) argued about the fluidity of the documentary proof in India, the inconsistency of these documents across states and rural and urban areas, and about the practical impossibility to prove every citizen's ancestry, and also about Bangladesh's refusal to accept its citizens living in India.

Whilst I was not in India to conduct PhD fieldwork or have direct access to information other than themesmedia outlets at the time of the CAA legislation, I argue that the current strategy of the IGov, as shown in the passing of the CAA Bill (2019) and the NRC (2019) could be understood as an inflammatory tool in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious country like India and a time when unemployment rate is increasing (Kumar, 2020). Six out of India's ten states with the highest unemployment rate are either ruled by the BJP or it is an alliance partner with regional parties (Business Today, 2020). Moreover, half of the total population in India is under the age of 25 and two thirds are less than 35 years old (Sharma, 2017). Youth in India are concerned about issues related to lack of jobs, gender inequality and education (Tandon, 2018). In an IPSOS study (2018) the youth of India feel optimistic about their future, but they are equally aware of inequalities and are concerned with three main issues, as shown in Table 10 below:

**Table 10. Issues that bother Indians (2018)**

Issues that bother Indians	Youth (%)	Adult (%)
Ending poverty	39	42
Access to jobs	33	41
Improving education	54	39

Source: IPSOS study, Quartz India (2018)

And so, while employment, infrastructure, education, and eradication of poverty seem to be a priority for youth in contemporary India, the Government focuses on checking the right to citizenship of its citizens and directly or indirectly instigating to divisions and conflicts.

### **III. Internal migrants, the act of voting and Indian citizenship**

The question of Indian citizenship can be critically analysed from another angle, looking at the experiences and rights of the internal migrants (Abbas, 2016), within different citizenship regimes inclusive of legal status, rights, identity and participation. The central point here is that often Indian citizens, particularly those impoverished, cannot prove their citizenship status, or claim social rights, like food, housing, and voting, that are lawfully guaranteed to them by the Constitution.

In the context of developing states like India, having less capacity to grant citizenship rights on equal basis because of factors that include corruption, administrative incompetence and issues with implementation and reaching out to rural areas, it is argued that the level of economic development impacts on the provision of citizenship rights in such a state (Sadiq, 2009). The increasing rural-urban migration in India, where 70% of the population currently lives in villages, has led to clashes between urban dwellers and rural migrants. Analysing the case of migrant workers from Northern Indian states (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand) to urban centers such as Kolkata and Mumbai, Abbas (2016) shows how the denial of citizenship rights is a widespread unofficial policy. The West Bengal government burns on a regular basis the identity documents of slum dwellers when they evict them, the vast majority being internal migrants from Bihar and immigrants from Bangladesh, explaining that non-citizens have no rights and thus claiming that all evicted people are non-citizens.

Another interesting aspect of this discussion is the question of political rights as a dimension of citizenship, which includes the act of voting. However, for poor internal migrants in Mumbai and Kolkata and for non-citizens alike, the primary goal of voting in India is to enable them to verify their identity, to join electoral rolls, and thus establish residency and eligibility for other basic rights associated with citizenship: food rations, housing and education (Abbas, 2016). Thus, the voting act is not primarily aimed at political participation, but at accessing citizenship and its basic rights. 'We vote not to elect our representative but to ensure our citizenship of India' said Afzalur Ali, a rickshaw puller of Bangladeshi immigrant background in India (Sadiq, 2009, pg. 139).

The literature on migration and citizenship, developed in Western Europe and the USA, states that there is a crucial difference between citizens and non-citizens and only the former are entitled to participate in the political life of the state, for instance by casting their voting in national elections. Thus, citizenship is about exclusion: 'closure of territorial boundaries and political exclusion of non-citizens' (Sadiq, 2005, pg. 104). However, the process of documentary citizenship, as exemplified by

developing states such as Malaysia, India and Pakistan proves the opposite: illegal immigrants were taking part in elections while native populations, those deemed to be citizens by birth, have no documents to prove their citizenship (Sadiq, 2005).

In countries where citizenship is weakly institutionalized, citizenship is not defined by the exercise of social, political, and civil rights; instead it is defined by the acquisition of documents and papers to prove one's membership. (Sadiq, 2005, pg. 116). In India, illegal immigrants have been a useful voting bloc for political parties interested in gaining and maintaining political power, like the pro-immigration Congress party in the North-Eastern state of Assam, that relied on the votes of the Bangladeshi Muslim immigrants and local ethnic minorities. This means that from below, illegal immigrants find voting useful for strengthening their citizenship claims and to acquire a voice in the political process (Sadiq, 2009, pg. 155). Overall, it can be argued that the process of both internal and international migration in India is important to look at in order to understand the restrictive aspects of the citizenship regime and the acquisition of papers to prove one's citizenship. And this connects the discussion with the case of Tibetans living in India, presented below.

#### **IV. Paper citizenship and the case of Tibetans in India**

In this section I bring together the argument presented earlier, and I show how the experiences of Tibetans living in India connect with the other populations, migrants, and citizens alike, using the concept of paperwork and 'paper / documentary' citizenship.

Historically the Indian subcontinent defined an alien/foreigner much earlier than the citizen via the Foreigners Act of 1946 that preceded the various Citizenship acts. In this complex process of defining who a citizen is, India established several markers of identity and of citizenship: passport, Electoral Photo Identity Card or Voter's ID, Permanent Account Number or PAN Card and the Below Poverty Line Card (Banerjee et. al., 2016). The recently introduced Unique Identification Number or the Aadhaar Card is not considered as a marker of citizenship but of residence in India and critically understood as "an instrument to control undocumented migrants, refugees, stateless and the other unwanted mobile population" (Banerjee et. al. 2016, p. 9).

Citizenship is not always simple to prove in India, a country of 1.2 billion people, where less than 100 million people hold a passport, while other identity documents, issued at local levels can be unreliable (Subramanian, 2020). According to a Government Report in India, 2003, there is a wide variation in the format and design of birth certificates across and within states, to the extent that many times it is not clear whether any given birth certificate has been issued by the Government or

not (Sadiq, 2009, pg. 82). For instance, a list of accepted identity documents in India can be lengthy, as shown in Table 11 below.

**Table 11. Accepted form of identification for Indian citizens in Assam, India (2006)**

No.	Accepted form of identification for Indian citizens in Assam, India (2006)
1	Passport
2	Driving license
3	Income tax identity card
4	Identity card for employees of State / Central Government, Public Sector or Public Companies
5	Passbook issued by banks/post offices/ farmer passbook
6	Ration Card
7	Caste Certificate
8	Student Identity card
9	Land document
10	Arms License
11	Transport Conductor's License
12	Pension document (for dependent of ex-service men)
13	Railway Identity card
14	Freedom Fighters' Identity card
15	Physically handicapped certificate
16	Permanent resident certificate
17	Tea Gardens Association certificate
18	Panchayati Raj (Local Council) certificate
19	School certificate
20	Revenue certificate
21	Domicile certificate

Source: Sadiq (2009, pg. 144) simplified version

The list above highlights two key ideas: one, the apparent inclusive nature of identity and citizenship markers in India, by allowing any of the 21 documents to be used for voting purpose, and two, this lengthy list makes the line between illegal migrants and citizens more blurred, given the lack of standardization and the ease of obtaining such identity documents in a country like India.

Returning to Sadiq's (2009) argument about 'documentary citizenship' and 'paper citizens' that erase the Western-based distinction between illegality and legality on the path to citizenship, I argue that this approach is crucial for our understanding of non-Western migration regimes, such as the case of India, which has no clear migration policy and the only legal instrument that governs the treatment of foreigners is the Citizenship Law (1955) and its subsequent amendments (1987, 1992, 2003, 2005, 2014 and 2019). Overall, the question of Indian citizenship for migrants living in the country and for Tibetans in particular is an interesting case to examine as it shows the complex political, historical, social, legal and geographical context that creates a peculiar path towards citizenship. This path is

very different for different groups of migrants, based on geopolitical considerations, the political party in power and the migration regime at a particular time.

Tibetans as such are not legally recognized as refugees, albeit they have been allowed to seek protection in India since 1959. They have been registered with documents by the IGov to show their status in India, such as the RC that is renewable every five years. Since recently, however, they can apply for other identification papers, such as the Aadhaar card, which is an identity document that any resident in India can be issued with. And based on the Aadhaar card, they can also vote in Indian elections, which they started doing since 2014. This means they perform the duty of a citizen, a member of the political community. Therefore, they constitute a different form of 'paper citizens' in contemporary India (Sadiq, 2009): they 'act' like citizens without having the legal status of a citizen. And since the CAA and NRC 2019 the citizenship and legacy of all residents in India have been questioned but the list of documents that would be acceptable as 'proof of citizenship' is continuously shifting and the possibilities include a plethora of identity documents, the birth certificate, Aadhaar card, voter ID card, PAN card, passport and others.

Moreover, for Tibetans the path towards Indian citizenship was filled with hurdles and legal and bureaucratic challenges. In 2017 the High Court issued an order that all Tibetans in India born between 1950 and 1987 should be issued an Indian passport. These dates signify the time between India's Constitution (1950) and the first amendment to the Citizenship Act that stated that one of the parents should be an Indian citizen (1987). Nonetheless, the bureaucratic process for obtaining the Indian passport is long and burden-some. Each case is checked individually by the Police who needs to establish a no-criminal record evidence and permanent address proof. The proof of address is another type of paperwork and an issue for Tibetans and for many other groups of people in India who have no clear permanent address, such as internal migrants, labour migrants, women who changed places, names and identity documents. Given the scale of migration in India – with 29.9% of citizens being on the move at the latest 2011 Census and the problematic nature of government-based statistics on a sensitive topic such as migration (Sadiq, 20019) - the issue of proof of permanent residency and of documentary citizenship more broadly is shared by many other Indian citizens alike, those who migrate to other states for labour or family relations or other reasons, as discussed in the earlier section on internal migrants and citizenship.

I situate the case of Tibetans living in India and the concept of Indian citizenship in the current discussions on citizenship in the academic literature. In Table 12 (below) I produce a summary of different conceptualizations of citizenship in the academic literature that supported my current understanding of this topic in the PhD research. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all the

existing discussions and debates, but a starting point for framing the question of citizenship for the purpose of this PhD research. In this table the examples of citizenship in India include multi-layered, instrumental, and paper citizenship (Mitra, 2016; Jayal, 2013; Sadiq, 2009) and are marked in purple colour. The case of Tibetans is exemplified with symbolic and precarious citizenship (Shachar et al, 2017; Lori, 2017) and I marked it in blue colour.

**Table 12. Key concepts on Citizenship from selected academic literature, relevant to this section**

Type of Citizenship (C.)	Author(s)	Explanations/examples
<b>The right to have rights</b>	H. Arendt (1951)	Basic and political dimension, exclusion of stateless people, post WW2
<b>Legal, social, political rights – national C.</b>	T. Marshall (1947)	Early definition, grounded in political sciences, directly linked to nation-state.
<b>Identity, belonging, multilayered</b>	N. Yuval-Davis (2011, 1999)	Participatory dimension of belonging to a political community + alternative forms, e.g. cosmopolitan, feminist
<b>Market C.</b>	D. Deckard (2016)	Inclusion based on economic success – e.g. Australia, US, UK
<b>Multicultural C.</b>	Kymlicka (1995), Young (1989)	Culturally differentiated access to rights in a nation-state
<b>Dual C./ EU C.</b>	Baubock (1994), Seijersen (2008)	Multiple belongings, Supra-national institutions
<b>C. by investment</b>	Aneesh (2017)	Gov. selling bonds to rich non-nationals, e.g. in Malta, Portugal, Hungary
<b>C. as ‘birth right lottery’</b>	Shachar (2009)	The place of birth pre-determines one’s life chances
<b>Post-national C.</b>	Soysal, Sassen (2002)	Not linked to nation-state, but based on Human Rights regime
<b>Multi-layered C.</b>	Mitra (2016)	Within the same territory different categories of C., with different levels of rights and entitlements, co-exist. E.g. India
<b>Cosmopolitan C.</b>	Turner (2000), Smith (2007)	Membership in a cosmopolitan political community, based on belonging to humanity and sharing same virtues.
<b>Instrumental C.</b>	N. Gopal Jayal (2013)	Access to basic rights to food, land, education. E.g. Rajasthani migrants from Pakistan to India after Partition
<b>Flexible C.</b>	A. Ong (1999)	Cultural and economic strategy of accumulating foreign passports, social capital abroad, e.g. Hong Kong business class
<b>C. as performative act and in flux</b>	E. Isin (2009, 2015)	Acts of C. as lived experiences, used to reclaim rights and for political resistance, e.g. voting, volunteering, blogging, protesting, organizing.
<b>C. as exclusion and inequality</b>	Bhambra (2015), Boatca	Exclusion of women, racialized groups, indigenous and ethnic minorities
<b>Symbolic C.</b>	Shachar et al. (2017)	Tibetans living in exile and holding the Green Book issued by the CTA – not granted by a recognized state.
<b>Precarious C.</b>	Lori (2017)	Protracted, ambiguous and temporary legal status of migrants. E.g. RC for Tibetans in India
<b>Doubtful citizens / Paper citizens / Racialized C.</b>	Abbas (2016), Sadiq (2009), Bhambra (2018)	Long-term resident members, citizens by birth, unrecognized by the state due to lack of official doc. E.g. Windrush generation in UK, Assamese residents in India.
<b>Intersectional multi-layered C.</b>	Erel and Acik (2019)	Social and political actors challenge injustices + are central to transforming exclusionary practices, e.g. Kurdish women
<b>C. revoked</b>	Home Office UK (2019)	Stripping off the citizenship of Shamima Begum, British citizen of Bangladeshi heritage, left for ISIS Syria in 2015.

Source: author’s own, based on selected literature (2019)

However, I argue that in the light of recent shifts in the concept and practice of citizenship in India (2019), both cases of Tibetans and Indians can be understood as 'doubtful citizens' (Joyal, 2020), 'paper citizens' (Sadiq, 2019) and 'citizens excluded' especially since the inflammatory potential of the CAA 2019 to 'turn citizens into migrants' (Bhambra, 2018) for those people who live in India and who have to 'prove their citizenship' to the state with a plethora of documents and paperwork. This bears similarities to the case of the Windrush generation in the UK who was invited to the UK post-WW2 and who was requested by the UK Home Office to provide the paperwork to identify their legitimacy as citizens (Bhambra, 2018). Many of them faced homelessness and unemployment, were denied healthcare and were illegally deported, as part of a racialized redefinition of citizenship (Bhambra, 2018).

As Table 12 shows, the understanding of citizenship post WW2 and until 2019, linked to the nation-state and its sovereignty, has been transformed in multiple ways, with new research challenging existing frameworks and adding new knowledges about new forms of citizenship. This trajectory highlights tensions about the value and meaning of citizenship in current times, its transformations, and limitations.

In the following section, Scene 2, I discuss disruptions to these conceptualisations of citizenship. But before the commencement of Scene 2 I introduce an Interval.

## Interval

In this Act 2 the interval signifies a transition from Scene 1 to Scene 2.

The interval invites the reader to consider and reflect on the previous Scene and to prepare for the disruptions that will follow in Scene 2.

During this interval, the reader may also take a short break before returning to *Scene 2: Spaces of hope, resistance, and theatre in times of crisis*.



## Scene 2. Spaces of hope, resistance, and theatre in times of crisis

In Scene 2 I introduce disruptions to the arguments discussed in Scene 1 and I argue for new understandings of citizenship and identity in terms of hope, resistance, and theatre, in times of crisis. This means that there is a crisis, and so before identifying the hopes, I explain and situate the crisis in the current political scenario in India and globally.

### I. Religious nationalism, Crisis of governance and Crisis of democracy in India

The transformations in world politics and a shift towards the right, towards nationalism and religious nationalism, are important for our understanding of how the case of India and the question of Indian citizenship sits in the contemporary structure of global nationalist, identity movements.

Arguments about a return of religion in the public life in developing and developed countries have been put forth to explain the transformations in the nature of the state and governance (Singh, 2013). This movement has gained strength and power over the past 40 years, across the world, in countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, the USA (Singh, 2013). This revival of religion in state governance was termed ‘a crisis of legitimacy’ (pg. 136), mostly present in developing countries in the South, especially in times of disenchantment with modernity and the collapse of governance. However, I argue that these developments are not limited to countries in the South and I add examples of right-wing, nationalist leaders since 2000s in Hungary (Viktor Urban), Italy (Matteo Salvini), UK (Boris Johnson) and Brazil (Jair Bolsonaro). I summarized these examples in Table 13.

Table 13. Crisis of governance, legitimacy and rise of religious nationalism: examples globally

Time period	Countries affected/ leaders	Internal / political factors / outcome
Post 1980	Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan	Militant Islam
Post 1980	USA (G. W. Bush)	Militant Christianity
Post 1970	India, Nigeria, Tanzania	Erosion of secular foundations of nationalist movements that secured independence
Post 1990 and post 2000	India (Modi)	Political Hinduism, Hindutva ideology - BJP
Post 2000	Turkey (Erdogan), Bangladesh, Sri Lanka	Religious nationalism (Islam, Buddhism)
Post 2013	Myanmar	Buddhist religious violence against minority Muslim Rohingya
Post 2016	USA (Trump)	Identity politics, anti-immigration
Post 2012	China (Xi Jinping)	Imposed regimes on ethnic minorities in Xinjiang and Tibet and potentially Hong Kong
Post 2000	Hungary (Orban), Italy (Salvini), UK (Johnson), Brazil (Bolsonaro)	Ascent to and consolidation of power of right-wing, nationalist leaders, religious nationalism.

Source: adapted and summarised from Singh (2013), Siddiqui (2017), Safi (2017), Tisdall (2019)

The ‘crisis of legitimacy’ corresponds to the demise of the secular state and a ‘crisis of governance’ (Singh, 2013, pg. 140). The ascent to power of BJP in India is part of a regional and global phenomenon of religious nationalism that can be witnessed now in Turkey, in Pakistan and Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (Safi, 2017), as well as in India, in the USA and in China (Tisdall, 2019).

In Table 14 below I present a visual summary of key ideas about the crisis of governance, rise of religious nationalism and demise of secular Indian state.

**Table 14. Crisis of governance and rise of religious nationalism, demise of secular state: India**

Time period	Key events	Internal factors /outcome	External factors / context
<b>1977</b>	Congress Party lost its hegemonic power	Congress lost elections after 1975 Emergency Rule by PM Indira Gandhi	Decline in the coalition of political forces that established the postcolonial states (1970-1980)
<b>1980-1990</b>	BJP rose to power	Rising Hindu-Muslim communal tensions, rise of Hindutva forces	Externally imposed structural adjustment policies (SAP) + early economic liberalization
<b>1991</b>	India liberalised its economy	Consumerist, expanding middle-class, at the expense of the rural populations and urban poor.	These SAP highlighted markets, deregulation, and downsizing of the state.
<b>Post 1991</b>	Economic transformation	BJP unleashed their project of ‘reinventing India’ and redefining the Indian society	Uneven development - feature of capitalist society
<b>Post 1991</b>	Growing socio-economic crisis	Conditions of backwardness and poverty - right-wing Hindu organisations divide people based on religious identity	Uneven development - feature of capitalist society
<b>1999</b>	National Elections	BJP-led NDA won 270 seats (out of 545) and formed a Gov.	
<b>2004</b>	National Elections	Congress Party returned to power	Rise of religious nationalism, right-wing leaders, anti-migration policies, identity politics
<b>2014, 2019</b>	National Elections	BJP won both elections	Regional and global phenomena of religious nationalism
<b>Post 2014</b>	BJP-led NDA policies + BJP associated organizations: RSS and VHP	Editing school textbooks to embed the values of Hinduism + demanding an end to Indian secularism, calling for the recognition of a Hindu state+ political promise to build a Hindu temple on the site of the disputed Ayodhya mosque	Regional and global phenomena of religious nationalism

Source: Singh (2013), Siddiqui (2017), Safi (2017), Tisdall (2019), Corbridge and Harris (2000)

In India, the mobilization of BJP and its ideological base of political Hinduism posed a significant challenge to the principle of secular democracy. The growth of authoritarian forms of politics in India should be seen in the context of a long-term crisis of the state (Chacko, 2018).

Together with a crisis of legitimacy and governance in India (Singh, 2013), a crisis of democracy emerged, caused by several key factors that converged since 1980s (Banerjee, 2013). I summarise in table 15 below some of the key features of this crisis of democracy in India. And I argue that these contributed to paving the rise to power of the BJP party.

Table 15. **Crisis of democracy in India, prior to the BJP Governments in power: 2014, 2019**

Time period	Key Factors	Implications
<b>1980-1990</b>	Emergence of a new generation of careerist politicians – no ideology.	Distortion of the democratic process in India:
<b>1980-1990</b>	Rise of identity-based ethnic, caste-based, and religious politics that disregards the pluralism of a democratic society.	bribes + intimidation during elections
<b>1980-1990</b>	Reinforcement of the conservative values of a feudal hierarchical society.	
<b>1980-1990</b>	Emergence of a 'corporatocracy': members of political parties, bureaucracy, financial institutions, judiciary + industrialists - overtook the institutional structures of Indian democracy + started shaping public policies to meet their interests.	+ formation of Gov - corporate sector supports its candidates for major ministerial posts, who in turn adopt policies to suit their business.
<b>1991</b>	Economic reforms of neoliberalism - Congress PM P.V. Narasimha Rao	opened the market for exploitation by investors uncontrolled by state intervention + entry of corrupt business interests in the parliament
<b>1991 - 2004</b>	Scandals of corruption in Congress Party + NDA-BJP Alliance: e.g. 2010 CWG in ND - weak infrastructure, collapsing bridges built overnight by contractors favoured by the Gov.+ 2G Telecom affair+ illegal loans	Scandals = accessories to the neoliberal model of economic growth that Indian state has adopted
<b>2009 elections</b>	+ ½ elected MPs self-described millionaires,  ¼ elected MPs were traders, industrialists, businessmen and builders.	Corporate interests aligned with those of political leaders who acquired more wealth + were more removed from the basic economic needs of the people they represented.
<b>2012</b>	¼ of MPs faced criminal charges	

Source: Banerjee (2013), Singh (2013), Siddiqui (2017), Sardesai (2018), Siddiqui (2017)

The previous Congress Party failed to create new forms of political incorporation by addressing long-term structural problems in India's political economy, such as jobless growth, and gave rise to large-scale corruption scandals (Chacko, 2018). The adoption of neoliberal economic policy by the IGov in 1991 has increased the GDP, but it did not produce an expansion in employment, which is known as 'jobless growth' (Siddiqui, 2017). The BJP made three key election promises in 2014: to build a Hindu temple in the place of Ayodhya mosque, to enact a uniform civil code that would put an end to the Muslim Personal Law, and to abolish Article 370 of the Constitution that grants special status to the formerly princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (Singh, 2013). Once re-elected in April 2019, the Prime Minister Modi and his BJP party implemented all the three promises in the following months of the year 2019. The rise to power of BJP will be shortly presented in the following section.

## **II. The rise of BJP to power and the divisive figure of Modi**

The ascent to power of the BJP in India in 2014 meant, in many ways, a continuation of the neoliberal policies initiated by the previous Congress governments, that BJP sought to consolidate (Nilsen et al., 2019). But what is different in the BJP-led political regime is 'its pursuit of a majoritarian agenda of authoritarian populism' (Nilsen et al., 2019, pg. 9). The term 'neo-liberalism' is often used to characterise the contemporary form of capitalism in a globalized world, defined by an excessive focus on growth and a failure to prioritize crucial elements like inequality, unemployment and poverty (Siddiqui, 2017). In India these have taken the form of starvation and malnutrition of the rural poor, oppression of Dalits and exploitation of tribal people, which coexist with new forms of deprivation introduced by the neoliberal reforms (Banerjee, 2013, pg. 290).

The question of how BJP ascended to power twice in the national elections in India has been posed many times. One answer to the question argues that the BJP benefitted from a political and ideological vacuum, situating itself as an alternative to the Congress Party, at a time when people were disillusioned with the Congress party as the government was consistently facing accusations of corruption (Siddiqui, 2017). At a time of economic crisis and uncertainty, the concept of Hindu unity functioned as a means of social stabilisation: 'the BJP put itself forward as the defender of Hindu society' (Siddiqui, 2017, pg. 171). Moreover, the BJP party caught the attention of the youth and captured their votes, based on its promises of good governance or 'ache din' (Hindi word meaning 'good/prosperous days'), focus on growth, wealth creation and social and material advancement, while 'embellishing its Hindu roots and aggressive nationalism' (Sardesai, 2018, pg. 8). Crucially, the PM himself appeared to connect directly with the young by using social media and especially Twitter on a regular basis. The so-called 'Modi wave' was created by a political environment characterized by low growth, rising inflation and large corruption scandals which all produced a sense of negativism for voters, and so they were looking for a populist nationalist to offer instant solutions:

Modi proved to be the right man at the right place, offering the promise of good leadership (Sardesai, 2018).

In my PhD fieldwork in India in 2016 and in 2017 some of the participants in the Tibetan settlement in Shimla spoke about the 'Modi wave' in local politics and how Shimla, which was historically a stronghold of the Congress Party might shift towards BJP. When I asked the participant how Tibetans position themselves vis-à-vis this new political development, the response suggested that the 'Modi wave' has caught the Tibetans as well, since Himachal Pradesh is an important location for the CTA, it seemed to be important to align with current political movements nationally.

The PM Modi was perceived as both a charismatic and a controversial figure, arguably the most powerful politician and the most dominant in post-independence India, likened only to Indira Gandhi (Sardesai, 2018). Although an international pariah figure over his Gujarat state government's suspected role in ignoring, and possibly condoning, deadly Hindu-Muslim riots in the state in 2002, Modi recreated his image in the decade before winning power in 2014, projecting himself as a pro-business statesman obsessed with economic development (Safi, 2017). Some of his policies were disruptive, such as the 2016 demonetization which saw all the rupees 500 and 100 banknotes replaced with new rupees 500 and 2000 overnight and affected negatively the informal sector, job creation and businesses, with speculated losses of 1.5 million jobs in a country with 70% informal economy (Safi, 2018). When he announced demonetization, Modi put forward three key objectives: to fight black money, corruption and terror funding in the country, but these objectives have been debatable due to the lack of accurate and testable data (Dutta, 2018). Others argued that this policy helped India move faster towards a digital economy, however the cost to people's lives and livelihoods was too high (Safi, 2018).

Other policies initiated by Modi were welcome for helping the poor, such as the four million gas cylinders given to families living below the poverty line (Sardesai, 2018). Unsolved issues, such as those in the field of agriculture however, continue with farmers marching from far away states like Maharashtra to New Delhi in 2018, in the agrarian crisis in India; when asked by journalists which party they vote for, the farmers responded: 'no one, we want to change the system' (Sardesai, 2018, pg. xvi). While in power, Modi advanced his Hindu nationalist agenda but also lined up issues such as tax reform, a campaign focused on 'clean India' (*Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* means 'Clean India Movement'), aiming to build toilets in all rural households (Finnigan, 2019). He also repeatedly emphasized a repression of corruption, which led to many asking whether his project was about development or Hindu nationalism (Safi, 2017). The answer seems to have two sides: 'one is Modi the great economic modernizer, and other is one of muscular nationalism' (Safi, 2017). To his critics,

the leadership of Modi and BJP since 2014 was widely condemned for doing too little to reduce inequalities in India, for promoting upper-caste Hindu values, and endangering the rights on non-Hindus and Dalits, for an 'unholy alliance with the media' and the establishment of a new authoritarian rule in India (Froystad, 2019).

In the context of the current political scenario in India, and the crisis of governance and democracy, and rise of religious nationalism, there is arguably space for hope, for social change and for resistance. In the following section I will expand this argument.

### **III. Hopes, resistance, and theatre**

The hope for change in India started with several policy initiatives and social movements in early 2000s. One of them was the 2005 Right to Information Act (RTI), which can be accessed online on the IGov website (Banerjee, 2013). The RTI establishes timely response to citizen requests for government information, promoting transparency and accountability in the work of the Government, contain corruption, and make democracy work for the people. (Rti.Gov.in)

Another form of change in India emerged in 2011 when the social activist Anna Hazare requested the IGov to introduce a Lokpal Bill ('Citizen's Ombudsman Bill'), that appoints an ombudsman to receive and solve complaints of common people against government institutions. Anna Hazare's movement, supported by thousands of people who protested in New Delhi in August 2010, aimed at increasing government transparency, investigating, and punishing corruption in public life in India. It became a national campaign and put pressure on the IGov to act. The Lokpal Bill was proposed eight times between 1968 and 2011 and was passed in the Parliament in 2013 (Deepalakshmi, 2017).

In August 2011 I was living in New Delhi, India, for the first time and I witnessed the protests on the streets of the city. Albeit I have not yet started my PhD at that time, I stored the memories of this civil movement and returned to them years later, while writing this PhD Thesis. When living in India in 2011 I kept a personal diary and I noted the day in late August when I was out in the city, wanting to return home by metro (tube) from the centre of ND, but the entrance to the metro was blocked by the protesters and a young man advised me to walk to the next metro stop where there were less people. I remember reading in the local news about the hunger strike of Anna Hazare and from the terrace of the house where I was living, I could see the main streets blocked by the tens of thousands of people protesting. Although I did not take part in these protests in 2011, by writing

about them in this PhD Thesis I strongly connect these memories with the powerful impact of this civil moment as a form of self-reflexivity, hope, resistance and change.

The anti-corruption movement started in 2011 was later converted into a Political Party: Aam Admi Party (AAP) or 'The Common Man's Party', led by the co-leader of the Anna Hazare movement (2010), Arvind Kejriwal. Kejriwal and his AAP party won the elections in New Delhi in 2016. In April 2016, at the time of local elections I was in ND, India, on a short visit pre-PhD fieldwork and I took an active part in the discussions about the elections won by AAP and I felt the excitement and enthusiasm of people around me, the Indian family members and friends I spoke to. I also followed the election result in the news articles, and these conveyed waves of hope, solidarity, and change.

In February 2020, in the local elections in New Delhi the anti-establishment AAP party won 62 out of 70 seats, and a second consecutive term in power, while BJP suffered a major defeat. I was not in India in February 2020, but the news of the election result inspired me to write about it in this section of my PhD Thesis and to reflect on the broader meaning that the AAP movement has in India and how I came to understand this as a potential of hope, change and transformation.

The AAP led an election campaign in 2019 focusing on the development work the party has been doing in their previous tenure of five years in New Delhi, especially in building new, modern government schools to boost education prospects for the children of common people and improving the healthcare system with the famous 'mobile health clinics', as well as lower electricity bills and free bus rides for women (Economic Times, 2020). The mohalla or community clinics initiative was launched by the AAP government of New Delhi in July 2015, to provide free health care access to health services by qualified providers to everyone, especially the urban poor (Lahariya, 2017).

Yogendra Yadav, an academic who was a member of the AAP until 2015 said the New Delhi elections result in February 2020 was a clear rejection of Modi and his party's campaign of hatred, as a desperate electoral gamble (Ellis-Peterson, 2020). However, other analysts (Verma, 2020) warn against a rapid conclusion that the AAP win in the elections in New Delhi should be seen as a rejection of the BJP's ideological platform, arguing that, according to opinion polls, a significant number of voters who supported the AAP in the ND 2019 elections would endorse the BJP's ideology at the national level. The AAP won in New Delhi as it focused on good governance, offered more credible leadership to voters, and did not stand in contrast to BJP's ideology (Verma, 2020).

On a more optimistic tone, the potential for change in India is arguably one that goes beyond political parties and starts at the structure of the society, creating socio-economic structural transformation by unifying the forces of the different populations working together: 'an alternative

socio-economic order that will reinvent democracy in India by creating institutions of governance for and by the people' (Banerjee, 2013, pg. 295). In order to preserve the secular and democratic basis of India's Constitution and the pluralistic culture of society, the hope and transformation can be forged by having all liberal, secular, left and progressive forces united to combat the current ideological and political system in power (Siddiqui, 2017). And while these ideas for structural changes seem to be far away from reality in the current times, with the BJP party in power in India, I argue that social activism converted into a political movement (AAP) could be one of the pan-political embodiments of hope in India. The AAP self-defines its work as neither left, nor right, but has gathered support from across social strata and beyond identity markers, such as caste, class, religion and gender, with a common goal of delivering social good for all the people.

I argue that new movements forged by political or apolitical groups, can emerge in new spaces for hope, positive change, and transformation even in times of crisis. And I focus on another space for hope in the section below, in the form of anti-CAA 2019 protests in India.

### **On Hope as resistance and anti-CAA 2019 protest**

The CAA (2019) that was passed into Law on 12 December 2019 led to protests across the country against a break of the Constitution of India (1950) that lays down the secular principle of democracy in India and aims to accommodate all forms of identities. Protesters held banners, some of which read 'No to CAA and to NRC', and 'We are the Resistance', 'Withdraw CAA immediately', 'Shame on India' and 'India's only religion is secularism'. The protests started in December 2019 and continued until March 2020 (The Times of India, BBC, Washington Post, CNN, The Guardian). The protesters gathered in New Delhi, Mumbai, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Bangalore, and many other cities. More than 100,000 people protested peacefully against the CAA in the southern city of Hyderabad in early January 2020. More than 40% of Hyderabad's estimated population of nearly 7 million people are Muslims (Reuters, 2020). In one of the largest demonstrations more than 20,000 people took to the streets in a demonstration in Kolkata. The Government responded with imposing internet blackouts in the states of Assam, Karnataka and parts of Uttar Pradesh (Ellis-Peterson, 2019). One of the protesters, a student in Kolkata in December 2019 told the press: 'My grandmother who is more than 80 years old often asks me, 'Will they send me to jail? But I have my Aadhaar Card. Am I not Indian?'' (Ellis-Peterson, 2019).

I argue that the large protests in many cities across India can be understood as a symbol of agency, resistance, and hope. Some observers noted that such large scale protests have not been seen in India before, which is a country accustomed to people protesting on other occasions, and have



drawn parallels between the present demonstrations and those in the 1970s, also led by students, over discontent with the government of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. 'Those protests revitalized Indian democracy against a rising authoritarianism. Demonstrators undoubtedly hope that the present protests will have the same result' (Malik et al, 2019, no page number). Judging by the scale of protests, other analysts believe that this time the BJP Government might have gone too far and never anticipated this form of resistance and response from different sections of Indian society who came together. The demonstrations have been perceived as a "a battle for democracy, a battle for civil liberties, a battle for secularism and the plural character of Indian society" (Ellis-Petersen, 2019). In some of the protests against the CAA 2019, like the ones in New Delhi, reports emerged of crimes based on belonging to a particular religion, mostly the divide has been between Hindus and Muslims (The Tribune of India, 2020). In an interview with the Tribune (08 March 2020), the Indian scholar Ashish Nandy spoke of the recent violence and crimes in New Delhi as a political tool used to weaken communities and instigate violence and crimes with the purpose of gathering votes. Nandy (2020) argued about how division and communal tension based on religion were exploited by political parties in the name of 'identity politics' in contemporary India, which might end by harming the people. I argue that Nandy's (2020) comments resonated to a large extent to information acquired from my personal sources<sup>9</sup> that highlighted how political exploitation could be the force behind such acts of violence, in a city like ND, where a population of 17 million people have lived peacefully next to each other for decades, and how people's actions in current times could be motivated by information and instigations shared on the social media. The role of social media is important in India and it can be used for spreading news but also instigating to action like in the example below. In the following pages I present the final argument about hopes and resistance in the form of a theatre play enacted by school children in India, in February 2020 and its meanings for this PhD Thesis.

### **On Hope as theatre: The school play that enacted resistance in India, 2020**

The final discussion on hopes, resistance and theatre focuses on a school play, a drama staged on 21 January 2020, by students of fourth, fifth and sixth standard, aged nine to 12 years old in a local school in India. The play was about the CAA 2019 (Bathini, 2020; Press Trust of India, 2020). A mother and a teacher were arrested on 30 January 2020 on the charge of sedition and accused of spreading "false information" and of using children to insult the PM Narendra Modi, after one of the parents streamed the school play live on Facebook, and the recording went viral. One of the people who watched it said he became furious over a scene where a man approaches an elderly woman and

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<sup>9</sup> Discussions with my partner, my extended Indian family and friends and contacts who reside in India

tells her that PM Modi wants Muslims to produce documents proving their Indian citizenship and that of their ancestors, and if they fail to do so, they will be asked to leave the country. The woman responds that she has been in India for generations and would have to dig up the graves of her ancestors to look for documents. She then says a "boy who was selling tea", a reference to Mr Modi who has said he used to sell tea as a teenager, is now demanding that she show him her documents. "I will ask him for his documents and if he doesn't show them to me, I will hit him with slippers," she adds (Bathini, 2020, no page number). The police questioned the children and school staff five times, about those who wrote the script and assigned dialogues (Press Trust of India, 2020).

I argue that the school play briefly presented above constitutes a powerful enactment of identity, citizenship, resistance, and hope. This intervention by those deemed at the margins of citizenship, young children, women, and minority groups, demonstrates the power of performative action, activism, and political presence from below and from the margins (Vourloumis, 2014). And the school play enacted in India shows how citizenship can be understood in terms of 'multilayered intersectional citizenship' (Erel and Acik, 2019), when citizenship is a struggle for rights, representation, belonging and participation, and where those social and political actors, challenging existing injustices are central to transforming exclusionary practices and conceptions of citizenship (Erel and Acik, 2019, pg. 6). And this is important for understanding citizenship in a non-Westocentric way, in the sense that the multilayeredness of citizenship challenges Westocentric notions that the nation-state's relationship to individuals determines the meaning of citizenship. Instead, participation, belonging, and the challenge of power relations as layers become important aspects of citizenship (Erel and Acik, 2019).

Another performance group called Elanadistikikanoume ('Come and see what we do') in contemporary Greece, made of people living in Athens without official residence permits enacted their stories through 'cultural works performed by those very bodies without citizenship and an official national identity' (Vourloumis, 2014, pg. 242). Therefore, I argue that the citizenship-inspired school play enacted in India in January 2020 and the performance of Elanadistikikanoume in Greece demonstrate how local marginalized groups play the primary role in determining their own political subjectivity (Stokes, 2015). And this possibility of hope and political subjectivity emerges from theatre and performance, which disrupt processes of power and hierarchies based on age, gender, social class, and ethnicity and enables the participants to not only discuss but to perform political actions (Stokes, 2015, pg. 185-186).

## Summary of Act 2

Act 2 discussed the migration regime in India, the question of Indian citizenship and the case of Tibetans in India in the context of recent developments in the citizenship legislation and shifts in the political establishment that aligned with religious nationalism. Scene 1 explained the shifts in the citizenship regime in India and how the legal and constitution notion of citizenship in India has been transformed through several key amendments to the Citizenship Act (1955): 1986, 1992, 2003, 2016 and 2019, in response to political events. I illustrated how citizenship has become questionable and documentary for all, since the implementation of the CAA and NRC 2019 that demand proof of documentary citizenship and legacy. I argued that the case of Tibetans living in India could be understood in terms of 'paper' and 'documentary citizenship' that connects their experiences of living in India with other populations including internal migrants, populations on the move, women, ethnic and religious groups, who are requested to prove their citizenship with paperwork.

Scene 2 introduced disruptions in the form of spaces for hope, resistance and performance that disrupt and transform the meanings and practices of citizenship, in the context of a triple crisis of governance, legitimacy and democracy in India since 1980s. I highlighted key political, economic and social transformations in India, and in global context, that led to the rise of religious nationalism and the ascent to power of the BJP party and its divisive leader Narendra Modi. I ended Scene 2 with arguments and examples of enactments of hope in the form of protests against corruption, social movements transformed into the AAP Party that implemented social changes since in power in ND and a school play that contested the CAA 2019.

The next section of this PhD Thesis is *Act 3. Disruptive Methodologies*. Before Act 3 commences I introduce an Interval.

## Interval

This interval signifies a transition from Act 2 to Act 3.

The interval invites the reader to consider and reflect on the previous Act and to prepare for the disruptions that will follow in Act 3.

During this interval, the reader may also take a short break before returning to *Act 3. Disruptive Methodologies*.

## Act 3. Disruptive Methodologies

Academic knowledge and epistemology privilege the mind and the intellectual forms of knowledge over other forms. We need ways of working that promote different ways of knowing, different methods that transcend the old epistemologies and ontologies and different understandings of personhood (Gatt, 2015).

We are *homo performans*, rather than *homo sapiens* (Madison, 2012).

### About Act 3

In Act 3 titled 'Disruptive Methodologies' I present the overarching strategy and the rationale of this PhD research, the conceptual framework, and the tools and procedures for collecting, analysing and interpreting the data. This PhD research explores how Tibetans living in India make sense of their social and political identities and positionalities in the current times (2015-2020) and their approaches vis-à-vis the question of Indian citizenship, a possibility debated and contested since 2010, when the first Tibetan applied for and obtained Indian citizenship. This Act commences with explaining the key concept: 'Disruptive Methodologies'. Following this, the Act will be divided in two scenes: *Scene 1. Setting the stage: Methodological journeys and bricolage*, followed by an Interval, that will make the transition to *Scene 2. Disrupting Methodologies: theatre approaches and performance*. I present in Table 16 below a visual summary of the structure of Act 3.

Table 16. Structure of Act 3. Disruptive Methodologies

Act 3. Disruptive Methodologies	
<b>Scene 1. Setting the scene. Methodological journeys and bricolage</b>	
i.	Research design as methodological journey
ii.	Conceptual framework
iii.	Locations: multi-sited ethnography
iv.	Data collection: 2016-2017
v.	The fields, the troubles, and the performance of identities
vi.	Data analysis and interpretation: 2016
vii.	Introducing new techniques for capturing sounds, images, silences: Live methods 2017
Interval	
<b>Scene 2. Disrupting Methodologies. Theatre approaches and performance</b>	
i.	Live Methods as performance: 'Amma la': Theatre play in two acts
ii.	Who is research for? On <i>companheiras</i> , witnessing and political theatre
iii.	Enacting live methods: data as performance
iv.	Devising the Theatre workshops 'Amma la' in McLeod Ganj
v.	First Theatre workshop: Tibet World (TW), McLeod Ganj
vi.	The second Theatre Workshop: TIPA, McLeod Ganj
vii.	The third Theatre workshop at LTWA, Dharamshala

Source: author's own

Disruptive methodologies are processes of inquiry, rupture, creativity and transformation that have been used across disciplines to disrupt established notions of research roles and relationships, traditional approaches to data collection and analysis, dominant notions of representing and disseminating research findings and rigid methodological boundaries and frameworks (Brown, et al., 2014; Ivanova et al., 2020). The verb 'disrupt' means to interrupt, disorder and rupture and includes possibilities and tensions, while methodological disruption denotes 'a way of being and doing' (Brown et al., 2014, pg. 6-13). Being disruptive in research signifies embracing fluid identities and being transparent about how the research emerged from the researcher's personal biography and lived experience, and how these guided and shaped the research questions and methodological perspectives (Brown et al., 2014, pg. 6). Disruption as practice is dynamic and is about acting in ways that transform processes and productions of knowledge to become accessible and accountable to individuals and groups that have been minoritized and marginalized (Brown et al., 2014, pg. 6). Disruption and creativity are tools used to challenge and disrupt conventional methodological approaches and to contribute to dismantling the 'western', neoliberal hegemonic social narratives and ideologies in qualitative methodologies (Ivanova et al., 2020).

In this PhD research I embraced and employed disruptive methodologies that interrogated the production and organisation of knowledge, sought to find alternative ways of collecting, analysing and interpreting the data, that valued different ways of being in the world and knowing about it, and provided inclusion of perspectives in disseminating the research by engaging co-researchers/co-creators in dialogue. This PhD research contests the boundaries between sciences and the arts and disrupts the barriers between traditionally distinguished categories of methods, data, theory, and dissemination.

I begin this section by stressing how that the methodological disruptions started to take shape in this PhD research after the first two years of research and fieldwork. For this reason, I chose to structure this section of the PhD Thesis in two separate scenes.

In Scene 1 I explain how the methodology of this PhD research constitutes a process of situating the research in a mixed set of approaches defined as methodological bricolage (Marcus, 2016; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Atkinson et al., 2020). I then make the transition to Scene 2 by using the theatrical tool of Interval. In Scene 2 I present and discuss the disruption of the methodologies from Section 1 with the help of performance, self-reflexivity, and theatre approaches.

## Scene 1. Setting the scene. Methodological journeys and bricolage

In Scene 1 I outline the main theories and approaches I employed to answer to the main research questions, how I collected, analysed, and interpreted the data. The methodological and theoretical framework justifies the research project and positions the PhD Thesis in the contemporary sphere of knowledge production and innovation in qualitative research.

**PhD Aim:** This PhD research aims to explore the meanings and experiences associated with being a Tibetan in India in the period 2015-2020.

**The Main research question is:**

**1).** How do Tibetans make sense of their current political status, identities, and positions in India in current times (2015-2020)?

**The associated research questions are:**

- 1.) What are the current meanings, practices, and possibilities of Indian citizenship for Tibetans?
- 2.) What are the localised and individualised narratives of Tibetans living in exile in India?

In Scene 1 I explain the design of this PhD research, and by using the concept of ‘research design’ I refer to a legitimate and autonomous strategy of producing knowledge to answer a given question, strategy that accepts *intuition* and *uncertainty* (Després et al., 2011, pg. 4). I explain how the methodology of this PhD research constitutes a process of situating the research in a mixed set of approaches defined as *methodological bricolage* (Marcus, 2016; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Atkinson et al., 2020). The bricolage of this PhD research is comprised of the researcher version of constructivist grounded theory, mixed qualitative methods that include critical and multi-sited ethnography, auto-ethnography, and qualitative interviews. Ontologically, this PhD research is founded on cultural relativism and epistemologically, on social constructivism and interpretivism.

The conceptual framework of this PhD research incorporates philosophical ideas borrowed from cultural studies, post-colonialism, migration, refugee and diaspora studies, social justice, hybridity, border thinking and self-reflexivity.

The **methods** employed in this PhD research include multi-sited, interpretive, performative and critical ethnography, participant observation, semi-structured, individual, group, walking, ambulant and informal interviews, walking tours, live methods, auto-ethnography and secondary and online data sources. I analysed the research data employing the principles and techniques of grounded theory, by elaborating codes, categories, and themes manually, with the paper and pen technique and using Microsoft Visio to represent the data analysis (2016). I interpreted the research data using

the tools of interpretive and experimental ethnography (2016). I collected the research data in 2017 employing live methods that are multisensual and multiperspectival and include non-verbal language, sounds, images, pauses, silences, laughter, animal sounds, nature sounds, traffic, music, background conversations, and multiple languages. I used the software MAXQDA to synthesize and analyse the research data, following the grounded theory principles of coding and elaborating themes (2017). In the following section I explain how I came to incorporate these methodologies and methods in my PhD research.

## **I. Research design as methodological journey**

The question of how Tibetans make sense of their current status and everyday life in India is central to this PhD research and aims foster a sociological understanding of life experiences in exile and of the shifting nature of political identities in a non-Eurocentric perspective. The epistemological approach to this PhD research understands that reality is socially constructed by the people who experience it and we live in an intersubjective world that we share with others (Berger and Luckman, 1996). Reality is shaped by cultural, social, political and economic norms in which the individual is a “sense maker” (Darlaston-Jones, 2007, pg. 20), insofar as every person tries to understand or make sense of the world and interpret it as they see and experience it. Researchers doing fieldwork are interested in uncovering the categories and processes of “sense-making” through which participants organize their social world meaningfully (Venkatesh, 2002, pg. 106).

The methodological and analytical framework of this PhD research is a researcher version of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006, 2008) and social justice studies (Harris, 2001, Jones, 2003) while the philosophical underpinnings pertain to symbolic interactionism (Denzin, 2004) and cultural studies (Chambers, 1996; Hall, 1992; Gossberg, 1992; Barker, 2002). Situating the research in a mixed set of approaches was referred to as methodological bricolage (Marcus, 2016; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Multi-method is another concept defined as a methodological strategy that involves combining any different methods in doing research (Hunter and Brewer, 2015). Multimethod research entails the application of two or more sources of data or research methods to the investigation of a research question. Such research is also frequently referred to as mixed methodology (Bryman et al., 2004). For Hunter and Brewer (2015) ‘mixed methods’ more specifically focus on combining qualitative and quantitative methods.

When I started this PhD research in 2015 I decided to take an approach to research that would start with the data, with getting to know what happens in the field, meeting people and hearing their stories, then building theories based on the findings. This approach resonates to a certain extent with a version of grounded theory as articulated by Charmaz from a constructivist perspective



(2006). A constructivist grounded theory adopts the guidelines and directions of grounded theory only as tools but does not subscribe to the objectivist and positivist assumptions. A constructivist approach highlights the phenomenon under study more than the methods of studying it (Charmaz, 2008). Grounded theory originally derived from pragmatism and symbolic interactionism, developed by Corbin and Strauss (1990) into a model of data and theory interplay, with an emphasis on constant data comparisons, theoretical coding and memos, and development of theory (Bartlett and Payne, 1997). Thus, I started drafting the research design positioning my research in the constructivist paradigm. This paradigm assumes a relativist ontology, arguing there are multiple realities, a subjectivist epistemology in which the knower and the known co-create knowledge, and the findings are presented in terms of the criteria of grounded theory (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, pp. 32-33).

When I returned to my University in the UK in September 2016 and started analysing the fieldwork data I became aware of the multiple approaches and philosophies that my research was built on and how it evolved in ways that I did not necessarily plan or design. This type of ethnography was about the people I researched and about myself, it was an interpretive version of their stories and mine and an attempt to be critical about the social structures that shaped these experiences. In this respect, I started writing about what Denzin (2000) proposes to be an ethnography that is existential, autoethnographic, performative and critical. He suggests that researchers use interpretive ethnography as a means to erase the conventional boundaries between the objective observer and the world under study and a tool against the Western categories of reason, logic and science. This type of ethnography is then deemed to be deconstructive and a “blueprint for cultural criticism, envisaging a respectful politics of hope” (Denzin, 2000, quoted in Lincoln, 2004, p. 56).

Recently ‘the narrative turn’ (Sandelowski, 1991; Goodson and Gill, 2001; Czarniawska, 2004) emphasized the reflexive, gendered, and situated nature of human experience. Since experience cannot be studied directly, it is represented and studied through narratives, which convey the meanings and norms of everyday experiences (Denzin, 2004). The narrative turn emerged in the context of new epistemological debates about the relationships between self, other, community, social, political, and historical dynamics. It is also a response and a challenge to the positivist approach to examining the social world and understanding human experience (Goodson and Gill, 2011, pg. 18). The turn from positivist towards narrative and interpretation in social sciences emphasized the moral force, healing power and emancipatory nature of stories, according to Sandelowski (1991). The term narrative can refer to the process of making a story, to the cognitive scheme of the story, or to the result of the process – also called ‘stories’ or ‘tales’ (Polkinghorne, 1998, pg. 13). The function of the narrative is both at the individual and cultural level, argues

Polkinghorne (1988). The individuals have a narrative about their own lives, which serves to enable people to construct what they are and where they are going. At the cultural level, narratives function to give cohesion to shared beliefs and transmit values (Polkinghorne, 1988, pg. 14). Narratives are a basic form of social life, a form of knowledge and a form of communication (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 13). Human beings are reconceptualised as narrators and their products as texts to be interpreted by the audience (Sandelowski, 1991). Narratives are understood as stories with a temporal order of events and an effort to make sense of the significance of those events in a personally and culturally coherent manner (Sandelowski, 1991, pg. 162).

The interesting point here which I found relevant for my epistemological positioning in this PhD research is that the concept of narrative has come to reveal the artificial distinction between truth and fiction insofar as the Western differentiation between imagined and imaginary, fiction and false is no longer plausible (Sandelowski, 1991). In Gloria Anzaldua's words, the Western anthropologists split the world of imagination from the world of the spirit and the world of the soul, defining external reality as the official reality that is privileged over the others (2009, pg. 106). But the spirit world, the underworld and the world of imagination can be experienced as one world or several. For Anzaldua everything is real. "Fiction is as true as whatever happened literally to people" (ibid, pg. 107-108). Following the narrative turn there can be no claim to a final and authorized version of the truth. Certain criteria of assessment are needed, according to Hall (1996), to provide a systematic, rigorous, coherent, and comprehensive account. However, the social science enterprise has an "ultimately interpretive character... since all accounts, however carefully tested and supported are, in the end, authored" (Hall, 1996, p. 14 cited in Denzin, 2004). The methodological shift from classical symbolic interactionism to postmodern narratives and performance texts guided to a large extent the methodological and analytical framework of my PhD thesis. Denzin (1999) is credited with having blurred the boundaries between disciplines, genres and intellectual traditions and encouraged researchers to become *bricoleurs*, confiscating methods and materials as deemed useful and constructing new methods, analytic strategies and understandings of social life (Lincoln, 2004). His aim and project were to create ethnographies without abstractions and "to return to narrative as a political act" (Denzin, 1999, quoted in Lincoln, 2004, p. 54).

I chose a set of methods for answering the research questions that resonate with a social constructivist and interpretive approach to reality (Berger and Luckman, 1996; Denzin, 1997). The foundation of this research places importance on the point of view of the research participants and its aim is to offer detailed description of the everyday world of their experiences (Colby et. al, 1996). This philosophical approach translates into methods that include multi-sited ethnography, participant observation, semi-structured and informal interviews and autoethnography as main tools

for collecting and co-constructing data and theory. These are supported by secondary and online data collected from social media, Facebook pages of Tibetan groups: the Tibetan Women Association, the Tibetan Prime Minister's page and articles and posts of Tibetan activist Tsendin Tsundue, as well as posts shared by some of my gatekeeper such as the Indian researcher from Brazil. I joined these individual and group pages either at the invitation of the account holder or because some posts were re-shared by friends of my Facebook friends. I also researched Tibetan blog posts and Tibetan and Indian news outlets online and in printed versions available in English: Phayhul, Tibet.net, Tibetan Journal, Tibet Sun, The Times of India, and Hindustan Times. The information originating from these secondary sources is important for triangulating the data collected during the fieldwork trips and also it keeps me informed about the ongoing activities in the Tibetan communities in India while I was not physically there, about nine months per year.

In order to make sense of the research and the data I collected in India in 2016, I started working in an auto-ethnographical framework while following the principles of constructivist grounded theory in respect to returning to the field multiple times for data collection and saturation of categories, theoretical coding and memos and theory building and data analysis in the form of codes, categories and themes. Following the progress of this PhD thesis through several stages of fieldwork and data analysis and interpretation in 2016 and 2017, I argue that this research is situated in the intellectual and methodological approach titled *bricolage*, which refers to the mixed-method processes, transdisciplinary practices, and multitextual communication used by bricoleur researchers (Atkinson et al, 2020). Here the methodological, theoretical, interpretive, critical political, narrative and gendered *bricoleur* performs a variety of tasks, works between and within competing paradigms, understands research as an interactive process, is aware that all research findings have political implications and the research process is a reflexive, fluid, interpretive and interconnected *bricolage* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

## **II. Conceptual framework**

This PhD Thesis aims to foster an understanding of the current experiences of Tibetans in exile in India and the political questions and debates about Indian citizenship. This understanding is built on the representations and interpretations of reality and meaning as constructed by the participants and an interpretation of the text by the self-reflexive researcher. The research questions that guide the PhD Thesis were formulated at the beginning of this research for the purpose of having the research proposal approved by the University Ethics Committee that would then allow me to commence the fieldwork. As the PhD project evolved, these questions were reshaped and rethought in the light of the multiple stages of data collection and analysis and their integration with the relevant literature and conceptual framework.

The main research question is how Tibetans make sense of their political and apolitical identities and positionalities while living as guests/ refugees/ citizens in India. The reasoning behind this question relies on several arguments. Chambers (1996) argues that “identities are articulated across the hyphen, the transition, the bridge or passage between, rather than firmly located in one culture, place or position” (p. 53). This argument challenges the understanding of culture as a site of belonging and argues that culture is as a process of transition and becoming, which may include hyphenated identities.

Radhakrishnan (2007) moves this argument further, stating the need to secure culture as a “negotiable space between identity and location” or the open area between ‘where we live’ and ‘where we think’.” (pg. XVIII). Stuart Hall (2017) argues that identity is not a set of fixed attributes, but a process of constant positioning, a never-completed process of becoming and shifting identifications (p. 16). Hall’s work is important in historicising ethnic and cultural identity, argues Anthias (1998) but to some extent it undermines a de-essentialised notion of cultural identity and does not adequately deal with the relevance of inter-ethnic, class and gender differences that identities are made of (Anthias, 1998, pg. 560). Another model of a flexible process for personal and collective identity formation, ethical action and alliance building is central to the writings of Gloria Anzaldua (1999). If identification functions through exclusion in any other context, Anzaldua shifts the focus from exclusion to inclusion and supports a view towards reconfiguring identity in open-ended and potentially transformative ways.

Alongside the central research question I formulate two more research questions that explore (I) how Tibetans relate themselves to the question of Indian citizenship, and (II) what kind of individual narratives convey which types of identities and belonging for those living in a third, ‘hybrid’ and diasporic space (Bhabha, 1994; Brah, 1996).

These research questions are inspired by a theoretical approach that places the study of identities and cultures at the centre of the research endeavour. The idea of culture and identity as fluid processes of becoming is supported by cultural studies theorists, such as Chambers (1996) and Hall (1992). Simultaneously, postmodern discourses and postcolonial theory about diaspora and migrant, mobile communities living at the borders (Anzaldua, 1987) or in spaces of ‘hybridity’ (Bhabha, 1994) contributed to the conceptual underpinnings of this PhD research.

Postcolonial criticism seeks to understand the operations—politically, socially, culturally, and psychologically—of colonialist ideologies. Colonialist ideology is inherently Eurocentric, and it was established in the colonies to inculcate the culture and values of the European colonizer and thereby prevent rebellion or any form of resistance (Tyson, 2016). The strength of postcolonial theorists is

their ability to explore the ways in which, in the context of migrancy, multiple and hybrid identities emerge and in this hybridity there is potential for counter-hegemonic discourses (Moreton-Robinson, 2003, pg. 28). The experiences of dislocation contribute to disrupting a migrant's sense of belonging to one single place and thus create the framework for emerging multiple identities. Postcolonial theorists argue that postcolonial identity is necessarily a dynamic, constantly evolving hybrid of native and colonial cultures. Moreover, they assert that this hybridity or syncretism is a productive, exciting, and positive force in a world that is becoming more and more culturally hybrid (Tyson, 2016, pg. 422).

The concept of 'hybridity' has been explained in relationship to several figures. One kind of understanding emphasizes three images of border existences and of subaltern identities as existing between two competing identities (Gossberg, 1996, p. 91). The first image, of a 'third space', illuminates an in-between place inhabited by the subaltern, while the second image of 'liminality' converts the 'third space' into the border, the very place where the subaltern lives. And finally, the third image is that of 'border-crossing' which refers to the uncertainty and multiplicity of the fact of constant border-crossing. This is reflected in the figure of the *diaspora*, which has become a signifier of the political struggles to define the local (Clifford, 1994, cited in Gossberg, 1996).

For Anzaldúa (1999) the border is a historical and metaphorical site, an occupied borderland where individuals and groups transform space and home territories become one. Borders deals with shifting identities, border crossings, and hybridism (cited in Keating, 2009, pg. 184). Brah (1996) argues that a diasporic group is situated within the social relations of class, gender, racism and sexuality in the country where it migrates, and thus it is placed in a variety of different discourses, economic processes, state policies and institutional practices. This "relational positioning" helps deconstructing the regimes of power, the forms of inclusion and exclusion from the nation as a political body (Brah, 1996, pg. 182-183). Furthermore, for Brah the concept of 'diaspora space' is the intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location as a meeting point between economic, political, cultural, and psychic processes. "It is where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed" (Brah, 1996, pg 208). Intersectionality, a concept coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, has been understood and applied as an analytical framework through which feminist scholars interrogate the structural identities of race, class, gender, and sexuality (Cooper, 2016). Other authors argued that intersectionality focuses on the interaction between different systems of oppression and goes beyond the originally identified gender and race categories of oppression: 'intersectionality is a critical concept, pointing out the limits of previous ways of understanding the relationship between social structures' (Weldon, 2008, pg. 193).

Bhabha (1994) writes about the liminality of migrant's experience and the indeterminacy of diaspora identity, "that will not be resolved here", quoting Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* (1988) (Bhabha, 1994, p. 322). Rushdie's work has been classified as blasphemy by certain religious groups. Bhabha reads this act as the interpretation of a religious text into cultural translation and hence in the sense of hybridity itself being classified as heresy. The migrant culture of the 'in-between' or the minority position shifts the question of culture's appropriation towards a process of hybridity that identifies with the culture's difference (Bhabha, 1994, p. 321). Culture, in this sense, becomes an "uncomfortable, disturbing practice of survival and supplementarity – between art and politics, past and present, the public and the private" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 251).

However, in a critique of the concept of 'hybridity' and of Rushdie's work, Radakhrishnan (2007) writes that hybridities are not all equal since hybridity is not subjectless, but in reality "hidden within the figurality of hybridity is the subject of the dominant West" (pg. 159). Radakhrishnan (2007) therefore rejects the theoretical claim that hybridity is the ultimate decentring of all identity regimes, arguing that hybridity has a semantic insufficiency, pointing out to the question that Rushdie was asked "as who" is he a hybrid and when his hybrid self speaks, who is being spoken for? As a Muslim, Indian, Londoner, metropolitan intellectual artist? Even hyphenation would not solve this difficult question, insofar as Rushdie was protected as a "Western individual with a prerogative to hybridity" (Radakhrishnan, 2007, pg. 161).

Juxtaposing the question of identity and who is being spoken for, the literature on subaltern identities questions the problem of representation and speaking for others. There is a growing recognition that "one cannot assume an ability to transcend one's location." (Frow, 1995, p. 161). In line with this idea, Linda Alcoff (1991) follows closely Spivak's thesis in 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' arguing that the simple solution is not for the oppressed or less privileged to be able to speak for themselves, since their speech will not necessarily be liberating or reflective of their own interests. However, ignoring the subaltern's or oppressed person's speech means a continuation of the imperialist project. The problem with speaking for others is then contained in the very structure of discursive practice, and therefore it is this structure itself that needs alteration (Alcoff, 1991, pg. 23). Summing this up, Frow (1995) argues that outside the politics of representation there is no simple answer, only an unequal negotiation of relations of power that are structurally contained within it (pg. 163-164).

The theoretical approach informed by cultural studies brings a set of methodological understandings derived from feminism, postmodernism, and poststructuralism (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Feminist and cultural studies models privilege a materialist-realist ontology, which favours an understanding

of the real world in terms of a material difference in terms of race, gender, and class. However, after 1990s in the Global South emergent 'alternative' cultural studies informed the more traditional and Western approaches to the field. Scholars such as Garcia Canclini (1995) or Martin Barbero (1993) proposed new analytical categories: syncretism, hybridization, *mestizaje* (mixing Indian and Spanish heritage) for exploring processes of cultural appropriation and adaptation (Ferguson and Golding, 1997). Other authors such as David Morley (1997) express their critical view of cultural studies, making a case for "putting the sociology back in", with more emphasis on questions of socio-economic conditions. Another contemporary critique to cultural studies suggested that it should be more imaginative and propose alternative, different ways of ordering the social and cultural world (McGuian, 1997, pg. 153). Other approaches explicitly link the analysis of global inequalities between the core-periphery, with colonial history, gender, race and ethnicity and with concepts of culture and citizenship (Boatca, 2016).

Cultural studies employ methodologies that are pragmatic, strategic, and self-reflective, in line with methodological bricolage, and depending on the questions asked which depend on the context (Gossberg, 1992). The purpose is "to enable people to understand what is going on, to provide ways of thinking and strategies for survival and resources for resistance" (Hall, 1990, cited in Gossberg, 1992, p. 3). In this respect, the approach resonates with the aims and ethical responsibility of critical ethnography, that is to address processes of injustice, while maintaining a strong sense of duty towards the principles of human freedom and well-being and "a compassion for the suffering of living beings" (Madison, 2012, pg. 5).

Theoretically and politically, ethnographic research stresses persons as active agents, and so in the tension between structure and agency, ethnographic work puts creative and active political subjects back on the agenda. Further, the ethnographic work has the potential to connect with individuals, organizations and networks of people who are, or could be, actively involved in the politics of cultural and social change (Barker, 2002, pg. 188). The use of methods in cultural studies is strategically chosen, as resources for understanding and for producing resistances to local structures of domination. These may include online, reflexive, and critical ethnographies while the methods rely on open-ended interviewing and participant observation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Participant observation encapsulates a wide range of observational practices and it is also used to denote a fieldwork strategy which includes general interviewing, relatively unstructured, and the interviewing of key participants. But the key to this practice is the ability of the participant observer to get close to the people researched and to see the world from their perspective (Bryman, 1984, pg. 78-79).

Embedded in the conceptual and theoretical framework of this PhD research is also an angle of social justice, inspired from the intersection of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2008), Buddhist studies and social engagement (Harris, 2001; Jones, 2003; King, 2009; Ramacharaka, 2011). The theoretical importance of social justice as part of the research methodology has been highlighted by Tibetan Buddhist authors (Mayard, 2016) but also by political scientists (Fernando, 2016). Kathy Charmaz (2008) argues for an application of constructivist grounded theory for advancing social justice studies. Social justice research should integrate subjective experiences with a critique of social conditions, exploring tensions between inclusion and exclusion and poverty and privilege (Charmaz, 2008, pp. 206-207). Therefore, social justice researchers can offer rich possibilities of advancing qualitative research by focusing on meaning and processes at a social level.

Writing about Buddhism as a social theory, Jones (2003) argues that the central point of development for both Buddhism and sociology is to establish a definitive relationship between individual and society, between human agency and the social system (pg. 51). Jones (2003) draws an interesting comparison between sociology as the product of Western modernity in late nineteenth century and the Buddhist philosophy, stating that they are both different and similar in certain ways. They are similar because they both aim to forge an understanding of the dynamics of social structure. And they are different because in the West the traditional Christian religion and Greek mythology supported a dualistic struggle, good versus evil, which translated into the struggle to create a new science about the society, while in India, the place of birth of Buddhism, the principle of *avidya* (ignorance) and the acceptance of the relatively fixed and hierarchical social relations constituted the ground for a Buddhist philosophical understanding of social reality (Jones, 2003). An engaged Buddhist philosophy (King, 2009) focuses on compassion as a spiritual practice and value for making oneself an enlightened person and for creating positive change in society (Harris, 2001, p. 193). This then corresponds at the theoretical level with the argument put forward by Charmaz (2008): an interest in social justice means that the research will pay attention to ideas and actions focused on fairness, equity, democratic process, and individual and collective rights and obligations.

The conceptual perspective informed by social justice studies and the Buddhist angle presented above signify that this PhD research incorporates reflections and ideas about creating good societies and being responsible human, national and world citizens.

### **III. Locations: multi-sited ethnography**

In the period 2016-2017 I conducted fieldwork in four locations in India over a six months period: New Delhi (capital of India), McLeod Ganj and Dharamshala (seat of TGovE), Shimla (capital of Himachal Pradesh) and Mundgod (Karnataka) (Appendix 1). The choice for conducting research in



multiple places and across several years has theoretical and pragmatic justifications. Multi-sited ethnography is a qualitative research strategy that follows people, connections, associations, and relationships across space, in multiple spaces and places (Falzon, 2016). The researcher moves in two or more places, breaking with the idea of the traditional ethnography that involved spending a lengthy period of time (several months or years) in one field where s/he studied the set of social relations and then compared them with others and made generalizations into regional or even universal knowledge. There are many variations as to what multi-sited ethnography would mean in theory and practice, starting with Marcus' (1995) reformatory theory. Multi-sited ethnography responds to contemporary social, cultural, and economic changes in the era of globalization and to theoretical developments in the relationship between the local and the global, aiming to crosscut these dichotomies (Marcus, 1995). This method emerged at the same time as new interdisciplinary research in the media studies, sciences and cultural studies started burgeoning. Ethnography as a method has been rethought and redefined by the transformations in the global cultural economy and the blurring of national boundaries and identities (Appadurai, 1990, cited in Denzin, 1997). In the postcolonial, global world of new diasporas, electronic capitalism and hyphenated identities it is not possible, however, to take for granted what is meant by ethnography, the ethnographer now works in a "hybrid reality" (Denzin, 1997, p. XIV) within an ethnographic project committed to human and social justice. For this PhD Thesis and in line with the research I carried out, I refer to multi-sited ethnography as qualitative research that implies some forms of geographical and spatial multi-sitedness. This means the research participants live and move in multiple geographical locations and the researcher herself navigated through space and time in order to form relationships and to extend, compare and enhance the understanding about their lives and the meanings constructed around social practices. In multi-sited, multi-staged ethnography the researcher listens to stories and presents them to the audience in the form of a dialogue that is lively and may change through time. The dialogue between the researcher and the participants across time and space has been framed as performative ethnography (Madison, 2012, pg.11). Here the researcher takes a responsible approach and seeks to offer an account of the culture and people being studied that is not timeless, and so the people represented are non-static and changing beings.

Along with multi-sited ethnography in my PhD research I employed autoethnography as a tool that turns the gaze of ethnography inwards (Denzin, 1997). This is framed as 'reflexive ethnography' or 'turning back on ourselves' (Davis, 1999, cited in Madison, 2012, pg. 8). When we turn back, we become aware and accountable for our own research paradigms, our own positions of authority and our own moral responsibility in relation to representation and interpretation. "Doing fieldwork is a personal experience" (Madison, 2012, pg. 9), and one should start where they are: from the

experiences in one's life, from one's personal history. Employing auto-ethnography helped me making sense of my experiences, thoughts, feelings, and questions in the field and in relationship to the research while analysing the larger context where the experiences took place.

My search for a methodology that allows the personal life story to co-exist together with the stories from the field has found an inspiring point of departure in Anzaldua's work (1999). She describes her text *Borderlands* as "autohistoria-teoria", term coined to reveal the interventions of women of colour and the transformations of the traditional Western auto-biographical form. The term is infused with the search for personal and cultural meaning, "informed by reflective self-awareness employed in the service of social-justice work" (cited in Keating, 2009, pg. 319). "Autohistoria-teoria" includes both life story and self-reflection on this story and these writers blend their cultural and personal biographies with memoirs, history, storytelling, myth and other forms of theorizing. Through their work, they create interwoven individual and collective identities (Keating, 2009, pg. 9).

#### **IV. Data collection: 2016-2017**

The data collection in the form of ethnography, participant observation, semi-structured, informal and waking interviews, took place during two fieldwork trips to India: July – September 2016 and July – September 2017, total six months spent in India. I present a visual format of the summary of data collection in each place, the people involved and the relevance for my PhD research in Appendix 2: Part I, II, III and IV. Following the strategy of theoretical or purposive sampling in constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), I selected the participants based on the objective of the research questions. I had few initial selection criteria: Tibetans who were born in India and Tibetans who had / did not have Indian citizenship. Additionally, I selected the Tibetans who were willing to talk to me after having been informed about the PhD research. To further data collection as I developed conceptual ideas, I chose participants in different situations as they were needed to help me clarify understanding. In grounded theory, the researcher collects new data to check, fill out, and extend theoretical categories (Bagnasco et al, 2014).

I maintained an overt ethnographic stand throughout my research and so all the participants knew about my PhD research. The interviewees received detailed information in the form of the Ethics form, Participant Information Sheet, and the Interview guide, as per the Ethical guidelines of my University in the UK. I ensured all the participants about their right to anonymity and confidentiality of all data and personal information in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act 1998 and to the Personal Data (Protection) Act, 2013, India. I also shared information about myself, my studies and work and, to some extent, personal and biographical information about my place of birth and my family, including my parents and my spouse.

I collected 14 audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews in 2016 and 21 audio-recorded, open-ended, ambulant and group interviews in 2017: total 35 interviews. Additionally, I recorded in the fieldwork diary the content and details of 28 informal interviews with Tibetan and Indian citizens in 2016 and 45 informal interviews in 2017: total 73 interviews (Appendices 3 and 4). All in all, I met and spoke with more than 100 people from very different places and walks of life, whose accounts and narratives offered a constructed, interpretive picture of Tibetans in exile in India. In the first fieldwork trip in 2016 I followed a rather rigid format of the interviews and spent less time on building relationships and meeting other people, apart from the interviewees. I was over-focused on what I have naively perceived to be 'successful' research in terms of number of interviews. In 2017 I tried a different approach to my research, following inputs from my PhD supervisors and being inspired by some of the literature on creative methods, with an emphasis on relationships, informal interviews, creative ways of conducting open-ended, walking and group interviews.

## **V. The fields, the troubles, and the performance of identities**

During my PhD fieldwork I was aware about the possible consequences of sensitive questions and about a researcher who comes and goes back to her home, leaving the field and participants exposed, as Dinesh (2012) writes about her participants' views: "but at the end of this project you'll return to New York and we have to live here. We need to think about this carefully" (pg. 65). I felt that maybe it would have been easier if I had lived in India at the time of doing this research. But my affiliation with a UK University and work as Instructor does not allow me to do that. So I repeatedly questioned myself and tried to be cautious about the research I was doing about Tibetans in India – a topic which is politically sensitive because of geopolitical implications in terms of China's problematic relationship with India and with the world over the issue of Tibetans. For instance, in a recent event documented in the Tibetan Journal (online version), the Royal Court Theatre in London has apologized to Tibetans for cancelling a play about Tibet and promised to produce the play in the next season. The Theatre was involved in a heated argument and criticism from around the world for banning a play about Tibet following alleged Chinese pressure (Tibetan Journal, 2018).

During the visit to the Nunnery of the Tibetan settlement in Mundgod, Karnataka, I felt more like an intruder who was not really welcomed. These feelings had to do with the person I interviewed, the head of the nunnery. She was willing to meet me after my interpreter introduced me but gave short and rapid answers to my questions and told me (via the interpreter) that there is more info on their website. When I offered her a kata (white scarf symbolizing respect for Tibetans) she immediately offered it to my interpreter, which I found very unusual. I thought that my gender assumptions about how women and especially nuns behave – the ones I have met in my fieldwork in McLeod Ganj in 2016 were friendly – were completely wrong. The head of the nunnery looked very strong

physically, more like a wrestler, her face was always very serious and she did not try to smile once, her head was shaved, I felt that the person in front of me was not a woman in the traditional sense of gender categories, so I began to question my own assumptions about how I expected a woman to be like and to behave. I realised how ingrained the gender categories and expectations are in my own head, despite the academic and feminist training I have been doing. I seemed to have completely forgotten that gender is not a stable and fixed identity, but an identity instituted through a repetition of acts, through the stylization of the bodily gestures, movements and enactments, which create an “abiding gender self” (Butler, 1988, pg. 519). Gender is a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanctions (Butler, 1988, pg. 520), and so the head of the nunnery was performing an identity that I could not easily categorize and I found myself confused and questioning my own assumptions.

The performance of identity is strongly linked with being in the body. Doing something with or about the body is a performative act. The body has “shared political meaning” (Jeffers, 2012, pg. 107), like the Suffragettes’ act of inscribing the message ‘votes for women’ on their body with a needle. And the realization of this potential made a strong impression on me in 2017. It has also contributed to my reflections on the negative aspects of bodily acts, like the self-immolations committed by Tibetans living in Tibet and in India. Doing self-harm to one’s body is a deeply political message that refugees have used when literal speech was impossible and thus self-harm became a form of testimony, of making a plea for social recognition and a way “to regain a degree of control in the situation where all power appears to reside outside the body.” (Jeffers, 2012, pg. 104) This has happened multiple times in recent history: refugees were sewing lips, eyes and ears in Australia Woomera camp center (2002), they went on hunger strikes in UK 2006 and they set themselves on fire in UK 2003-2005. Tibetans inside Tibet and some who were living in Dharamshala, India, set themselves on fire as a form of protest against Chinese occupation. Up until March 2018 there have been reports of 152 Tibetans who have self-immolated in China, acts that have been condemned by the TGovE and by the Dalai Lama (ANI, 2018).

**The interview guide** contained 12 semi-structured interview questions that initially, in the first one or two interviews during the first stage of fieldwork (2016), I followed closely (Appendix 5). As the research progressed, however, I decided to modify the interview guide and allow more space for open questions, letting the participants develop their own topics of interest and my contribution being minimal, mostly with probing questions. The questions I used in the first fieldwork stage (2016) started with demographic data (age, gender, education level, occupation, marital status, nuclear/ extended family, self-identified religion, if any), followed by questions about the

participant's arrival in India (when, how), life in India (feeling at home, family), life in Tibet (if applicable), Identity documents in India (e.g. Identity certificate, Registration certificate, Yellow Card, Voter's ID, ADHAAR card, other/ none) and their use in everyday life, thoughts about getting an Indian passport and citizenship and why yes/no, the process of obtaining the Indian passport (if the case), what makes somebody a Tibetan (identity) and finally, question about the position of the IGov towards Tibetans.

In the second stage of fieldwork (2017), I met many of the participants from the previous year and, thus, the original questions about their demographic data, their views on Indian citizenship and on life in India had already been answered in 2016. When I met them again in 2017 we followed up on how they have been doing in their personal lives and also on the case of the Indian passport and I learnt more about the new rule of the IGov that requested Tibetans with an Indian passport to move out of the settlements. Furthermore, I met Tibetans in positions of responsibility at several institutions, including the Tibetan Parliament. In these cases, the questions I asked were different and less personal, more oriented towards the work of that institution and towards religious, gender or political topics. For instance, when I had interviews at the Nunnery and the Old People's Home or with the retired Tibetan army officers, I did not necessarily follow the interview guide questions. I learnt to accept and embrace these changes as part of the daily social life and to adapt the ethnographic project to these challenges to allow space for creativity and the creation of narratives.

## **VI. Data analysis and interpretation: 2016**

The analysis of the data collected in 2016 followed the grounded theory technique of elaborating codes, categories, and themes using the paper-pen technique in four stages (Appendices 6, 7, 8 and 9). The fifth stage was about elaborating themes, based on the categories. At this stage I used the software Microsoft Visio, which enabled me to represent the themes visually, in the form of a map (Appendix 10). I then created a table with the themes and explanations, in the end I had five themes and three, five or more sub-themes for each theme. I analysed these themes with the help of relevant literature and theories which are discussed in the First Data Analysis chapter.

The data interpretation stage (2016) was a creative endeavour that I designed after I have added all the categories together, by now reduced to one or maximum two words each, and wrote them next to each other on a blank page, it came out to be less one A4 page (Appendix 8). There were just words, not sentences. After reading them out loud, I realised they made some sense, as if part of a puzzle or a story, but without following grammar rules or sentence structure or punctuation. Then I decided to create sentences based on these categories and to add structure and punctuation. I then added a style to the story that was being shaped. It became a letter. I gave it a title: "Letter to India".

It was a letter sent by the Tibetans in India to the IGov, just before they leave India to move somewhere else. After I wrote the *Letter to India*, I came across a letter written by a young Tibetan woman to India, published online in Indian news (Appendix 11) which I refer to as a supportive material but this letter did not inform my data interpretation.

After writing the Letter to India, I interpreted and criticized this text from the point of view of opposite arguments, of what was untold, of what goes against the unitary form of a letter and of what the non-contributors to this letter might have to say. Van Maanen (1988) argues that the final text, after the fieldwork is completed and the text is re-created as a working-interpretive document contains the writer's attempts to make sense of what she has learned. This text may have several forms: confessional, realist, impressionistic, critical, literary, analytic, grounded theory or others (cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p. 34).

It is important to acknowledge that the cultural products made by or about refugees are conditioned by political and historical moments and constitute layers of thinking and practice and discourses about performance, diaspora, migration and identity (Jeffers, 2012, pg. 4). In doing this PhD research, I tried to respectfully acknowledge the ethical principles of postcolonial ethnography (Madison, 2012, pg. 112-113), with an emphasis on accountability – telling how I came to this ethnographic tale – , on the political, social, emotional and physical context of the story, on truthfulness and willingness to be absolutely honest and on the community that I can no longer be separated from, since we have shared the story.

I came to know and understand through my own writing and interpretive practice that making sense of one's findings is both artistic and political because there is no single interpretive truth (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p. 35). There are messy, uncertain, multi-voiced texts, cultural criticism and new experimental works which all are part of the new age of doing qualitative research. These may also be experimental ethnographies, which are writings that produce poems, stories, plays and performances and maybe letters. By writing autoethnographically throughout the PhD research, I aimed to write in a fluid and flexible way that connects the local and personal to the global and political, envisaging a space in the middle, in-between, that is self-reflexive, artistic, politically and socially-orientated and reflects the power of human experiences.

## **VII. Introducing new techniques for capturing sounds, images, silences:**

### **Live methods 2017**

In this section I explain how the PhD research progressed during the second ethnographic fieldwork in India in 2017 by using new and multi-modal approaches to doing sociological and ethnographic work. These approaches that Back and Puwar (2012) write about as 'live methods' became part of

my PhD research gradually as I started to learn more about them from the literature and from events, workshops and conferences that I took part in various locations. I began to adopt them into my research practice in the second (2017) and third ethnographic fieldwork in India (2019). While doing this I continued to work in a methodological framework of bricolage that allows the researcher to borrow methods, strategies and techniques from several fields and intellectual frameworks and to create a piece of work that transcends the boundaries of one discipline and brings originality, creativity and dialogue in the centre of the research.

In 2017 I conducted 21 audio-recorded, individual, group and walking interviews, and spoke to more than 50 people during informal conversations. After returning from fieldwork, I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews, paying attention to the non-verbal language, such as pauses, silences, laughter, tone of voice, background sounds of rain, cows, dogs, traffic, music, conversations taking place at the same time in multiple languages (Tibetans, Hindi, English). All these forms of expression are extremely important as they reveal emotions, intentions, meanings, and context and constitute 'live methods' (Back and Puwar, 2012). For instance, while I was conducting walking interviews in 2017 and doing a tour of the Majnu ka tilla camp in New Delhi, or walking in the Tibetan camp in Mundgod, I paid attention to the sounds of the traffic and the Yamuna River in New Delhi, walked and felt the touch of grass and trees in the vast agricultural fields in Mundgod and the taste and smell of dust or the amazing rain on the streets of McLeod Ganj. And I made a note of these in my fieldwork diary and when I transcribed the interviews conducted in 2017. For instance, I noticed the sounds of the heavy traffic I heard in the Tibetan camp in New Delhi, Majnu ka tilla, and of the Yamuna river flowing behind the camp, and of the ongoing construction work, the making of new hotels and people talking about exchanging foreign currency, dollars and euros. And while doing fieldwork in the Tibetan settlements in Mundgod, I made a note of the group interviews and the lively context that I found myself in:

We sat on chairs outside, in the garden, it was me, Manish, Karma, Mrs La, the camp leader and then her son joined. At a certain point we were speaking three languages simultaneously: Tibetan, English, and Hindi. The two Tibetan men had served in the Indian-Tibetan army for 20 years and the lady's son spoke good English and Hindi too, so he spoke to Manish as well. **It was raining throughout, the dogs came to us, and the cows of the neighbours were crying, too. This was indeed an interview with sound, environment, voices, and emotions.** (Fieldwork diary entry, 17 September 2017, my own emphasis in bold).

The innovative approaches to methods (Back and Puwar, 2012), that include walking tours and experimenting with ambulant techniques, such as ambulant interviews, (Back, 2012, pg. 29) engage words, images, text and sounds while allowing space for flexibility, changes, and contingency. These

experiences aim to make space for the co-existence of a multitude of senses and allow their representation in the research process. And they respond to searches for new ways of capturing voice, beyond the transcribal voice, there can be discordant voices, visions and feelings within an epistemology that is multisensual and multiperspectival and includes sounds, touch and taste, instead of privileging speech and images (Denzin, 1997, p. 36). This type of ethnographic data can then be used to support an interpretation using creative means such as arts, theatre, ethnographic performance and ethnopoeetry (ASA, 2018; Jones, 2018).

The discussion and analysis of the live methods employed in the second ethnographic fieldwork in India that led to the data interpretation as a theatre play and the enacting of the performance in 2019 in India will be explained and presented in Scene 2. Before Scene 2 commences I introduce an Interval.



## Interval

This interval signifies a transition from Scene 1 to Scene 2 and invites the reader(s) to consider and reflect on the changes that will be introduced and to prepare for the disruptions that will follow.

During this interval, the reader may also take a short break and then return to *Scene 2: Disrupting Methodologies. Theatre approaches and performance.*

## Scene 2. Disrupting Methodologies. Theatre approaches and performance

In Scene 2 I discuss the disruption of the methodologies from Section 1 with the use of performance and theatre approaches. I begin by explaining how and why I interpreted the research data (2017) in the form of a theatre play titled 'Amma la', an adaptation and appropriation of the theatre play 'Waiting for Godot' by Samuel Beckett (1952). I continue with reflections about how this PhD research began as a quest about the value and potential of social research and how it became a project about political theatre and hopes, contributing to disruptions and novelty in transdisciplinary academic knowledge. I present the enacting of the theatre play 'Amma la' with research participants and young Tibetans in India (2019), total 85 participants at three institutions: TW, TIPA and LTWA.

### I. Live Methods as performance. 'Amma la': Theatre play in two acts

In this section I present the conceptual and methodological developments that facilitated the interpretation of my PhD fieldwork data (2017) in the form of a theatre play entitled *Amma la*, which means 'mother' in Tibetan. During my second PhD fieldwork I employed mobile, multimodal and sensory methods (O'Neill, 2018) that include the full range of the human senses in exploring the many registers of the social life, and enable us to produce work that is inclusive of word, image, sound and text. (Back and Puwar, 2012). After returning from India (2017) I transcribed the interviews and analysed the data with the help of MAXQDA software and I used coding techniques that produced key themes. When I completed the data analysis I tried to make sense of the data and I thought about ways of presenting it that would be inclusive of the sounds, images and voices I had heard, seen and listened to during the 2017 fieldwork period. I decided to espouse the use of live methods during the fieldwork research with creative means of presenting and communicating the data in the form of a performance.

When I wrote the PhD research findings in the form of a drama, I also made use of the concept 'verbatim theatre' (Paget 2009), in the sense of creating a documentary drama, in this case a short theatre play. The theatre play I wrote in 2018 employed recorded material from the 2017 fieldwork alongside the emotional and non-verbal context of these meetings, which gave the piece its dramatic shape. Interpreting the 2017 ethnographic data through the use of verbatim theatre was inspired by academic sources that emphasize the need for social scientists to share their findings in new and creative forms, such as arts, theatre, and online media (Jones, 2018). The 2017 data interpretation relied on using new, textual, personal and performance approaches to ethnography, inclusive of imagination and creativity (Denzin 1997; Lincoln and Denzin 1994; Atkinson 2004).

The playscript of 'Amma la' is available below.

**Amma la**  
**Theatre Play in Two Acts**

Two characters:

**Amma la** ('mother' in Tibetan): 60-year-old Tibetan lady who came to India as a child.

**Tenzin**: 25-year-old Tibetan working in an Indian city.

**Act I**

*A bench. A tree.*

*Evening.*

**Amma la**: (sitting on the bench) Did you feed the birds today, Tenzin? It is going to rain soon...  
(sound of thunder approaching).

**Tenzin**: Yes, I did, Amma la... (the young girl responds in a hurry, while entering the gate with a basket of mangoes, coconuts and papaya).

**Amma la**: I am so tired sitting on this bench, my knees are hurting all the time... (tries to stand up while the cows in the shed are mooing and the dogs start barking).

**Tenzin**: I will come and help you, Amma la, after I empty the basket of mango and papaya...they were the best I could find in the market today...

**Amma la**: (looking at the fruits bought by Tenzin and then speaking softly, more to herself than to Tenzin) When we first arrived here, we were given real mango, coconut, banana, papaya. All people rushed for banana and papaya... They gave us the fruit after some time, they said 'we give the coconut after five years.' 'Oh, five years, we do not want it, we plant mangoes, it takes five years to grow, we will get the food but in five years we will be back to Tibet!'...

**Tenzin**: Amma la, are you talking to me? I did not hear you well because of the dogs barking...

**Amma la**: No, no, I just said my prayers to our spiritual guru, our Holiness the Dalai Lama...

**Tenzin**: Amma la, tomorrow I will go to the city to collect your pension (sound of wind and torrential rain)....you know this is your first pension, so I can buy you a gift... (smiling).

**Amma la**: Pension? Yes, I am waiting, still waiting... but I have no pension, Tenzin, no Tibetan receives any pension, we are not Indians (with a sober tone in her voice).

**Tenzin**: Yes, you do, this is a new decision by the Indian Government, because you fought in the 22 Regiment, you told me all the stories, remember? You were para-instructor, since 1986 to 2007. You fought in Kargil and then Kashmir, so many stories, in paramilitary school for 19 years! (very excited).

**Amma la**: I remember, of course, we were preparing to fight and protect His Holiness and get ready to go back, waiting for India to win over China... (sighs, pauses, then continues with a grave voice). Because when we enrolled in the Army, in our force, after one month the Indian Government gave us some money, 'what is this?', 'your pay', 'we have not come for pay', 'you give us weapon, you give us training, we do not want salary'. Then at that time, what they have given us, we are satisfied with that...

**Tenzin:** Yes, Amma la... (it is raining loudly and torrentially, the sound covers their voices almost entirely). Also, do you remember Namgyal? The neighbour's son? He will come over this evening to borrow a suitcase...

**Amma la:** Namgyal, the boy of Lobsang la? (with a louder voice, to make herself heard in the rain).

**Tenzin:** Yes, him. He said he is going to New Delhi next week, his aunt has a pension in Mainu ka tilla. They are building a new hotel and his uncle is now buying euros, not dollars...

**Amma la:** His father needs him at home, to help with the fields... he owns four to five acres of agricultural land, who will do the physical agricultural work?

**Tenzin:** Yes, Amma la, but he wanted to go to Dharamshala, to help with the cause, with our Tibetan movement for independence... but he could not find work there, so now he is back. He told me he wants to go to Canada... (speaking slowly, in a low tone).

**Amma la:** (not listening to Tenzin anymore) The movement... our cause... We are waiting ... 59 years... the green pastures of Tibet, going out with the horses, the animals and the entire family for six months on the mountains.... (pausing, then silence, then speaking to Tenzin) Dalai Lama used to fold the hands and ask for support for our own people, he travels all over countries for his own people, to get support for the people. Because of his hard work, we are so privileged to get all the facilities, support from all over the world...

**Tenzin:** Yes, Amma la, but now Namgyal says that if he goes to Canada and gets a passport, he will then be able to go to Tibet... (the rain gradually subsides)... there are a lot of young people going abroad and trying to study, to continue their studies and then coming back to India and contributing to the movement for independence or working in the Government... it is a good thing, Amma la...

**Amma la:** Studying is good... I did not go to school, my parents were farmers... we did not know the weather change in India... did not know how to cultivate the rice, potatoes, because the higher altitude, the agriculture was different, when we came 500 metres down, we did not know how to cultivate, what to cultivate.... And still then we wanted to go back... we are waiting to go back.... (it is getting dark outside and the wind and rain have stopped).

**Tenzin:** Yes, Amma la, but the Tibetan solution is not coming up. And most of the young generation, they are losing their hope and want to migrate, you know, to other countries.... Still then, the Tibetanness will never be lost, you know, Tibetanness will never be lost. And then, of course, citizenship is nothing, it is a paper, it is nothing, it is just a paper, you know....

**Amma la:** When is Namgyal coming, you said?... It is already evening... (with a worrisome voice).

**Tenzin:** I do not know, he said we should wait...

**Amma la:** Wait for how long? It has been 59 years ....

(A young boy opens the gate and starts speaking fast but with a shy voice): Namgyal said to tell you he cannot come today, but he will surely come tomorrow.

(He then shuts the gate and runs back outside, into the street, into the darkness).

## Act II

*A bench. The tree is sprouting leaves.*

*Morning.*

**Amma la:** Namgyal did not come last night, did he? I was waiting, then fell asleep...a boy came in my dream and said something... I do not remember.... (takes a deep breath).

**Tenzin:** Amma la, he said he would be coming today. We will be waiting... I fed the birds this morning. Did you see the tree is sprouting? (with a joyful voice) We will have coconuts soon! But I saw a snake trail in the garden. Do you think the cobras are here again? (worried)

**Amma la:** Maybe, but cobras never harmed any of us, since we first came here, we always lived in harmony with the nature... (speaking with a calm voice). Karma la is soon going to Manali with the sweater business. I will be going to stay in her house and look after it....

**Tenzin:** Oh, again you have to stay in their house? you were there last year, too... (slightly unhappy).

**Amma la:** I will wait for her to come and to let me know when she needs me... Is Namgyal here?

**Tenzin:** No, he is not here yet, Amma la. We can wait a little.... You know, my friend from College, she said she is getting a job as a nurse in a Hospital in New Delhi. She will have a good salary... (with excitement in her voice). Maybe I should also go there with her and find a better job? But only Government jobs are safe and well paid... (disappointed)... How can I get a Government job if I have my Registration Certificate, and not an Indian passport? (sighs deeply and then stops talking).

**Amma la:** New Delhi is a big city, it is overpopulated, over 14 million... and we are Tibetans. We live in India, eat the food and drink the water, speak the local language, so maybe we are 90% Indians this way, but we know that our blood is 100% Tibetan.

**Tenzin:** Yes, Amma la... I have never been to Tibet, you know, I only heard your stories... and how will I go there? When would we get our freedom back?... The Middle Way approach had no dialogue with China since 2011... I do not know, Amma la... (confused)... I will ask Namgyal when he comes....

**Amma la:** Yes, Namgyal should be coming... We have been waiting... Did you prepare the suitcase? (sitting on the bench for one minute, then getting up and walking).

**Tenzin:** (not listening to the last question) Even the daughter of Karma la moved to the U.S. and said that Tibetans there are very active for the Tibet cause... (pauses then stops, changes the topic). Do you know the cook at the Old People's Home? He just came from Tibet last year. He said that he could not find a place to stay in India, rents are high in the cities, so he came here, to our village. Maybe Karma la can give him her house to stay in and look after it? Since it will be empty? (with a hopeful tone).

**Amma la:** You can ask Karma la when she is going to be here.... (tired, sitting on the bench again).

**Tenzin:** When is she coming?

**Amma la:** She said today... And Namgyal? Has he come?

**Tenzin:** Waiting....

*End of the play.*

## **Drama and performance – from theatre workshops to ‘Waiting for Godot’**

Two main events inspired me to use live methods and drama to convey my PhD research findings. One of them was the workshop ‘Theatre as a social metaphor’, led by Sanjoy Ganguli, director of the Theatre of the Oppressed, Kolkata, organised by the Open University during the PASAR Conference, London, November 2017. The Theatre workshop was a mix of performances, role-play, games, and playback theatre. In one of the performances I had to play the role of a male, which proved challenging, as I had to enact a different type of behaviour and gestures that were not familiar to me (Figure 6 below). I realised that theatre means using the body to convey a powerful message and to invoke reflection and change.

**Figure 6. Theatre of the Oppressed Workshop, London, 09 November 2017**



Source: photos taken by the staff of the Theatre of the Oppressed and shared with the participants

Secondly, in November 2018 I took part in the session ‘Listening and performing together: emotions, experience, and ethnopoeury’, at the ASA Conference, Oxford. During this session I experienced two emotional complexities: embodying someone else’s story and having someone else perform mine, with attention being paid to pauses, silences, and missteps. My decision to use a theatre approach in interpreting and presenting the research data was also inspired by contemporary research, ethnography and performances involving participatory action research, forum theatre, applied theatre for social research, performance studies and documentary verbatim theatre and visual research projects (Erel et. al, 2017; Kaptani, 2019; Kaptani and Yuval-Davis, 2008; Sahamizadeh, 2017; Remoundou-Howley, 2017; O’Donoghue, 2018). I discussed these theatre performances as disruptive narratives in Act 1 of this PhD Thesis.

Lastly, the short play ‘Amma la’ is an adaptation of Samuel Beckett’s drama ‘Waiting for Godot’ (2004), first published in 1952 and considered to be an innovation in the Theatre of the Absurd. It is important to mention that the data interpretation presented in the play ‘Amma la’ did not follow the content of the original play ‘Waiting for Godot’, nor the description of its main characters, who are



of questionable social status. However, the structure of the play 'Amma la', the props and its theme: a seemingly endless wait for something or someone, could be considered an adaption or appropriation of Becket's play. Sanders (2005) writes about adaption and appropriation as processes of reinterpretation of an original source text. Adaptation involves the transition from one genre to another, such as novels adapted into films or dramatization of prose, while appropriation leads to the creation of a new cultural product (Sanders 2005). The two terms take various meanings and degrees of similarity and difference in studies of literature, theatre, and the arts, including a degree of criticism and debate over their uses. In this section I refer to Margherita Laera's (2014) argument that adaptation is a synonym for appropriation. Both concepts largely refer to mechanisms of cultural practice and theatrical operations in which a transformation takes place, and in which artists and audiences – and researchers, I add – adapt existing cultural materials into performances by returning to and rewriting histories and narratives and offering new interpretations from a different perspective and sometimes a different language and culture (Laera, 2014, pg. 2).

'Waiting for Godot' was staged in numerous locations since its production: Sarajevo, South Africa, Avignon, New Orleans, London. In each place it acquired new meanings and interpretations about human existence, oppression, nobility, absurdity, in a metaphorical theatre where 'Godot can be anything you want' (Smith 2009). What is important to note is that in both plays – 'Waiting for Godot' and 'Amma la' – the characters wait for something, or someone, by a lonely tree, in a world where time, place and memory are blurred and meaning is where you find it.

## **II. Who is research for? On companheiras, witnessing and political theatre.**

In this section I explain how I came to employ disruptive methodologies in this PhD research in the form of theatre performances. My inquiry into who research is for and what the researcher can do with the research has been a personal and auto-ethnographic process for almost a decade and it started with my first ethnographic fieldwork, in 2008-2010, during my MA research in refugee camps in Hungary. During the camp visits and the interviews with asylum seekers waiting for a decision on their case or waiting to be 'integrated' in the Hungarian society after being granted refugee status, I was relentlessly self-reflexive about what I was doing and why, and what my research meant for the camp inhabitants held there indefinitely and about how it would do anything to change their situation. I felt that my research findings had to do something else: to go back to the participants one way or another and to become an open source for more people to read it, not only fellow University students. I contemplated writing an article for a local newspaper and summarizing my research findings in a non-academic language that would reach larger audiences. I also wanted to become politically involved in decision-making processes about asylum and refugees in Europe and I applied for several entry positions in the European Parliament. For several years after the

completion of my MA, I was moving in-between working with NGOs on migration and refugees, working in the private sector and writing brief articles for conferences and Research Institutes, before returning to the University for doing a PhD, in 2015.

Fast forward, in 2016, during my first PhD ethnographic fieldwork, while living in India and in McLeod Ganj for three months, I was constantly asking myself what good would my research do to my participants, how would Tibetans ever benefit from what I was doing. I still felt that I had to be more than a foreigner asking questions about their lives, more than a non-involved, politically neutral academic who observes and writes about what she sees and hears.

One year later, in 2017, during the second ethnographic fieldwork in the Tibetan settlement in Mundgod, Karnataka, the South of India, one of my research participants, a Tibetan settlement officer was interested in my work for creating a documentary about the life of the first generation Tibetans in India, who were by then in their 80s, and I was happy thinking this could be a good use of my research for the people who helped producing it. However, this project did not materialize, despite my brief attempts to elicit further response and action from this participant.

Therefore, a reoccurring question stayed with me from before the start of this PhD research: *what (good) does my research do for the participants?* Directly linked with this question, I was wondering how to share my findings with the people I interviewed, observed and met while doing fieldwork, in ways that are not academically formulated, sophisticated and long texts written in English that few people would understand, not to mention be able to offer relevant feedback on.

Since 2017 I have tried to find an answer to this question by attending events and workshops about participatory research methods, arts and theatre, and social research at the intersection of performance and politics, and these inspired me to use theatre and performance ethnography as a means of sharing my findings with Tibetan research participants and the wider Tibetan community in the form of a theatre play on my third ethnographic trip to India, in July 2019.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1995, pg. 419) argues for researchers being "*companheira*" which means a person who accompanied the participants in their struggle (Scheper-Hughes, 1995, pg. 411) like her personal experience and ethnographic work in South Africa where she joined the participants on local campaigns. She wrote about this as the difference between the ethnographer as "spectator" and as "witness" (Scheper-Hughes, 1995, pg. 419). Being a spectator is a passive act which positions the researcher above and outside human events. But the witnessing researcher, as *companheira*, is the active voice, responsive, reflexive, and morally committed, who will "take sides" and make



judgments and as witness, s/he is “accountable for what they see and what they fail to see, how they act and how they fail to act in critical situations” (Scheper-Hughes, 1995, pg. 419).

Some of the comments to her argument highlighted that in most ethnographic situations the political choices are more complicated than they were in the South African society of the 1990s. And in some places, intervention may be close to impossible, adding that the foreign ethnographer, who is free to depart, can put the participants at risk, by intervening in a situation, for which the consequences might not affect him/her (Kuper in Scheper-Hughes, 1995, pg. 425). An ethical ethnography must be more aware of the local effects of geopolitics, transnational capitalism, and postcolonial transformations, in a world where “we are multiply positioned and where the West- Rest relationship has yet to be reworked” (Ong in Scheper-Hughes, 1995, pg. 430).

Reflecting on these debates, I felt that they resonated to some extent with my mixed feelings and my self-questioning over what I was doing as a PhD researcher with the Tibetans living in exile in India and what the implications of my research have been since 2015. During the first two years of my PhD research (2015-2017) I felt that conceptually, as a researcher, I was positioned in-between a witness and a *companheira*, albeit perhaps closer to the former than the latter, since I did not take an active role in the struggles and political actions of Tibetans in India or in the UK, like protests against the visits of Chinese dignitaries to India in the summer of 2017, or yearly marches, both in India and the UK, on the 08 March, which is considered Tibet’s National Day.

Since 2018, when I wrote up the analysis and interpretation of my second PhD fieldwork using live methods and performance ethnography, and during the last PhD fieldwork in July 2019, when I facilitated the enacting of the theatre play ‘Amma la’, I have tried to connect with contemporary literature on migration and the arts, in order to make sense of the potential and the value of my research findings and its collaborative dimensions for the participants and the readers. Thus, I moved closer to the multiply positioned researcher that Ong writes about, in her response to Scheper-Hughes (1995).

I came to understand that my PhD work about Tibetans living in exile and their quest for Indian citizenship in present times (2015-2020) connects with experiences of other populations, other migrants and refugees across the globe, in a complex geopolitical context, and speaks to personal and human experiences about identity, location, movement, exile, embodiment, loss and hope in contemporary times. Thus, I argue that my PhD research resonates with broader themes and debates about questions of identity, migration and movement and contemporary politics that have been expressed in artistic forms, such as political theatre. And one of these works, sitting at the intersection of migration, refugees, and theatre that I feel personally and intellectually close to is

Anders Lustgarten's play 'Lampedusa' (2015). Lustgarten is a British citizen born to American parents of Hungarian descent (De Michelis, 2017) and his play 'Lampedusa' (2015) is inspired by the increasing death toll of people migrating from African countries and crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Italy and thus Europe in 2010-2015.

### **On 'Lampedusa' (2015) and disruptive methodologies**

The play 'Lampedusa' was written after the tragedy of the shipwreck on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2013 with more than 360 victims that led to an outcry in media headlines, beyond European borders, with the Mediterranean Sea being labelled a 'cemetery' (De Michelis, 2017, pg. 2), in the midst of renewed political debates about what to do with the migrants. In this political context, where people on the move have been fixed into objects of representation, deprived of agency, to be 'saved' or 'drowned', each serving different populist agendas, Lustgarten's work carves a space of 'militant investigation' (De Michelis, 2017, pg. 1) in the form of political theatre. In political theatre "the protagonists intend to materialize shame and to shock them into catharsis through empathy and a passionate appeal to renewed agency." (De Michelis, 2017, pg. 10).

'Lampedusa' (2015) is a play with two characters. One of them is Stefano, an Italian fisherman on the Italian island of Lampedusa who picks up bodies of drowned migrants from the Mediterranean Sea. In one of his monologues, he cries out:

There has never been a time when three hundred and fifty died at once. In sight of shore. With no-one to mourn for them. (Lustgarten, 2015, pg. 22)

The other character is Denise, a British-Chinese student who is struggling to pay her University fees and holds a precarious job, living on the edge of poverty, with a sick mother who is refused a Disability Allowance by the UK Government. 'Lampedusa' (2015) is a play about resistance, kindness, solidarity, agency, and empathy in times on neoliberal, anti-migration and austerity-driven policies. Lustgarten's view of the theatre is, according to De Michelis (2017), a means for reviving hope, a kind of 'militant hope' (pg. 11) which means renewed agency and empathy, human solidarity and acceptance of the 'other', the migrant, the refugee in a spirit of kindness and hope. This is emphasized in the end of the play, when Denise is touched by the kindness of her newly-found friend, Carolina, a migrant from Portugal who is studying in England and struggling to pay her fees, her rent and the child-care for her young son, abandoned by his father. Carolina attends the funeral of Denise's mother and then invites Denise to live with her and her son, to split the rent and thus to recover from their precarious financial situation. Denise speaks of hope as "our ability to walk away from delusion" (Lustgarten, 2015, pg. 32) and of kindness, which has become an endangered species: "why are people kind? It's the most unlikely thing" (Lustgarten, 2015, pg. 29).

Stefano, the fisherman, who used to pick up dead bodies of migrants off-shore Lampedusa, decides to go to the sea when he hears news of an approaching vessel and to save the people on board. He thus saves Aminata from a drowning boat, one of the three survivors amongst 57 dead people. Aminata came to Europe from Mali, via Libya, to join her husband, Modibo, who arrived in Lampedusa first and was granted temporary leave in Italy. After her arrival, she and Modibo had their second wedding, which they called 'European wedding'. Stefano was the guest of honour, to his amazement. And he speaks of hope and joy as a gift from Modibo and Aminata:

They have given us joy. And hope. They have brought us things we have nothing of. And I thank them for that. They do not know what will happen. If either of them will get to stay long-term. But they are here, in this moment, alive, and living. And that is all you can ask for. (Lustgarten, 2015, pg. 33)

The play 'Lampedusa' (2015) is meaningful and powerful because it tells and performs a story about migrants and children of migrants, as vulnerable groups in times of 'manufactured rage' and fear of migration (Mehta, 2019) across continents, in the USA of Donald Trump, in Modi's India, in Hungary's Orban, in Brazil's Bolsonaro and in Italy's Salvini and more recently in Brexit times in the UK led by Boris Johnson. These are populist leaders who won recent elections based on narratives and 'horror stories about the other' (Mehta, 2019, no page number) told convincingly enough for many to believe, in a climate of fear and intolerance.

Their storytelling needs to be counter-argued with another narrative that advocates hope, humanity, and kindness, in Lustgarten's (2015) words. And in order for that to happen, there needs to be more storytellers who write literature, poetry and ethnography, make theatres, films and performances across academic disciplines, storytellers who try "to render the invisible more visible and bring closer that which seems to be afar, saying that there is no 'us versus them' – the Other is, in truth, my brother, my sister. *The Other is me*" (Shafak, 2019, no page number).

'You cannot divorce yourself from hope, otherwise there is nothing left' (Walker, 2017, pg. iv) writes Corinne Bailey Rea about Alice Walker's novels and the power of writing about a world beyond the reoccurring forces of racism and sexism. Similarly, a performance group whose name in Greek – *Elanadistikanoume* – means 'Come and see what we do' is made up of people living in Athens without official resident permits or citizenship. Their theatrical performances about the historical pluralities and complexities of Greek society address the growing nationalist and fascist movements in Greece and in Europe while their cultural works are innovative and powerful insofar as they are performed 'by those very bodies without citizenship and an official national identity.' (Vourloumis, 2014, pg. 241-242). These performances can be understood as an attempt to create a 'common front between citizens and noncitizens.' (Vourloumis, 2014, pg. 242)

On another continent, the story of the Kurdish journalist Behrouz Boochani who sought asylum in Australia in 2013 but was instead illegally imprisoned in the detention centre on Manus island is powerful for similar reasons. He spent five years typing passages, one text at a time from a secret mobile phone in prison and smuggled out in the form of thousands of text messages. Writing in Farsi and translated into English, Boochani's account turned into a book is considered 'a miracle of courage and creative tenacity' in a political context where the Australian government did everything possible to dehumanise and silence asylum seekers ( Boochani, 2019, pg. 11).

Therefore, I argue that this PhD research about Tibetans in India and the performance of the theatre play 'Amma la' by young Tibetans in McLeod Ganj, in July 2019, stand out for its methodological and analytical novelty and for the methodological disruptions that challenge what constitutes data, how data is collected, analysed and interpreted and shared and the roles of the research / researchers / co-authors. This PhD research makes a strong contribution to the stories about hope and the power of writing against narratives of exclusion, silencing, and othering. For these reasons, I argue that the performance of 'Amma la' in 2019 is a form of political theatre and a disruptive methodology which tells the experience of Tibetans in their own words, with imagination and empathy, enacted and represented through their actions, and performed with skilful engagement and lively re-interpretations of its various meanings. The reflexive, relational, and embodied dimensions of performance make this a powerful analytical and methodological disruption and a tool to explore not only experiences of migration but also experiences about the human condition: "performance is a prism for studying human life" (Tinius, 2015, no page number). Through the process of meaning-making that is inherent in drama and performance, participants 'translate realities and negotiate power structures, thereby informing the development of their own social and cultural identities' (Amkpa, 2014, pg. 13).

### **III. Enacting live methods: data as performance**

In this section I explain how I prepared for and facilitated the enactment of the theatre play 'Amma la' in India in 2019 with 85 young Tibetans. I use visual presentations of graphs, tables and pictures that have been taken with the permission of the participants at all the events mentioned below. I continue working in a framework of accountable-critical ethnography where the researcher is open and transparent about what, why and how she did the research (Madison, 2012).

#### **Preparing for the third ethnographic fieldwork in India: January – June 2019**

Since writing the theatre play 'Amma la', in November 2018, I considered planning how to stage the play on my last PhD trip to India, in 2019. I started brainstorming ways of organising the theatre workshop and contacted people who work in the field of Theatre and Drama, and some of my

Tibetan friends from India and abroad, to ask for advice and ideas. And I registered for and took parts in events, meetings, theatre plays, workshops, and conferences in the UK, in Canterbury and London, that I will briefly present below, in Table 17, Part I, II and III.

Table 17. Events I attended in January – June 2019, preparing for the 3<sup>rd</sup> fieldwork India

**Part I: January – March 2019**

Date	Location / city	Institution	Event title / type	People involved	Relevance for my PhD
31 Jan. 2019	London	Rich Mix Theatre	Theatre play 'Me? I just put British' + Forum Theatre	Researchers + theatre directors: Dr <u>Umut Erej</u> , Dr Tracey Reynolds, Dr Irene <u>Kaptani</u> . + Research participants-actors + <u>spect-actors</u>	I thought about how I could organise the enacting of the play 'Amma la' in India, by the research participants, + have a Forum Theatre session at the end to gather feedback from the <u>spect-actors</u> .
Feb. 2019	Canterbury/ London	Tibetan Office for Culture	Emails	Staff at the Tibetan Office for Culture, Tibetan artist, Tibetan students	My initial plan (1) was to have the play 'Amma la' enacted in UK by Tibetan students and artists – reason: unable to do the theatre workshop in India, Staff at Tibetan Office for Culture (males) recommended a Tibetan artist (male). But I needed female actors for enacting 'Amma la'.
Feb. 2019	Canterbury/ London	UK Universities / Drama Dep.	Emails	Tibetan students / any students of Theatre and Drama	Initial plan (2) to have the play 'Amma la' enacted in the UK by trained artists/ students, at my University, with the help of IT Dep., to record the performance + show it to my research participants in India + gather their feedback.
21 March 2019	Canterbury	CCCU, Performing Arts and Drama Dep.	Meeting	<u>Dr. Kene Igweonu</u> , Senior Lecturer in Drama	Dr. K. I. advised me not to have the 'Amma la' performance in the UK, due to challenges e.g. recruiting actors, cost, timing, + my PhD research was in India. Suggested I organised one day Theatre Workshop in India, enact 'Amma la' with research participants, I did not need 'trained actors', I could be the facilitator + do Forum Theatre.

## Part II. April 2019

Date	Location / city	Institution	Event title / type	People involved	Relevance for my PhD
20 April 2019	London	Royal Theatre	Theatre play 'Pah-la'	Indian playwright Abhishek Majumdar. The play – result of five years research in Tibet, Beijing + India, workshops with Tibet Theatre in Dharamshala + meeting the 14th Dalai Lama <sup>1</sup> .	Topic: Tibetan uprising in Lhasa in 2008 + self-immolation of a young Tibetan nun. I thought about how to enact the play 'Amma la' in India, in English, like the play 'Pah-la'. The cast it was made of actors born out of mainland China <sup>2</sup> .
30 April 2019	London	Queen Mary Univ.	Workshop: 'Welcoming acts for hostile times'	Conference participants + Debora Minà <sup>3</sup> conducted theatre workshop 'Thresholds'. Debora is the Project Director of Future, part of Pan Intercultural Arts' Refugee Youth Arts programme <sup>4</sup>	I spoke with Debora about her theatre work experience with unaccompanied minors-asylum seekers in Croydon + I asked advice for my theatre workshop in India. She recommended resources, e.g. 'Games for actors and non-actors' (Boal, 2005) + invited me to theatre workshop at Goldsmith U., in June.
30 April 2019	London	Café	Meeting	Tibetan contact – student. He lived in India as a Tibetan refugee, was a JNU student, then moved to UK and did another MA, preparing for a PhD.	Tenzin said that 'Amma la' could be done in India + told me about the Tibetan Theatre group in Dharamshala + advised me to recruit only Tibetan actors/participants, unlike 'Pah-la' + use Tibetan language + add English subtitles.

## Part III. June 2019

Date	Location / city	Institution	Event title / type	People involved	Relevance for my PhD
05 June 2019	London	Goldsmith University, Dep. of Theatre and Performance	Action-Reflection event: 'That's not my name' <sup>5</sup>	Theatre practitioners: Sue Mayo, Mita Pujara, Sharon Kanolik and Debora Minà. This day of free workshops and presentations by NGOs, museums, academics, refugees explored how refugee led arts experiences disrupt and reinforce identity.	I took part in one workshop: about refugee women, we explored exercises, short performances, dance, and songs + I took notes about the games + I had conversations with the women + another PhD researcher participant + with Debora Minà.
10 June 2019	London	Anthropology Department of UCL	Workshop: 'Performance Ethnography: Enlivening the Field through Theatrical Techniques'	Organiser: Dr Tess Altman + Tom Bailey, theatre maker, director of the group 'Mechanical', <sup>6</sup> author of the theatre play 'No direction home: Zugunruhe', performed at Edinburgh Festival, 2017 + 20 selected PhD students.	Learnt techniques and strategies from theatre and performance arts: e.g. physical theatre, comedy, vocal techniques, storytelling, gesture, ensemble work, impersonating an animal, improvisation. + The afternoon session: vignette performance of a fieldwork excerpt.

Source: author's own

In the last event that I took part in, the *Performance Ethnography Workshop* at UCL Anthropology, in June 2019 (Figure 7 below), I took notes and photos of the materials used (Figure 8 below) that I found useful and inspiring for my plan of organising a theatre workshop in India, the following month, with the research participants.

Figure 7. Performance Ethnography workshop flyer. UCL Anthropology. 10 June 2019

**Performance Ethnography:  
Enlivening the Field Through Theatrical Techniques**

**One-day Workshop  
with Tom Bailey,  
Theatre Practitioner  
(Mechanical Theatre  
Company)**



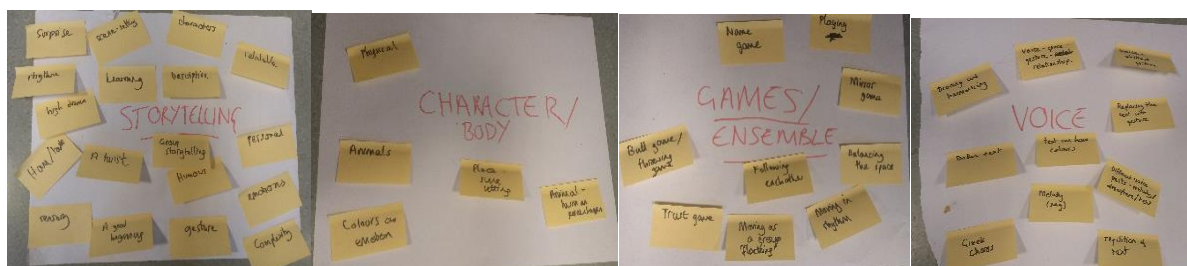
**Organised by Dr Tess Altman  
In association with the  
Political & Moral Economies  
of Voluntarism  
Reading Group**

**Monday 10 June, 9am to 5pm  
Daryll Forde Seminar Room  
UCL Anthropology, 14 Taviston St WC1H 0BW**

Ethnography is an attempt to evoke lived moments and interactions. Yet, sometimes our presentations of ethnographic data—in conference papers, fieldnotes, and writing—do not always capture the vibrancy and dynamism of these moments. Dialogues and encounters that had

Source: flyer emailed to all the workshop participants by Tess Altman

Figure 8. Post-notes of Storytelling - Character/body – Games / ensemble - Voice



Source: photos of post-it notes clicked by the researcher during the event, on 10 June 2019

I also reflected on the second part of the workshop, the performance of a fieldwork excerpt, a group activity where we worked in teams. While preparing for the five minutes showcase of our teamwork, I listened to and helped performing the excerpt from another team member's fieldwork notes which



felt powerful and it stayed with me after the event ended. This vignette originated in Valentina Zagaria's fieldwork notes about young men migrating from Tunisia to Italy and losing their lives in shipwrecks and the women left behind mourning their loss (Figure 9, below).

Figure 9. **Performing the vignette of death at sea, extract from Valentina Zagaria's fieldwork**



Source: photos clicked by UCL students, with permission, and shared with the participants

Valentina conducted extensive fieldwork in Tunisia and on the island of Lampedusa, about the migrants leaving Tunisia and drowning in the Mediterranean Sea on their way to Europe.<sup>10</sup> She had been using theatre in her work for several years and her approach to the short performance that we enacted at UCL on that day was very confident, spontaneous and creative. After I had returned from the last PhD fieldwork in India, in July 2019, I read about Valentina's work and how she devised and performed the ethnographic, political, street theatre 'Miraculi' in Lampedusa, in September 2014 (Zagaria, 2016). I then realised that her work was very close to my own, particularly in the ways she thought about using theatre in a saturated field, as a means of directly involving the participants – migrants, refugees and locals - in other forms than interviews and written text. The way Valentina Zagaria (2016) described the devising of the play 'Miraculi' in Lampedusa and the discussion of the limitations to her own work were inspiring for my writing of this PhD Thesis, in particular the following section, titled 'Devising the play 'Amma la'.

#### **IV. Devising the Theatre workshops 'Amma la' in McLeod Ganj**

##### **Planning one Theatre Workshop at Tibet World, McLeod Ganj, and receiving invitations to facilitate two more workshops (July 2019)**

When I arrived in India, in the first week of July 2019, I emailed and sent messages on social media to the research participants I have known since 2016 and 2017 and informed them that I was back to India and was planning to organise a theatre workshop in McLeod Ganj, in the following weeks, and invited them to join, whenever possible, although I understood that those who lived in New Delhi,

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.theatre-senza.com/valentina-zagaria.html>



Shimla and Mundgod would most probably not be able to join. However, I also offered to send them a summary of my research findings in the form of a playtext and ask for their feedback by email, if they could not join the workshop. One of the participants from Shimla replied asking me for the playtext and I responded to this request and sent out a copy of the 'Amma la' playtext and asked for his response and his thoughts on it, which I have not yet received. Another participant who was also my interpreter when I was in Mundgod, in 2017, responded on social media and told me she was going on a family holiday in the North of India, but not in Dharamshala at that time. Few other participants from New Delhi did not respond to my email or were abroad (in Nepal) at that time, and some of those who were based in McLeod Ganj were also out of town in July, such as a Tibetan journalist, and the businesswoman in whose hotel I stayed on both 2016 and 2017 trips.

I finally met with four of the participants who were in McLeod Ganj at the time of my stay, the director of the Tibet World NGO, as it will be discussed in this section, a young Tibetan woman who wanted to study in Australia but finally stayed in McLeod, another Tibetan young woman who was a student in my English classes in 2017, and a young Tibetan man who was also my student in 2017, he was a newly arrived Tibetan who had uncertain plans about the future, considering going abroad or returning to Tibet but China refused his Visa five times. I met with the Director of the NGO Tibet World (TW) on the first day I reached McLeod Ganj, after I had emailed him the previous week. We discussed my PhD work and my previous trips to McLeod and the volunteering period at the NGO and I asked him about his work. He kindly allowed me to use one of the available rooms in the NGO TW for the theatre workshop and advised me to organise the Theatre workshop at the end of the week, on Thursday or Friday, 18 – 19 July. He also advised me to place a flyer about the Theatre workshop in the town and online and to add an email address and phone number for people to register so that I can keep track of the number of participants.

Meanwhile my partner<sup>11</sup> Manish, who mentioned he did not want to keep his name anonymised throughout this PhD Thesis, and who was in the UK at that time, helped me prepare a flyer about the theatre workshop (Figure 10 below).

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<sup>11</sup> I choose to use the term 'partner' in this PhD thesis instead of 'husband', referring to the person I am married to, for several reasons. First, I find the word 'husband' to carry patriarchal meanings which do not reflect in mine and his beliefs and practices. Secondly, in the UK the term 'partner' is used to refer to the person one is married to or living together with, regardless of their gender, which I believe, offers more space and freedom for alternative modes of being. Thirdly, the definition of 'partner', according to Cambridge dictionary online, is 'the person you are married to or living with as if married to them.' (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/partner>)

Figure 10. Theatre Workshop Flyer, designed for the 1<sup>st</sup> workshop at Tibet World, 18 July 2019



Source: screenshot of the Theatre Workshop flyer designed by my partner Manish, July 2019

Following the advice received, I asked Manish to create another email address for this purpose and this was 'aml.theatre@gmail.com', a shortcut to the title of the play 'Amma la'. Having the new email address 'aml.theatre@gmail.com' attached to my work and to the Theatre workshop poster made me feel like I had another layer of my identity created overnight, and this has become a sort of *alter ego*, not a personal / gmail address, not the office one at Canterbury Christ Church, and nor the PhD student one, but a PhD fieldwork-theatre one. And it felt that with this, I constructed another dimension in the process of becoming: I have become someone who worked with theatre, something that made me feel both happy and excited, but also worried, since it was something very new and potentially open to the unknown. I will come back to these mixed feelings later in this section. The phone number that I gave on the flyer was an Indian number that I used whenever I was in India in the past few years. I printed 20 copies of the flyer and distributed them in different places

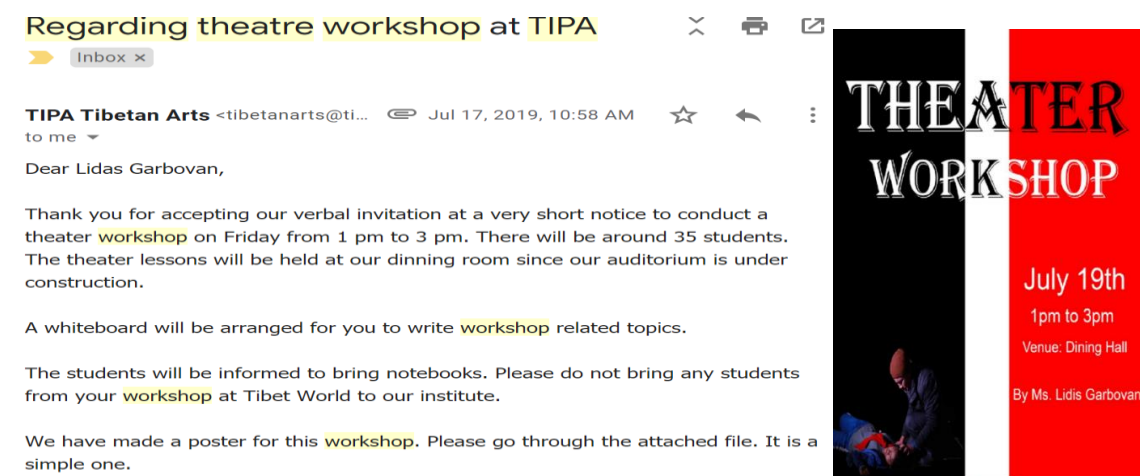
in McLeod Ganj, after having the permission of the people who owned or managed some of these places: at several Tibetan restaurants, cafes and hotels, in a tattoo and piercing shop, at the Tibetan Career office, the Students for Free Tibet Office, in two bookshops, and TIPA and I distributed them on Facebook, email and WhatsApp to my Tibetan contacts.

An interesting development took place after I had met the Director of TW and went out in town to distribute the flyers. I walked up to the TIPA office in McLeod Ganj and left a flyer with the Tibetan officer there, inviting the TIPA students and artists to come along to the workshop at TW on Thursday, although I did not feel very sure about it, as noted in the Fieldwork diary:

I was not very confident or assertive in what I was saying, maybe because I had this idea that the place (TIPA) is famous and reputed and I did not think they would actually be interested, I guess I also felt a little shy. (Fieldwork diary entry, 17 July 2019)

The Tibetan officer told me that their students usually do not go to TW and their artists were in the USA on a tour. But he asked me instead if I would like to offer a separate Theatre workshop to the TIPA students, on another day. I said yes, although I was amazed to hear that, and did not know what they expected out of it. Finally, he spoke to another officer and they both agreed to invite me to run a Theatre Workshop at TIPA on Friday, the 19<sup>th</sup> July. On the same day, in the evening, I received a confirmation email from the Tibetan officer at TIPA, and as discussed, he invited me to do a separate Theatre Workshop for the TIPA students, on Friday, 19 July, 1-3 p.m. He asked me not to bring any students from TW with me and he created another flyer about the TIPA workshop, which he planned to distribute to their students (Figure 11 below).

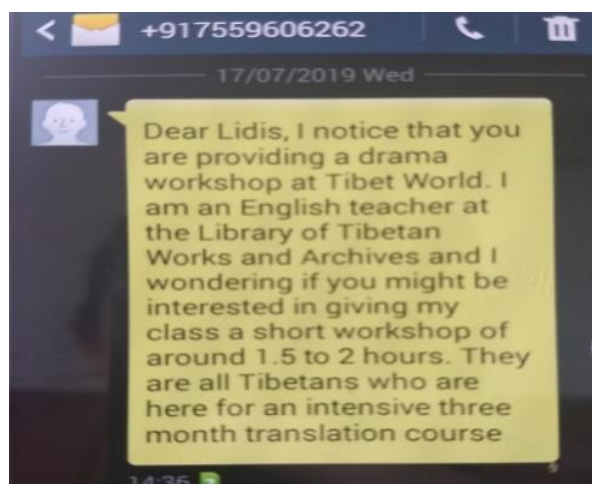
Figure 11. Invitation email from TIPA and the modified flyer, 17 July 2019



Source: author's own screenshot of the email from TIPA

On the same evening I received a text message on my Indian phone number from an unknown number. The SMS (Figure 12 below) was sent by the English teacher at the LTWA and she asked me to provide a drama workshop to her Tibetan students at LTWA. I responded to her surprise invitation and we agreed to meet after the Theatre Workshop at TW, on 18 July, to discuss her invitation.

Figure 12. **Invitation to conduct a Theatre Workshop at the LTWA**



Source: print screen of the SMS sent to my phone number in India

I felt that this unexpected development of events within two days and the invitation from the English teacher at the Tibetan Library as well as the invitation from TIPA to do two more Theatre workshops at their respective institutes, with their groups of students, was more than I had hoped for or planned for this PhD fieldwork. It was a different turn of events and I was happy to have the chance to meet with more Tibetan students but also, I felt very worried at the time of receiving these invitations about how I would go about the workshops, and what kind of expectations they had from me. I felt the impostor syndrome strongly, thinking that the people who invited me perhaps believed that I was a theatre expert or practitioner with years of experience in the field, when in fact I was doing a theatre workshop for the first time, on my own, with a plan that I was not sure how it would work in practice.

## **V. First Theatre workshop: Tibet World (TW), McLeod Ganj**

In advance of this first workshop at TW, I prepared a list of games, exercises and short story-based drama sessions from a variety of events that I attended in 2019, as described in the previous section, and based on selected online resources about Forum Theatre<sup>12</sup> as well as literature recommended by the theatre practitioner Debora Mina<sup>13</sup> that I had gathered in the previous six months (January –

<sup>12</sup> Forum Theatre, online version of Actvise project Handbook, [http://handbook.actvise.eu/?page\\_id=109](http://handbook.actvise.eu/?page_id=109) and Farmer, D. (2014), *Forum Theatre. Drama Strategies*, <https://dramaresource.com/forum-theatre/>

<sup>13</sup> Boal, A. (2005), *Games for Actors and Non-actors*, London: Routledge, available as e-book.

June 2019). I printed this list of games and exercises and took it with me to the first Theatre workshop at Tibet World on 18 July. The 11 games, non-verbal activities and the exercise based on Image theatre are described in the textbox found in Appendix 12.

Commencing a Theatre workshop with physical exercises and games is a practice that I witnessed and took part in on all the sessions where I was a participant, be it Forum Theatre (2017), Drama workshop (April 2019) or Physical Theatre (June 2019). Boal (2002) used the concept 'exercise' to refer to all kind of physical and muscular movement which enables the actor to get to know their body and their relationship to other bodies, as well as to external factor such as gravity, objects and space and its dimensions. 'Each exercise is a 'physical reflection' on oneself. A monologue. An introversion.' (Boal, 2002, pg. 48). He also wrote about and suggested practicing games, together with exercises since the latter relate to the expressivity of the body and the games are a form of dialogue and of extroversion. Boal (2002) also coined the term 'gamesercises', which he defined as: 'a fair proportion of exercise in the games and a fair proportion of game in the exercises. The difference on the whole is one of didactic intent.' (Boal, 2002, pg. 48). According to Augusto Boal (2002), the actors behave in a repetitive way, which is a common feature for all human beings, unless they go through what he calls a 'de-mechanisation' process, a returning or detuning of the emotions and physical sensations, so that the actors are enabled "to take on the mechanisations of the character" and to relearn how to perceive and experiment emotions and sensations that may have been lost from the habit of recognizing (Boal, 2002, pg. 29).

In physical theatre, Callery (2002) and Lecoq (2001) place crucial emphasis on the meaning of the body and the practices for preparing the body before performing any acts. According to Callery (2002), physical training is a process that leads to creative freedom and not a way of following prescriptive techniques. It is a "process of self-discovery and a time necessary for the actors to practice skills, to develop and explore performance potential" (Callery, 2002, pg. 19). Lecoq is considered one of the founding figures of physical theatre and central to his philosophy of theatre is the idea of recognizing the world through the body. To achieve this, the actor must go through the process of forgetting, as a pre-condition for learning. In the process of forgetting the actors enter a state of 'pre-expressivity', which is equivalent to the human state of being before the invention of language. Here the actors must find a simple human body, 'one which does not reflect the individual's personal or cultural history' (Callery, 2002, pg. 34).

**The Theatre Workshop at the TW on 18 July** started at 2.20 p.m. with 12 participants, most of them young men in their 20s and two Tibetan teenagers plus and a volunteer from Tibet World, a young woman from France, who joined out of interest in the workshop. Another Tibetan young man had a

camera given by TW and took photos and videos, after I had received the students' verbal consent. One of the participants, whom I will call Sonam (not his real name), offered to be an interpreter, although all the participants, except one said they understood the instructions in English and they did not need interpretation. However, having Sonam was helpful, as I felt it was good to have someone to help me organise the games. In the second part of the workshop, I asked for his advice about how to do the theatre performance. He read the play 'Amma la' and offered to translate it from English to Tibetan (Figure 13 below).

**Figure 13. Researcher and Tibetan interpreter at TW Theatre Workshop, 18 July 2019**



Source: photo taken by Tibetan participant with TW's camera, with the students' permission

We went through all the preparatory games and image theatre with the 12 Tibetan participants, as shown in Figure 14 below. This activity lasted for about one hour.

**Figure 14. Students at TW Theatre workshop playing ball game and frozen image, 18 July 2019**



**Source:** photo taken by Tibetan participant with TW's camera, with the students' permission

The groups decided on a story each, one about friendship and one about holidays, and then I asked them to work together and use gestures and frozen images and words, if they wished, to enact the story, and they had 10-15 minutes to practice it. They put the story together and had fun and were laughing while practicing, which they did with the games, too (Figure 15 below).

**Figure 15. Students at TW Theatre Workshop doing the mirror game, 18 July 2019**



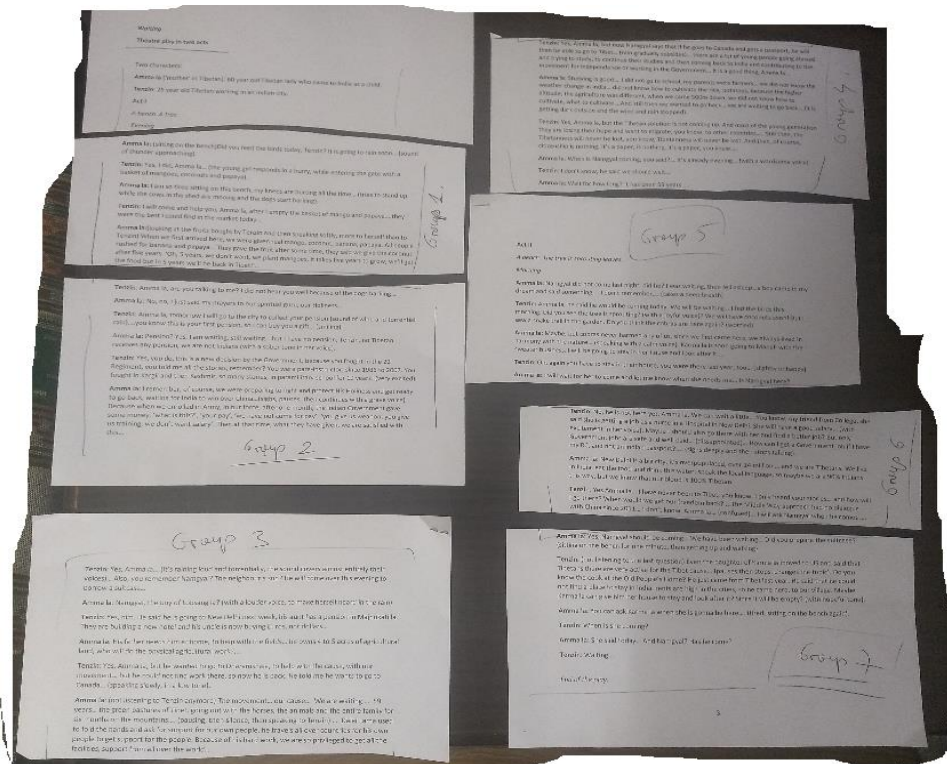


**Source:** photo taken by Tibetan participant with TW's camera, with the students' permission

They seemed to have enjoyed the warm-up exercises and enacting the short story and I thought it was a good preparation for performing the play 'Amma la'. This part of the workshop ended around 3.45 p.m. and I was worried that we had just 15 minutes left to do the play 'Amma la' and I was not yet sure how to go about it in such a short time. Then the Director of the NGO came and told me that we could stay for another one hour and continue the workshop. I was happy to hear that, but all the students had to excuse themselves and left at 4 p.m. for another class. It was only my interpreter who stayed longer, and we had a chat, he told me about his work in the Tibetan community in another town in Himachal and about his sisters who lived abroad.

To conclude, in this first workshop at TW I learnt about how to manage my time and how to organise the Theatre workshop better in the future, I felt responsible for this rather unfinished workshop, but I realised it was an experiment or a practice session that was fun but incomplete from the point of view of my research, as we did not perform the play 'Amma la'. One option could have been to continue with the performance the next day, but I had two more workshops planned for the following two days, and so I had to make a choice about what to do next. Finally, I decided to move ahead and organise the next two workshops at the TIPa and the LTWA with the new groups of students. By this time, with the lessons learnt from the first Theatre Workshop at TW, I knew that I had to organise the workshop better and allocate one hour for preparation time and one hour for the performance of 'Amma la'. Also, when I went back to the hotel room, I was thinking about how to do the performance with a large group of 35 students, in each of the two following workshops. After giving it some thought, I decided to divide each group in seven smaller groups with five participants each, and correspondingly, to divide the playtext of 'Amma la' in seven sections. Thus, I took several printed copies of the playtext and, using scissors, I divided them into seven pieces and wrote Group 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 on each respective section (Figure 16 below). This proved to be a useful strategy that worked well in the remaining two workshops, as it will be discussed on the following pages.

Fig. 16. Dividing the playtext 'Amma la' in seven parts



Source: photo clicked by the author

## VI. The second Theatre Workshop: TIPA, McLeod Ganj

The Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), in Dharamshala, was established by the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama in 1959 as the first Tibetan institution in exile. TIPA is the preserver of the folk opera of Tibet, called *Ache Lhamo*, and of a wide repertoire of musical, dance and theatrical traditions from Tibet.<sup>14</sup> TIPA also hosts a modern Theatre troupe which performs contemporary Tibetan plays and the institute has its own workshops for making costumes, masks and musical instruments, while it trains young Tibetans to become teachers of Tibetan music and the performing arts at Tibetan schools and settlements throughout India and Nepal.<sup>15</sup> The institute has 112 members, including artistes, instructors, administrative staff and craftsmen, who live and work at the premises of TIPA, in Dharamshala.<sup>16</sup> TIPA celebrated 60 years of life and work in exile in India, preserving and promoting Tibetan musical heritage, folk music, opera and dance traditions of Tibet.<sup>17</sup> The 60 years milestone

<sup>14</sup> <http://123himachal.com/dharamshala/links/tipa.htm>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> <https://playingforchange.com/musicians/tipa/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://tibet.net/sixty-years-of-excellence-in-tibetan-performing-art-an-exile-success-story/>



was celebrated by TIPA artists and performers and CTA officials in October 2019 with a showcase by Tibetan exile artists, who performed Tibetan dances, songs and Tibetan opera as shown in Figure 17.

Figure 17. **TIPA artistes performing Tibetan dances and songs. October 2019**



Source: <https://tibet.net/sixty-years-of-excellence-in-tibetan-performing-art-an-exile-success-story/>

At the time of my third PhD fieldwork in India, in July 2019, the Tibetan officer who invited me to do the Theatre Workshop at TIPA informed me that the main hall or auditorium where TIPA artists have their performances was under construction and it would be ready by October, when a large celebration would take place. This was indeed the 60-year celebration of TIPA in exile, as briefly presented above, and I read about it in November, when I was already back to the UK and thus I could not attend this event, in case I had been invited.

On 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019, when I had to facilitate the Theatre Workshop at TIPA, I had very mixed feelings about what I was doing and tried to gather feedback on my work, from both the participants and the Tibetan officer who invited me, especially after the workshop ended. My mixed feelings had to do with the place where I was going to do the workshop, the number of students who were going to participate in it and the expectations that I had to manage, which were two-folded. On the one hand, I expected the theatre workshop to work very well for the purpose of my PhD, and better than the previous one, at Tibet World, where we ran out of time with the students and could not perform the theatre play 'Amma la'. Secondly, I did not know what the Tibetan officer who invited me to TIPA and the TIPA students expected out of the Theatre Workshop, and I found myself thinking that I was not an expert and felt like an impostor. "The Impostor phenomenon" or "Impostor syndrome" was described as having strong feelings of deceit, dishonesty and self-doubt in the face of success (John, 2019). The phenomenon describes how mostly high achieving women doubt the expertise they have in their own field and they also feel they have made others believe that they are more capable than they are in reality (John, 2019). It has also been argued that women and ethnic minority populations

have a tendency of experiencing the impostor syndrome more, partly due to structural inequalities and imbedded forms of sexism and racism (Buckland, 2017).

My feelings about being unfit to do a Theatre Workshop at this institute partly originated in my previous, albeit little knowledge that I had about the TIPA: a famous and prestigious place where Tibetan artists and experts in the field of arts live and work and where I did not feel that I belonged or have had any experience with. My mixed feelings about doing a workshop at TIPA were reinforced later, when I returned from the fieldwork and met with my Tibetan friend and interpreter in the UK who helped me translate the videos from Tibetan to English. He told me that he was surprised that the TIPA students were part of my workshop, as they are not easy to find, always abroad, and difficult to have them part of any workshop (Post-fieldwork diary, 16 October 2019). Nonetheless, on the day of the Theatre Workshop at TIPA, I felt confident about the first part: the games, which I had practiced the day before with the students at Tibet World. And I had spent considerable amount of time preparing for the workshop the day before, going through some of my PhD chapters about Live Methods and several more articles on Theatre. And when the young Tibetans entered the hall at TIPA it felt good to see them as they reminded me of teaching at my UK University, in a large classroom of 35 students. They looked very young and the Tibetan officer later that day told me their age ranged from 14 to 21-year-old. Around half of them were teenage girls and half teenage boys and they all looked energetic, confident, and excited.

At the start of the workshop, the Tibetan officer introduced me briefly in Tibetan and I was able to understand few words: that I am from Hungary; that I live and study for a PhD in England and I volunteered with Tibet World, and I organised a Theatre workshop there the day before, as they could see on the posters in town. When I introduced myself, I talked about my PhD about Tibetans living in India, my studies in Sociology and Anthropology and more recently the training I had in the UK in drama and theatre. I told the students that we would do many games and exercises during the workshop and then we would enact a story. Then we started playing the preparatory games and I was slightly worried about how to work with such a big group, so I planned to do only the games that I thought could be suitable for a group of 35 students, four games with the whole group, including the frozen image game (Figure 18 below).

**Figure 18. TIPA Theatre Workshop – students playing the frozen image game, 19.07.2019**



**Source:** photo clicked by the TIPA administration officer, with students' permission

We then played three games in pairs and finally the game about the animal figure again with the entire group, which they enjoyed and laughed a lot at (Figure 19 below). We played all the games for about 30 minutes, we spent another 15 minutes on enacting frozen images and various feelings, and then we moved into the story part. As I was given a whiteboard, I decided to use it, so I asked the students to tell me the parts of a story and they answered quickly, without feeling shy, naming several elements: characters, emotions, drama, focus, narrator and few more, as I was writing their responses on the whiteboard.

**Figure 19. TIPA Theatre Workshop – students enacting an animal, 19.07.2019**



**Source:** photo clicked by the TIPA administration officer, with students' permission

We started the second part of the workshop, where the students had to enact the play 'Amma la', at 2.00 p.m. and had one hour left until the end of the workshop. I divided the students into seven groups and gave each of them one section of the play and asked them to sit in different parts of the large hall and discuss in their own group and prepare for the performance. I told them they had 20 minutes to do that. Then I went to check on each group several times and answered their questions. I also asked them if they understood the playscript, written in English and they all said they understood it, confirming what the Tibetan officer told me at the start of the workshop: that all the students had good English speaking and reading skills and there was no need of a translator.

One group asked me early on if they could enact the play in Tibetan language, instead of English, and I said yes, of course, feeling happy that I could follow my PhD supervisors' advice on the question of language, in April 2019, and offer the options to the participants as to which language to use during the performance. Another issue raised by many groups was how to enact the characters since each group of students had five members, and there were only two characters in the playscript: Amma la and Tenzin. I tried to help them by asking them to identify more human and non-human elements in the text, such as other people mentioned in the dialogue, for instance Namgyal, the neighbour's son, the cook, and Karma la, another neighbour. I told them to pay attention to animals as well as sounds, a cobra was mentioned at a certain point in the playscript, and there was rain and wind and so on. And I noticed that they were already good at enacting sounds as I could observe them doing so in the games part of the workshop.

Finally, one group that received part four of the playscript 'Amma la' could not do the performance and so part four was left out, and I re-allocated the team members of this group to the other existing groups. In the end there were six groups with more than five members each.

All the groups prepared for about 30 minutes, during which they talked a lot with each other, and based on my own experience with drama workshops, where the theatre practitioner told us to spend less time talking and more time standing up and enacting the playscript, I gently pushed them towards practice and performance in their own group. I noticed that they were skilled and creative during their preparation time, as some of them practiced the movements and sounds of a cobra, a cow and a dog, while others went out and collected grass and started cutting it with a knife and others cut paper into smaller pieces and asked me to write on it the symbol of foreign currency: EUR and dollar (Figure 20 below).

Figure 20. **TIPA Theatre workshop: students preparing for the performance 'Amma la'**



**Source:** photo clicked by the TIPA officer, with students' permission

The students also asked me if they could add more to the story they had to enact and I told them that they could add more characters on their own and more dialogues if they wished, I asked them to feel free and change the story as they pleased and be creative. After about 20 minutes they seemed to be ready with the preparations for the performance, and so I asked the Tibetan officer who helped with the camera work to come and help record the performances, he came back in 10 minutes and meanwhile I went to check on all the groups again and told them that we would start in five minutes and each group will present their performance to the whole audience made of the other groups, the Tibetan officer and myself, starting with the first group who had the first section of the playscript 'Amma la'. The performances of the students at TIPA made a strong impression on me, as noted in the Fieldwork diary, the evening after the Theatre Workshop:

The levels of confidence, creativity, talent, and imagination they used baffled me, I was in utter amazement. All the groups improvised, they learnt the dialogues by heart in the thirty minutes they had to prepare, and they acted without feeling shy or scared, they did not even look nervous! ... I thought it was fantastic! Each group prepared a scene – using tables, chairs, papers, a scarf, a door, empty cups to drink tea from, and changing the setting every time before their turn came to perform (Fieldwork diary entry, 19 July 2019).

We finished the Theatre workshop at 3 p.m., with a big thank you and hand clapping. I thanked all the students for their work and their beautiful performances and told them if they wanted to stay in contact they could write to [amla.theatre@gmail.com](mailto:amla.theatre@gmail.com). Then the Tibetan officer said a thank you message in English, and gave me a kata, a white scarf that Tibetans offer to a person as a symbol of respect and gratitude. The students then invited me outside for a group photo. And they wanted to teach me a game so we all stood in a circle and a teenage girl explained to me the game, which was interesting, very fast and I did not get it right even after three attempts, they forgave me, although one person should be out at the first mistake. I got myself out after my third mistake and watched



them playing the game so well, with four teenage girls left in the 'semi-final', and I was thinking that maybe I was not that young anymore, or I was not that good at games (Figure 21 below).

Figure 21. **Playing game outdoor with the students, post TIPA Theatre Workshop, 19.07.2019**



Source: photo taken by the Tibetan officer, with the students' permission

### **Post-performance reflections and Theatre Workshop at TIPA**

At the end of the Theatre workshop at TIPA I had a chat with the Tibetan officer who invited me to organise this event and I asked for his feedback about it. I was trying to read this on his face, but it was not very clear. During the workshop he was taking photos and was smiling and laughing with the students, especially during the games, which I was happy to see. He then made videos of their performances of the 'Amma la' play, to save them on the online archives of TIPA and to share them with me, which was a great help. Initially I was worried that I would need a professional photographer to assist me in the workshop and had nobody with me, although my extended family in India tried to find someone but the option I was offered was hiring a photographer for two hours for the cost of 30,000 rupees (325 pound), which I did not have funding for so I had to refuse. Finally, I was happy that the Tibetan officer offered to assist with the photos and video capture on the day and at the end of the event I was jokingly noting in my fieldwork diary: 'I managed to save 30,000 rupees by not hiring the professional photographer' (19 July 2019).

The Tibetan officer told me that he did not know much about the Theatre Workshop in advance, until I made the introduction on the day, but it was alright in the end. I told him how impressed I was with the students' acting skills, their talent and energy and creativity. I asked him for how long they study at TIPA and he said their studies lasted four to five years, but they continue afterwards up to 11 years. Some of them then become senior artists and perform at events in India and abroad, while others go to become teachers of Tibetan music and dance in Tibetan schools in India. The students were selected from all the Tibetan settlements in India based on an exam by a selection committee. He also told me they had someone from Germany who came to do a drama workshop last year

(2018). In the photos and video recordings he showed me while we were waiting for the Theatre Workshop's files to upload, I could see some wonderful drama performances, with actors on a beautiful stage, wearing costumes, wigs, masks and he told me they were the TIPPA senior artists, also the younger ones were dancing and playing some of the instruments. At that point I started feeling that these students were so talented and it was a loss that I did not have the nice stage and auditorium nor the costumes to do a drama, like in the videos from their last year's performance.

I was still wondering what the students thought of the Theatre workshop I did on that day, and whether it was not too simple for their level. Then we watched on the window and saw the same students performing a traditional Tibetan dance and singing together in Tibetan on an improvised stage in the courtyard, among the construction work going on and street dogs sitting patiently and watching them performing. Their performance was beautiful, I was captivated and went out on the balcony and watched them for another 15 minutes, while the photos were being transferred. At that point in time I felt that these young students were real artists and felt that I would love to do something similar, artistic, and beautiful in my own life. I began to understand that I could in fact learn from and be inspired by them, and their acting skills during the play were all part of their talent, skills, and their studies. I was wondering how they invited me to teach them when I was not an artist. I still could not know their thoughts about the Theatre Workshop we did on that day, but I started to understand that my presence there and the Theatre Workshop I conducted was more than sharing my PhD research findings, it was a co-production of an artistic, performative and embodied knowledge about Tibetan lives in exile in India. More than that, it was a time and space of shared learning, shared experiences and understandings, collaboration and reflections on the human condition, where the researcher is a learner herself and the participants-students-actors kindly introduce her to new meanings, ideas and potential. And this constituted a disrupting act to the traditional methodologies and epistemologies of knowledge production, as Gatt (2015) writes:

Academic knowledge and epistemology privilege the mind and the intellectual forms of knowledge over other forms that are considered practical. We need ways of working that promote different ways of knowing, different methods that transcend the old epistemologies and ontologies and different understandings of personhood. (Gatt, 2015, pg. 343)

Therefore, in this PhD research I advocate for disruptive methodologies and alternatives to the way knowledge is produced and represented, especially in Western-dominated understandings of the world, where the written text is considered more valuable over bodily expression (Madison, 2012). By using performance and ethnography and co-producing knowledges with the participants this PhD research forged a better understanding of reflexivity and collaboration and acknowledged the inherent temporality of knowledge (Gatt, 2015). This form of embodied, co-produced knowledge

shows how this PhD contributes to decolonising research and how in the process of co-producing research and sharing spaces of co-learning, common experiences and understandings with the participants, researcher's identities become reshaped and transformed (Keikelame and Swartz, 2019). And this process is more than about the method, data, and participants, it is about creating the spaces that can enable this process of disrupting methodologies.

## **VII. The third Theatre workshop at LTWA, Dharamshala**

In advance of the third Theatre Workshop at LTWA, on 18 July I met with the English teacher who invited me to run the workshop. Using the experience that I gathered at the first workshop, at TW, I showed her the preparatory games, and she advised on what we could do with the students at the Tibetan Library and few things that may not work. I also explained to her that the theatre play 'Amma la' was an interpretation of my PhD findings, and how it could be enacted by her students. She told me that the group was made of 35 Tibetans, mostly lay, few monks, one from Vietnam and one from Bhutan, with different levels of English. She was excited about the games and exercises and the play 'Amma la'. The reason why she invited me to do a drama workshop was because she wanted her students to build confidence, to express themselves more freely, especially in English, and get to know each other and have fun. We agreed on doing the theatre workshop on Saturday, 20 July, at 2 p.m. for a duration of two hours and she told me that based on her knowledge and observation about the students who were studying Translation (English-Tibetan) there was no need of an interpreter.

**On the day of the performance** I entered a small classroom with 33 students, on the second floor of the beautiful building of the Tibetan Library and I felt more confident that in the previous two workshops, perhaps due to the experience I had gathered in the past few days. I also felt that we had less space to do the games and performance, as compared to the previous days. Nevertheless, I was hopeful and I was confident, I think the impostor syndrome started to fade away and I felt that what I have been doing this week turned out well, the students enjoyed it and their performances were captivating, analytically rich and insightful.

The students at the Tibetan Library were indeed a mix of monks, nuns and lay people, all youngsters. The teacher told me they must be around 25 and up to 35-40 years-old, and had different background, some had studied Bachelor of Commerce, Architecture, Design, IT, English literature, and Buddhism before joining the translation course. She introduced me briefly and then I said a few things about myself, about my PhD about Tibetans in India, and my experience with theatre and drama. I also talked about the structure of the day and then moved into doing the games. We did all the games as in the TIPA workshop, but this time enacting an animal game did not work that well,



either because the students were shy or they had less space, or both. But otherwise they had fun with the games and the teacher was pleased to see that and as agreed with the students, she took some photos during the workshop.

During the game about non-verbal mimes, or performing emotions, this time I wrote more complex words than in the previous two workshops, such as 'kind', 'aggressive', 'impatient', 'drunk', and was not sure how much they would understand, or be able to enact, but to my surprise, they all understood everything and enacted them so well, without my guidance, I was impressed. When I went around and asked them about how they did the game, a Tibetan monk told me he had to enact 'kindness' and the way he did it was the following: he showed everyone in his group that he was hungry, by rubbing his stomach, then he picked up an apple, looked at it, but then decided to give it to the person next to him. I found it a fascinating way to enact a complex and abstract feeling. When I introduced the play 'Amma la' I told the students that this is part of my PhD, it was a story written in English, but it was about Tibetans. And since they studied translation, they would be the most suitable to translate the story in Tibetan for themselves and the group they were working in. Before we moved into enacting the play, I asked them about the constitutive elements of a story and they were all quick to answer and came up with great ideas that I wrote on the whiteboard (Figure 22 below). Then I told them that in the story they would perform there may be all or some of these elements that they mentioned, and this was an interesting idea, because they said that a narrator was a part of a story and later, during the performances, almost all the groups had a narrator in their performance, which I did not expect to see, but it was part of their creativity and skills.

Figure 22. LTWA Theatre workshop: Story discussion and students brainstorming, 20.07.2019



Source: picture taken by the English teacher, with the students' permission

After the ten minutes' tea break, I divided them into seven groups and gave each group a short text, a piece of paper cut from the play 'Amma la', just like with the TIPA students, but today I added an extra note to each group: the introduction that sets the scene and the two characters. Then I went around to each group to see if they had any questions. Before that I told them to use their

imagination and creativity to enact the story and to use Tibetan language and/or English, and they took around 30-40 minutes to prepare for the performance (Figure 23 below).

Figure 23. **LTWA Theatre workshop: students preparing to perform the play 'Amma la', 20.07.2019**



Source: picture taken by the English teacher, with the students' permission.

Many of them, but not all, asked me how they would do the play with only two characters, having five people in the group so I told them to identify more people in the dialogue, by their names or occupations, or animals or sounds. And some groups were able to do that on their own. I told them they could have more or less dialogue, create new characters, use both languages, do as they wished. And indeed, when the time came for each group to perform, I was amazed at their display of creativity, improvisation, and imagination.

We ended the theatre workshop after the last group performed the story and the English teacher said few final words, thanking me for my work, which I felt humble and happy about. I said few sentences filled with appreciation and praise for the students' performances and their creativity to choose what to do with the story, which language to use, how closely to follow the text and how to change it. I thanked their teacher for having invited me and wished them good luck with their studies and then I left. I walked back to the hotel and felt very tired but also very happy. A heavy storm marked the end of the day and the week in Dharamshala.

## On Improvisation and intersectionality

The performances enacted in India in 2019 by Tibetan students and volunteers, who were not trained actors, reveal the importance of improvisation and exploration of ideas and feelings in research using applied drama, that replaced the rehearsing and preparing a polished performance for an audience. This has been emphasized in other contexts, for instance applied theatre work in South Africa (Chatikobo and Low, 2015) shows that having no trained actors performing might work better since the enactment is 'about play, being playful and creatively collaborating' (Chatikobo and Low, 2015, pg. 383). Moreover, in the same context the researchers emphasized the importance of not relying on a model or formula of applied practice, but they rather decided to work in a way which was responsive to who was in that space. 'Such an approach also enables different ideas to emerge, ones which perhaps were not in the original plan' (Chatikobo and Low, 2015, pg. 383). In a similar manner, Vourloumis (2014) wrote about how improvisational practices are necessary for articulating and shaping the performances of the non-citizens' group 'Come and see what we do' / *Elanadistikanoume* performing in Athens, whose work was devised by experiment and collaboration. Vourloumis (2014) then argued that these improvisations were important as they promoted inclusiveness for everyone, including non-trained children, and they showed how such a politics of performativity could reveal 'other ways of being in the world' (Vourloumis, 2014, pg. 249).

I argue that these understandings of applied theatre and drama selected from other types of research correspond to the performances of the non-trained student-volunteers in the Theatre Workshop in India (July 2019). Their spontaneity and imagination sparked my curiosity but also answered to my worries about how the performances could be enacted without having trained actors and repeated rehearsals. In Madison's words (2012) human beings are a naturally performing species, rather than *homo sapiens*, we are *homo performans* (pg. 165) and here lies the power of performance.

Secondly, I argue for a contextually applied understanding of the concept intersectionality, defined earlier in this Thesis, in the discussion about the Conceptual framework in Act 3, Scene 1, point II. I show below how the performances of the research participants in the two workshops and their enactment of the theatre play 'Amma la' constitute an intersectional exploration of their different age, gender, education, and geography-based identities, but more than that, it denotes an intersectional understanding of their experiences of living in India that shape and are shaped by these identity categories. The workshop participants at all the three locations in India (2019) were mostly young Tibetans, who had some level of education, and most of whom spoke or understood English. This means that I did not include in the workshop Tibetans of middle or older ages, who had

less education and qualifications and who did not speak or understand English. While this may be the case, for the reasons discussed earlier in this section, I would also emphasize the fact that the playscript of 'Amma la' was built on the interpretation of the research findings from the PhD 2017 fieldwork, when I met with, interviewed and was inspired by Tibetans of all ages, with or without education and qualifications, who were born in Tibet or India or Nepal and their views were represented in the theatre play 'Amma la'. I would also argue that one of the main characters in the play 'Amma la' was an older Tibetan lady and her role was played by different people during the Theatre Workshops in Dharamshala (2019), including a 40-year-old Tibetan monk and several young Tibetan women.

Moreover, the 70 students who performed the theatre play 'Amma la' in two different locations came from diverse social and educational background and from different parts of India. The students at TIPA were around 14-18 years old, teenage boys and teenage girls, and they were selected by a committee to represent all the Tibetan settlements across India. And their performances were expressive of their own views and understandings but arguably also of the experiences of their families and communities whom they have lived with and observed during their lives. The students at the LTWA were around 20-40 years old, and included monks and nuns, together with lay young men and young women, and they studied different subjects, such as literature, design, marketing, IT or Buddhism and the same could be argued about their performances: they were most likely inspired by their personal experiences as lived in the middle of Tibetan and non-Tibetan communities.

I present and discuss the analysis of the Tibetan students' performances of 'Amma la' in India, in 2019, in *Act 6. Enacting disruptions. Participatory and collaborative performances*. And I connect the meanings and interpretation of these co-produced and disruptive knowledges with the key ideas and themes of this PhD research in *Act 7. The Final Act. Waiting and Hope*.

### **Summary of Act 3**

Act 3 presented the methodological process of this PhD research that was marked by disruptions, transitions, and changes. In Scene 1 I explained the methodological journey and the research design understood as bricolage that shaped the first years of this PhD research. In Scene 2 I presented and discussed the disruptions to this methodological process produced by the use of performance and theatre approaches through the interpretation of the research data (2017) in the form of a theatre play titled 'Amma la' and enacted with the research participants and young Tibetans in India (2019).

I argued that by enacting and performing embodied experiences about their lives in exile in India in the 2019 'Amma la' performances, the Tibetan participants collaboratively produced new and disruptive knowledges about migration, identities, and citizenship in multimodal and visceral ways. And these new knowledges created through ethnographic performances both contest the boundaries between sciences and the arts and re-join them with the help of theatre approaches and self-reflexivity. This corresponds to a radical knowledge coproduction that disrupts authorship, self, linearity, and established knowledges.

The following section is *Act 4. The quest for Tibetan identities*, preceded by an Interval.

## Interval

This interval signifies a transition from Act 3 to Act 4.

The interval invites the reader to consider and reflect on the previous Act and to prepare for the disruptions that will follow in Act 4.

During this interval, the reader may also take a short break before returning to *Act 4. The quest for Tibetan identities*.

## Act 4. The quest for Tibetan identities

‘Indians call me “ching chong”, the Chinese arrested me when I walked into Tibet, beat me up in jail and threw me out and said: “Get out of here, you bloody Indian.” *Who am I?* I am born and brought up in India and speak four Indian languages, love Bollywood, have more Indian friends than those of my tribe. *Who am I?* My identity card is called Registration Certificate. It says you are a foreigner, and your nationality is Tibetan. But for India there is no Tibet, it is only China, although we have Indo-Tibetan Border Police. Legally, no one is a refugee in India, there is no refugee law here, but India is home to the largest number of refugees, from Parsis to Burmese, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankan Tamils and Tibetans, who insist on maintaining exile citizenship’. (Tsundue, 2011)

### About Act 4

My PhD research aims to explore how Tibetans make sense of their status, positions and identities while living in India as refugees/guests/citizens and what is their approach towards Indian citizenship. In Act 4 I discuss the initial analysis and interpretation of the ethnographic data that emerged in 2016, based on a three-month fieldwork conducted in India. The details of the fieldworks, the gatekeepers, the interview guide, the participants, and the other processes involved in this data collection are explained in *Act 3. Disruptive Methodologies. Scene 1*.

Act 4 is important for several reasons. It shows how and why this PhD research is a personal story intertwined with a political one, and how by reflecting on myself and my personal story I was able to make sense of the 2016 research data, as explained in Scene 1. In Scene 2 I demonstrate how this PhD research that was conducted in several stages started with settling in the field, facing fears, anxieties, and lack of confidence, managing, and negotiating uncertainties. And this meant a process of wrestling with myself and a disruption of expectations by dismantling the layers of my identity.

In Scene 3 I explain how I explored and learnt first-hand, first time information about who Tibetans in India were, and what their questions, concerns and tensions were at the time of conducting this fieldwork, in 2016. Finally, in Scene 4 I present the data interpretation in an epistolary style, in the form of an imaginary letter titled ‘Letter to India’, which I then critique by using the concept of the researchers’ multiple voices. There are no intervals between these scenes since there is a continuity of ideas in all the four scenes of Act 4.

## Scene 1. Writing myself into the research: ‘start where you are’

I usually introduce my PhD topic as an inquiry into the practices of Tibetans living as guest / refugees / exiles in India in current times and the quest for Indian citizenship. However, this PhD Thesis reflects not only the stories and experiences of Tibetans living in India, but another migrant’s story: my story. The reasons behind this PhD topic are grounded in my life trajectory, my motivations and my anxieties, my experiences, and my identity questions. And the transitions in my life from one country to another, from one citizenship to another. And the processes of paperwork and of personal and professional struggles associated with these transitions and the journeys into the self.

My PhD is, in one way, about India and about myself, and a quest about what it means to be a migrant living in India. I started “my relationship” with India first by reading other scholars’ books about life and culture in India as a teenager and during my University studies when I met fellow students originating from India or local students who spent significant periods of time studying in India and I learnt more from them about life in India. I then studied about the colonial history of India and, as a social anthropologist, about the post-colonial reading of history. At the end of my post-graduate course as a Social Anthropologist, I applied for several exchange programs to study in India and to live there, in order to interrogate the theoretical knowledge that I gained in my post-graduate studies by means of lived experience.

I visited India in early 2011 and then moved there, after being admitted to an Educational institution for an Exchange Program and lived in New Delhi for half a year. I studied Hindi at the Language Institute for Foreigners in New Delhi, while living with an Indian family who became my extended family after I had an Indian wedding. This meant that I was getting an insider’s look into the life of a certain section of society, the upper middle-class, employed in Government jobs, living in the centre of the capital city, New Delhi. I was welcomed into the family of my new partner (husband) and had the chance to attend many events, social and cultural life, learning one of the Indian languages (Hindi), learning how to drive a car and traveling in the country. Despite the attention, affection, and respect that I received from my new Indian family, I felt utterly alone. The protection they had offered me felt like restrictions on my way of living, my freedom to travel alone in the city (New Delhi) or to go out after dark, due to safety reasons. I used to live a single and independent life in Budapest before 2011 and once in India, I could not imagine that my life would change dramatically.

After having secured a job in an NGO in New Delhi in August 2011 but not being granted a work Visa by the FRRO in New Delhi, I decided to leave the country and return to Europe. I could not make peace with the city, the life I got myself into, the lack of independence, the spaces that felt



suffocating and the chaotic capital, and I felt that I had failed in my attempt at living in and observing social life in India as a sociologist or anthropologist. I failed in understanding how the city life worked, how gaps between rich and poor were constantly reflected in the city life and its structure, but also how gender and class played out in that society. I did not want to understand any of these anymore, I decided they were alien to me.

Moving back to Budapest in 2012 felt I was having my life back but also acknowledging that as a social scientist, I was lacking the skills for immersing myself into the life of other people and writing about it. I concluded that my lived experience in India in 2011 was nothing but a failed experiment. However, my scholarly interest in migration and how migrant groups make a life somewhere else was relentlessly on my mind. The two years spent during my MA in Sociology and Social Anthropology about refugees in Europe prior to 2011 enabled me to meet people and make contacts with a variety of institutions in several European countries. After 2012 I tried to return to my academic interest in how policies for refugees are made and how people who flee their homes become agents of change. While keeping my academic interest alive, working with NGOs and Research Institutes in Budapest and Germany and visiting India every year after 2012, I hoped that one day I would be able to go back and study about migrants living in India. But I was equally afraid of what this plan might entail. Would my research interest in migration prevail over my inner fears of failure, past experiences, and lack of a mature approach, maybe? I told myself that maybe I could do more academic training to enable me to go back to India one day and live and work there, at least for few months, to prove to myself that I had not been defeated, that I can understand many things about India. This thought seems very selfish and silly to my now. Why do I need to prove anything? And to whom? Perhaps to nobody else except myself.

After leaving India I did, however, manage to maintain the relationship with my new Indian partner, who moved with me to Budapest in 2012. This relationship made me realise that the personal has become the political for me. It took many years to happen. I came to know that writing about how other migrants live in India can also mean writing about myself, to some extent. I came to learn that this strategy resonated with some of the current sociological literature (Denzin, 1994) which suggests that the texts that form the basis of analysis and interpretation in qualitative research are “dialogic texts” that “move from the personal to the political, from the local to the historical and the cultural” (p. 6). Denzin (1994) argued that bringing the past into the autobiographical present means employing a version of auto-ethnography in sociological research. This then allows the researcher to write her own version of what Mills (1963) called ‘sociological imagination’: writing from one’s biography into the spaces of history and culture.

‘Start where you are, honour your personal history’, writes Madison (2012, pg.21). Writing about one’s own experiences, both past and present, and about who one is, as a unique person, leads to formulating certain questions about the world and about why things are the way they are (Madison, 2012). ‘Politics alone are incomplete without self-reflection’ (Madison, 2012, pg. 7), and doing critical ethnography means more than exposing politics, it means acknowledging and writing about the ‘politics of positionality’ (ibid). ‘Positionality is vital because it forces us to acknowledge our own power, privilege, and biases just as we are denouncing the power structures that surround our subjects’ (Madison, 2012, pg. 8).

Doing a PhD research about migrants and refugees in India meant that I had to spend few months per year in India, thus dealing with my uncomfortable past while sending myself to India again and again as an academic, with a research-oriented purpose. I was aware of my frustrations and my feelings of not being able to accept some of the realities in the part of India where I lived (New Delhi, mostly), especially the clash of ideas about the social and gender inequalities. At the same time in my PhD research I aim to forge a culturally relative understanding of life as a migrant in India, having Tibetans at its centre. And theoretically I claim to criticize Western narratives and binary ways of understanding social life, but I could not accept all aspects of life in India, which places me in an uncomfortable intellectual position, an ambivalent positionality.

After having reflected on this ambivalence, I told myself that doing a PhD research about migrants living in India could become a transformative experience for me, a process of fighting my fears, a way of accepting what I could not change about India – and there is nothing I can change, actually. Why do I want to change something, after all? I commenced to feel that I was not entitled to think like that anymore – what I used to think a decade ago. I might have become a more mature person meanwhile, I might have learnt more about being open to learning about other ways of thinking, being and living.

These transformations in my ways of thinking in the past ten years led me to believe that there are multiple truths and multiple realities that I can write about while doing ethnographic research in several places in India. I realised that I came closer to working within a model of accountable ethnography which emphasizes the need for ethnographers to support their interpretations with a reflexive account of their research process, and “explicate how we claim to know what we know” (Snyder, 2005, p. 496). This new, transformed version of ethnography is, according to Snyder (2005) “comprised of multiple layers, multiple truths, and multiple voices” (p. 130) and this is the framework that I decided to use in this PhD research about Tibetans living in exile in India and their quest for Indian citizenship.

## Scene 2. Facing fieldwork dilemmas: ‘Why am I here and what am I doing?’

Doing PhD fieldwork in India has raised several dilemmas for me. One of them was about when to do the ethnographic work that required spending several months per year in several places in India. Given the nature of my dual responsibility at the University in the UK, doing a PhD research, and working as Sociology Instructor, I had to adjust my time to fulfil both duties during the academic year. Since teaching starts usually in mid-September and ends in April, with May and June dedicated to marking and exam boards, the only time when I could be away from the University for an extended period was the summer months, July – August and maybe half September. The practical problem with these months was about the hot weather and the monsoon period in India, which mean temperatures of 40° – 50°C followed by heavy rains and in certain places, especially in the mountain areas, floods and landslides. This period of the year is risky for traveling as well, as many flights are cancelled or postponed for the reasons mentioned above. Therefore, I had to negotiate how and when to do my research and at times, to accept the fact that I could not do much to avoid the weather conditions, so I simply had to accept them. At times I also felt privileged when the rain stopped for the hours that I needed to walk to the offices of people I had to interview.

The second consideration involved a level of negotiation with the people who offered to help me, mostly members of my extended family in India and in particular my partner, Manish, who agreed to having his name mentioned in this PhD Thesis, who was born in India, has lived in Australia, Hungary and the UK, and decided to go on several work-related trips to India at the same time when I conducted my fieldwork research in 2016. Accepting help from my partner was a dilemma that I struggled with every now and then, as I was caught between my desire to be fully independent and mobile in India and the practical reality of traveling and living in India as a foreign, non-resident woman. I came to understand that his help was indeed precious as he is a native, local, who knows not only the local language better than me, but also the cultural, every day ways of talking, behaving, the expectations, the untold words, the mannerism and what not to say when silence is required, similar to the role of a research assistant, as explained below:

I also felt that Manish’s role seems to be more clear to me now, that is not only to make my stay in this city comfortable, but more importantly, to introduce me to Tibetan people, like the role of the interpreter in the book I was reading about Tibetans in Sikkim and Darjeeling. (PhD Fieldwork Diary Entry, 20 July 2016).

Another dilemma for me was about my positionality in the field and my 'credibility' in doing my PhD research about Tibetans in India, especially since many of my interviewees asked me this question at the start or at the end of the interview, in 2016 and I felt that this was important. I became aware that I needed more time to build relationships and, to some extent, friendships in the field, albeit I had met some of the participants in my previous trips to India.

The question of my identity and positionality in the field and especially my racialised positionality was recurrent as this is something unescapable: we cannot change our place of birth which gives us our racialised identity. However, I came to understand throughout the five-year research process that 'fieldwork is intense and interpersonally complicated for everyone. Once you are there, no matter how introduced, *it is you—as a person—who develops the relationships you do, even as you never escape your locatedness.*' (Abu-Lughod, 2016, no page number) (my own emphasis in italics). This unescapable positionality or locatedness, as Lila Abu-Lughod names it, involves power relations, access to certain places and resources as well as limitations from accessing certain data. For instance, I started my fieldwork in 2016 feeling quite naïve and having built less relationships in the field, with language limitations. I found myself very new and self-labelled 'ignorant' of the Tibetan culture, in plain words I felt like an intruder, a foreigner who had some kind of relationship to India through family ties and had lived in the country in 2011, but had none to Tibet, or at least so I thought in the first few weeks of my fieldwork in 2016, which have changed throughout my PhD research, as it I explain later in this PhD Thesis.

As the research progressed in 2017, 2018 and 2019, I came to develop new relationships and new understanding about the people and the place I was researching. And I was able to delineate the instances when participants told me what I, as a foreigner, could do to support the Tibetans in India (by donating money or writing about their situation) and the situations when the research participants enacted issues affecting the community, such as alcoholism and drugs in front of me, thus revealing insights that are usually not displayed openly to everyone. These reflections were part of the ongoing process of research that included the fieldwork and the analysis, which were linked through carefully considered self-reflexivity.

'The other thought that hunts me is: why I am doing this? The answer comes in a second, yes, I know, I am doing it for a PhD'. (PhD Fieldwork Diary Entry:20 July 2016). But even the academic reasoning behind my PhD fieldwork seemed not to be sufficient for me at times and anxieties and questions about what I was doing *for* the participants arose, which were partly and temporarily settled when I volunteered for a Tibetan NGO, and taught English every day for one month. In the

evenings, however, when I sat down and wrote my fieldwork diary, I reflected on the ‘work for free’ I was doing for the Tibetan people and wondered whether this was not an ‘exchange’ for getting more access to contacts and potential interviewees, which perpetuated my mixed feelings. These thoughts, reflections and ambivalences about the research process returned throughout my PhD research, in 2016 and 2017 and motivated me to search for new, alternative and participatory methods of doing research as I explained in Act 3 of the PhD Thesis.

### Scene 3. Data analysis 2016: Emerging concepts and themes

In this section I discuss the analysis of the 2016 fieldwork data. In Table 18 below I extracted the main themes after having transcribed and coded the interviews in five stages, employing a researcher’s version of grounded theory methodology (Birks and Mills, 2015; Saldana, 2011). I discuss the themes emerging from the 2016 data analysis in the light of tensions and debates and literature on identity, migration, home and citizenship and auto-ethnography.

Table 18. Main themes – data analysis 2016

Theme	Explanations / Tensions / Debates
1. <b>Asserting, claiming, associating, imagining – what it is to be a contemporary Tibetan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asserting to have Tibetan origins and parents,</li> <li>- Claiming to speak Tibetan language,</li> <li>- Associating oneself with Tibetan Buddhism, Dalai Lama and the values of non-violence,</li> <li>- Imagining Tibet as home, without having ever been there.</li> </ul>
2. <b>Contradicting realities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tibetans at home: Tibetan language, values,</li> <li>- Tibetans at work: Indian culture, Hindi and other Indian languages, English influences.</li> </ul>
3. <b>Struggle in India</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opening and running businesses,</li> <li>- Being subject to corruption,</li> <li>- Being a refugee,</li> <li>- Feeling unprotected.</li> </ul>
4. <b>Freedom in India</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Total freedom just like any Indian”,</li> <li>- Freedom to work, travel, study, speak,</li> <li>- “Freedom to dance”.</li> </ul>
5. <b>Indian citizenship and passport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ‘Eye-opening’ for Tibetan MPs (+)</li> <li>- Loss of T culture, help, benefits as refugees (-)</li> <li>- Equal rights to Indian Gov. jobs, buy land, open business, practice law (+)</li> <li>- Travel abroad, emigrate to USA (+)</li> <li>- Indian old bureaucracy (-)</li> </ul>
6. <b>Refusing to become Indian / Wanting to remain Tibetan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To have what the Indians have: land, business, influence, Government jobs (+)</li> <li>- Not to have castes, discrimination, crimes (-)</li> <li>- To access benefits like Indians (+),</li> <li>- To be included in the Tibetan community,</li> <li>- To receive help from abroad as Tibetan</li> </ul>
7. <b>“Shining abroad”, not in India</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Abroad one is valued and respected,</li> <li>- ‘India shining’ campaign of the BJP Government (2004)</li> </ul>

## I. Theme 1: Asserting, claiming, imagining – being a contemporary Tibetan

This theme title contains some of the words spoken by an interviewee, during my fieldwork in 2016, a Tibetan poet who writes about Tibetan identity in exile. During our interview he challenged the concept of identity, as an idea of the Enlightenment period, and interrogated the need of asking this question, which made me rethink the purpose and usefulness of this question in my interview guide: “I do not think there is any five or 10 elements based on which you can claim to be a Tibetan.” (Interview with Tibetan poet, McLeod Ganj, July 2016). However, the question on what makes somebody a Tibetan was a recurrent topic of discussion in all my interviews, as I naively asked this question, hoping it would help me answer my PhD research question in a clear and simple way: “How do Tibetans make sense of their identities while living as refugees/guests/citizens in India?”. This question received a variety of answers, but many interviewees seemed to be confused about it. One of the young, educated Tibetans whom I met in New Delhi told me:

How can I define being a Tibetan? This is something, maybe it makes sense, but at the moment, if I say like, how can you define being a Tibetan, isn't it? Being Tibetan I can speak Tibetan, and I am eating Tibetan food and I am living with Tibetan, you know, I am surrounded by Tibetan people, you know. (Interview with T. New Delhi, July 2016).

Another respondent from McLeod Ganj asked rhetorically: “What do you mean by identity? If you want to say identity like from a paper (Indian passport) then it is changed. But identity from the personality, the culture, and all these things I think he is still a Tibetan.” (Interview with Y., McLeod Ganj, July 2016). When I asked the same respondent a probing question about what he considered to be the most important thing for somebody to be a Tibetan, his answer pointed to the complexities of one's self-defined identity, associated with certain values:

It is the culture, the value that you take, you have been as a Tibetan. Yeah, I feel like Tibetans have certain values which are different from maybe other like, you know, people. ... it is respect for life, more like (being) compassionate. (Interview with Y., McLeod Ganj, July 2016).

The Tibetan poet pointed out to several layers of Tibetan identity: one is the popular version or the simple understanding that many people have, looking at it through the lenses of language, parentage, dress code, food or religion. Another one is what he calls “made-up” identity, created by Western people, in the early years of Christian missionaries. Another layer of Tibetan identity for him is represented by the young Tibetans born and living abroad, a very different generation whose claim to Tibetanness is defined precisely by their *claims* to being a Tibetan:

And then increasingly we have a younger generation of Tibetans who were born outside, especially in the West, in the last 15-20 years, who may not speak even Tibetan. Who may not know even much

Buddhism, who may not even know much about Tibet. But of course, if you have to *assert* yourself as somebody in places like England, or even the United States, then you have to *claim* something. And that *claim* for mostly young Tibetans born in the West, this *is* being Tibetan. But for them being Tibetan has nothing to do with the language itself, because language, Tibetan language has nothing to do with their daily lives. But inspite (sic!) of all that, they still assert themselves as Tibetans.”

(Interview with Tibetan poet, McLeod Ganj, July 2016).

The question of identity is debated and contested in contemporary social theory, to the extent to which there are discussion about a ‘crisis of identity’, placed within wider processes of structural changes. “The old identities which stabilized the social world for so long are in decline, giving rise to new identities and fragmenting the modern individual as a unified subject” (Hall, 1992, p. 274).

The structural changes are fragmenting the cultural framings of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race and nationality while also transforming and shifting our personal identities and sense of self. Hall (1992) speaks about three different conceptions of identity: the Enlightenment subject, the sociological subject and the post-modern subject. First, the Enlightenment subject was built on the idea that the human person is a unified individual, with the capacity of reasoning, consciousness and action and the self, remained the same throughout one’s existence. This is perhaps the idea contested by the Tibetan poet in his writings about an imagined and claimed Tibetan identity. Secondly, Hall writes about the sociological subject as a reflection of growing complexity in the modern world and was formed in relation to an ‘other’, an interaction between self and society, as elaborated by symbolic interactionists such as G. H. Mead and C. H. Cooley. (Hall, 1992, p. 275-276). And thirdly, the post-modern subject is conceptualized as “having no fixed, essential or permanent identity” (Hall, 1992, p. 277). The post-modern subject can assume different identities at different times and within us are contradictory identities that are shifted about. As the systems of meaning and cultural representations become plural, the subject is facing a multiplicity of potential identities with which s/he could identify.

Hall (1992) argues that the political landscapes of the post-modern world are fragmented by competing and dislocating identifications that arise from the emerging identities belonging to the new social movements: feminism, black struggle, national liberation, anti-nuclear and ecological movements. These shifting identities evolve based on how the subject is represented, and thus have become politicised. This movement is then defined not as politics of identity anymore, but as politics of difference (p. 280). Informed by Freud and Lacan’s psychoanalytic theories of the formation of the self in the ‘look’ of the Other, Hall (1992) underlines the need to speak of identification as an on-going process, rather than identity as a finished thing. “Identity arises from the ways we imagine

ourselves to be seen by others” (p. 287). Derrida (1982) argues that the old concept of ‘cultural identity’ is not a good word for ‘today’, for it is a self-affirmation of identity that claims to be the inscription of the universal. Therefore, ‘cultural identity’ could be replaced by Rushdie’s concept of ‘migrant sensibility’ which speaks of a horizontal way to think of a cultural community. For instance, the Indians in England constitute and live in ‘cross-connections’, meaning the cultural and political history of migration, displacement. and life in a minority group (Rushdie cited in Bammer, 1994, p. XV). Identity, for Stuart Hall, is always constructed in plural. Therefore, identities are built from and by exclusion of the *Other* and by relationships, practices, and discourses of power (Hall, 1996, p. 4). Identities are about how to use the resources from history, language, and culture “in the process of becoming rather than being” (ibid, p. 4). Therefore, instead of asking the old question ‘who we are’ or ‘where we are from’, we should rather ask “what we might become?” and “how we might represent ourselves”? (ibid).

In the light of the above, during the 2016 fieldwork and data analysis I commenced to reflect that the question of Tibetan identity in my PhD research and how to make sense of it is perhaps, wrongly worded. I told myself that I should do away with the question of identity altogether, since it has the dangerous potential of leading to fanaticism, as the Tibetan poet hinted at in the interview, and it heats up the language of identity politics which replaced the language of equality in migration debates (Malik, 2005). Consequently, I started wondering about how to rephrase the main question of my PhD research, what was I looking for? I was certainly looking for what it means to be a Tibetan with an Indian citizenship. Does it mean to have “become Indian?” Or could it mean simply to “be a Tibetan who *has* Indian citizenship”? But does it have to be an ‘either – or’ question and answer? The distinction between *being* and *having* is manifestly essential but it should not be essentializing. I continued by asking further questions from myself and from the early 2016 research data: does being an Indian necessarily mean not being a Tibetan? Are these two mutually exclusive? And if so, why? Who makes them exclusive and incompatible with each other? The next theme explains the contradicting realities for Tibetans in India and attempts to seek analytical connections which help bridging the binaries of ‘either – or’ with the help of the concepts of ‘hybridity’ and ‘third space’ (Bhabha, 1994).

## **II. Theme 2: Contradicting realities. Towards a ‘third space’. Home, but not ‘real home’.**

Tibetans living in contemporary India face complexities in the everyday life, as they are under social pressure to conform to certain ideas of Tibetanness (Falcone & Wangchuk, 2008) while they need to



define themselves “based on something”, even if that something is not language or land anymore, as specified by the Tibetan poet and my interviewee who writes about Tibetans in exile:

So these are some of the layers that at least I look at ...to try to figure out what contemporary Tibetan is. And same applies to Tibetans in here (in India), also...they may live in Tibetan settlements, but then many people work for Indian companies or Indian offices, so for them, between their reality of being a Tibetan and working for an Indian office, where they have to either speak English or Hindi, so again, everyday there is, there is... a contradiction. But between these contradictions you have to still remain and try to define yourself as a Tibetan based on something. So these are things that we have to figure out, what these are. Of course, I do not have all the elements... (Interview with Tibetan poet, McLeod Ganj, July 2016).

The contradictions, pressures, and expectations that Tibetans face in different dimensions of their life in India speak of a broader dilemma that migrants have to live with, choosing between integration in their new country and preservation of their identity. However, literature suggests that there may be another possibility, beyond the division and distinction of the two. Hall (1992) writes about a third possibility beyond the “false dilemma” of thinking of identity either as destined to return to its roots or to disappear through assimilation. This possibility is what Bhabha terms as “translation”, which “describes those identity formations which cut across and intersect natural frontiers, and which are composed of people who have been dispersed forever from their homeland” (cited in Hall, 1992, p. 310). These people maintain strong links with their traditions and places of origin, but they know they cannot return to the past, therefore they accept the new cultures they live in without assimilating and losing their identities. They belong to “cultures of hybridity” and they are “irrevocably translated”, as Rushdie noted (1991). These migrants, like Rushdie himself, and like the Tibetans in India, I argue that they belong to two worlds, are the product of the “new diasporas created by the post-colonial migrations, they must learn and inhabit at least two identities, to speak two cultural languages, to translate and negotiate between them” (Hall, 1992, p. 310).

Belonging to two worlds is, however, a complex, multi-layered and intersectional experience for Tibetans living in India that shows which different categories of difference and power relations matter and how. In my PhD research context, I came to understand that the experiences of exile, refuge and citizenship for Tibetans living in India are shaped by different identity markers, such as age, gender, educational background, language skills, time of migration to India and length of stay in the country. For instance, Tibetans who sought refuge in India as children and who had very little education positioned themselves differently in regard to questions of exile, belonging and citizenship compared to Tibetans born in India, who learnt and spoke Tibetan, Hindi as well and English, had

high educational achievements and some of whom had acquired financial wealth. On another hand, some Tibetans who came to India recently, and spoke no other language except Tibetan, had difficulties in finding employment and accommodation and little community support, and had no chance of applying for Indian citizenship, as they did not qualify, but others who came to India to study in monasteries and nunneries were in a more protected zone of ensured spiritual work / studies, including scholarships and accommodation provided by the CTA. For these Tibetans too the question of Indian citizenship was not even a possibility, however they had more options to travel to other countries, for instance, and connect with the wider Buddhist communities by learning and teaching Buddhism.

### **‘Home, but not real home’**

This is another topic that is contradictory for Tibetans in India, based on the 2016 data, as the research participants described India mostly as their home, although not “real home” or their “second home”. Some of them, when asked where they are from, said “I am from Laddakh” or “I am from Tibet” although born in India. Listening to their stories and the different attachments to a place (or more) called home helped me connect with them by asking the same question of myself, where is my home? I like to say I have multiple homes, the small town where my parents live, close to the border of Hungary, or Budapest, the capital city where I lived for several years until I moved to India, in 2011 or England, where I moved again for my PhD. And so, I am wondering if that does not actually mean that I have privileges, given the fact I can move in-between these ‘homes’ easily, without a Visa or any restrictions? The same is not valid for Tibetans in India, they cannot travel to Tibet without a Chinese passport and they cannot travel outside India without a Yellow Card (YC), and even having the YC they face refusals at many Embassies, as evidenced by another Tibetan interviewee in 2016.

My PhD fieldwork was made possible because I have become an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI), by being a family member of an Indian citizen. This means I can travel to India, live, and work in India, if I wish. However, the OCI status is a privileged form of citizenship granted to Indians living abroad and their immediate family members (spouses and children). This is a scheme initiated by the Government of India to attract investments and business potential and to maintain and reward loyalties of Indians living abroad, especially in Western countries (Jayal, 2013).

Sarah Ahmed (1999) explores the relationship between migration and identity and the narratives of what it means to “be at home” and “to leave home”. She questions the relationship between identity, belonging and home, arguing that in contemporary critical theory, migration is used as a

metaphor for movement, dislocation, crossing of borders and boundaries (Ahmed, 1999, p. 331). Similarly, in Chambers' work (1994) migration is a journey that involves crossing borders and breaking barriers of thought and experience. Migration, exile and nomadism refer not only to experiences of being dislocated from home, but "become ways of thinking without home" (cited in Ahmed, 1999, p. 332). The migrant, in these writings, is a metaphor or a figure for the process of dislocation. When asking the question "What does it mean to be at home?" Ahmed (1999, p. 338) underlines the shifting definitions of home that may refer to where one usually lives or where one's family lives or one's native country. She then reflects on her own experiences of home in three places, UK, Pakistan and Australia. Considering the diasporic spaces, home becomes a "mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no-return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as 'the place of origin'" (Ahmed, 1999, p. 341).

The next theme, about struggles in India, can also be explained in the light of contradictions and tensions that are prominent in the lives of Tibetans living in India. There are tensions between being 'well-settled' in India and still facing inequality and discrimination as a refugee, as well as between feelings of privilege as a Tibetan born in India and feelings of empathy with the newly-arrived Tibetans in India who face many difficulties as they arrive in the country.

### **III. Theme 3. Struggle in India. Education, work, corruption, lizards, and language**

The theme about struggles in India emerged as a key concept from many of the interviews conducted in McLeod Ganj and New Delhi in 2016. Tibetans face difficulties on many occasions while living in India, for instance when renewing their Registration Card (RC), when applying for employment, when opening a business, when traveling abroad, when living in New Delhi as a student or when residing in McLeod Ganj and facing corrupt police officers. One of my interviewees, a Tibetan businesswoman offered a detailed description of the everyday struggles she was facing as a young, Tibetan entrepreneur. After having graduated from a College in New Delhi, she tried to build a career in the capital, but she suffered exclusion and lack of opportunities.

It just happened because after College I worked in Delhi for, like, few months, then, like, in Delhi there is no..., of course if I work in Delhi, then the office and everything will be owned by Indians not Tibetans. So, like, for me and other, like, other colleagues are Indians, just me I am Tibetan, and for me, like, I worked there for few months, and I didn't see, like, going upper, there is no, like, promotion...like that, so then I thought it's a waste of time, if there is no promotion. Then I thought, like, why I don't start my own business. (Interview with W, McLeod Ganj, August 2016).

Furthermore, once she opened her business in McLeod Ganj, she faced repeated encounters with the Police who took money (bribes), knowing that Tibetan refugees cannot own land in India. Everyday life is marked by struggles for refugees who lack power and influence, as described below:

Even if there are, suppose 100 hotels are there, and 10 are owned by Tibetans and 90 are owned by Indians, but then Police they do, (are) more strict to us, because they can bully us. They directly say where is your paper, you have no rights, and they are not, like doing their duty. If they are doing their duty, then we will say like you are doing your duty, we must respect you, but they are doing this, just to earn the money, because they know our weakness...so they just take the bribes, like that.

(Interview with W, McLeod Ganj, August 2016).

In New Delhi a Tibetan student told me about different issues that she had to confront, living in a student dorm with an Indian student and had to sleep outdoor because of lizards:

And she is my new roommate, she was the one who told me to be her roommate, and then yeah, she just started one night that there is a lizard and she cannot sleep. Then I helped her but then she did something and it came inside, went under my bed and then she said I want to take it out, and then you have to take all your bags from your side, under the bed... It's India, you know, it's scary!

These few examples show how Tibetans face individual struggles in many areas of their life, but there are also collective struggles that Tibetans had to face during their history in India. Falcone and Wangchuk (2008) write about the conflicts between Indians and Tibetans in Himachal Pradesh, in 1970s and 1980s, about riots in Dharamshala in 1994 over a killing of a local Indian by a Tibetan and also about another incident in Manali, 1999, that led to the destruction of 100 Tibetan shops (Falcone and Wangchuk, 2008, pp. 183-184). These conflicts have reduced over the years, as the authors noted, partially because of the improving socio-economic conditions of Indians who stopped resenting the better lives of Tibetans living amid their communities.

### **Newly arrived Tibetans: struggling more than the 'settled' ones**

Some of my Tibetan interviewees in 2016 spoke at length about the difficulties that newly arrived Tibetans face in India. They do not know the local language or English, they come alone, without any family member, they find it difficult to communicate with the local Indians and to find accommodation and, as a consequence, they cannot make a living. Many of them decide to return to Tibet, as the last resource. A Tibetan who was born in India and living in McLeod Ganj, commented on and empathized with the difficult situation of the newly arrived Tibetans in India:

I have seen new Tibetans coming from there (Tibet), they are facing many difficulties because they are just, er... they cannot come with their family, because if it is in a group, then it is more dangerous for them on the borders. So they just come like single, single, and single means their

parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, they all are in there, but from their family they try to send one person from the family to here. And that one person, when they come here, they got nothing here, no home, nothing, everything is like, they have to start from the scratch. So yeah, like seeing them, then I realise sometimes, oh, no, we are Tibetans, we are refugees, like that. Me, like, sometimes I forget, I am born here, settled, but then seeing them, meeting them, it is very difficult for them. (Interview with W, McLeod Ganj, August 2016).

Her account, reinforced by other interviewees, confirms the fact that there is a significant difference between different generations of Tibetans who arrived in India at different times. Those who were born and settled in India seem to have a more privileged social situation, despite being still refugees.

Another piece of information about the newly arrived Tibetans came during a conversation that took place in Hindi with an Indian taxi driver who drove me and my partner from McLeod Ganj to Jalandhar train station, on our way back to New Delhi (late August, 2016). The taxi driver talked about how the Tibetans who have recently arrived in India have problems in understanding the local language, they cannot find a job easily and they get into street fights, alcohol driven conflicts and selling drugs. This piece of information was confirmed by what the interviewee who set up a Tibetan NGO in McLeod Ganj told me about the newly arrived Tibetans, but of course in very mild words. There was a case of few Tibetans who landed into a fight with a local taxi driver, the same Indian taxi driver said, because, apparently, they refused to pay for the fare. One of the young Tibetans stabbed the taxi driver and then he went underground. The claim was that the Tibetan community is extremely united, therefore they did not disclose any information about the whereabouts of the Tibetan who committed the crime, and hence the police could not find him. The information mentioned above is, to this extent, unverified and no media sources or other persons could confirm it but I mentioned it as another viewpoint expressed by one of the Indian citizens in regard to the situation of the newly arrived Tibetans.

I tried to establish a personal level of connection both with the stories of freedom in India and the newly arrived Tibetans in India by reflecting on the stories of my parents' siblings and cousins who left the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and claimed asylum abroad, especially in the USA. Again, I can only use my imagination and the stories I heard from my parents about how the extended family left in the night, illegally, crossing many borders, spending weeks and months in dire conditions in refugee camps before finally being allowed in the USA. And they never came back. They made a new life from scratch, they learnt the language, opened businesses, acquired properties, had families. It is important to acknowledge here that fact that the USA was welcoming refugees from former communist regimes in the 1980s, unlike the new US policies against migration, since 2016, a point that I will return to and discuss it in more detail at the end of this analysis.

The transition from an early life of struggle to the realisation that life in India is better than in Tibet, there is freedom and enjoyment in India, suggests that the next theme, about 'Freedom in India', is the other side of the coin of the theme about 'Struggle in India'. The two are related, sometimes one leads to another, but other times some Tibetans, especially if born in India, enjoy more freedom than struggle, compares to the newly-arrived Tibetans who have many hurdles to face before being able to enjoy the freedom in India. A young Tibetan who lived in Taiwan for several years and was working in a Tibetan NGO in McLeod Ganj in 2016 described his difficult life in India when he arrived as a young child but also how he came to realise the privileges he could enjoy, living in India, compared to the Tibetans inside Tibet:

At the beginning it was very hard, very difficult because of the new place, new people and you have to learn a lot of, like Hindi and English and new languages. Environment is completely different, food is different, so it is hot over here and it was difficult. In the first two of three years you feel that you want to go back to Tibet. You have that kind of....But after two years you are used to the situation, and then you realize, even at that time I was like sixteen, seventeen, just getting the knowledge about the Tibet, the freedom and the people who are living in Tibet they are getting the trouble. And I understand all these things. Then I realized that I am lucky, yeah, lucky enough. And I enjoy, actually I enjoy living in India. (Interview with W., McLeod Ganj, July 2016).

The story of the young Tibetan mentioned above is useful in making the transition to the next theme, about freedom in India, which is interconnected to the previous theme in the data analysis.

#### **IV. Theme 4. Freedom in India. About Modesty and Imagination**

Most of my Tibetan interviewees in 2016 expressed content about their freedom of living in India, freedom of expression and even freedom to dance, as one young Tibetan put it:

We are free to stay (in India), there is a free right to speech, right to write, right to go, right to leave, right to dance, everything, we do have our rights rather than in Tibet, we donnot have any rights. (Interview with O., New Delhi, July 2016).

Another Tibetan interviewee was happy with his life in India mostly because of the "total freedom" he enjoyed, the only issue being the documentation needed for traveling abroad, especially since he tried many times to go to the USA and Europe, without any luck, until September 2016:

Life in India is great. I live in total freedom, despite all this, the documentation, you know. India is a free country, I am enjoying like any other Indian, you know, there is no problem, there are no restrictions, except that when I need to travel, then I need something more. (Interview with Z., McLeod Ganj, August 2016).

Nonetheless, the Tibetans living in India do not have the right to buy land, property, to apply for IGov jobs that are considered more stable, more valuable, respected and better paid than the ones in the private sector. And some of the interviewees mentioned these issues that could be dealt with in a better way by the IGov.

Another Tibetan who set up an NGO in McLeod Ganj talked about freedom in connection with the idea of identity in a way that linked the need of having one's own country to the practical, every day needs of registering a Facebook account but not having a choice to select Tibet as your country. There is also the practical issue of traveling with a Tibetan Yellow Card that is not always recognised by the Indian Immigration and Security Officers:

The most important thing for Tibetans is freedom. And we need identity, you know, that is the most important. Actually we have one identity, you can see Tibetans, but I think this Identity is cut, it's like citizen or country. Because even if I go to airport the Indian Government give that, then all people go first in line and I am the last person. And they ask many things, how you make it (the Yellow Card), they check machines everything because it is a totally different from other countries. And it is like, how to say, no one to support us.... And even if I try to make something in Google, if I want to make some ID, Facebook, then no Tibetans there, so I put Indian or what? (laughing) So I feel very sad... (Interview with A., McLeod Ganj, July 2016).

I tried to connect to the idea about freedom mentioned above, but since I have not been persecuted in my own life, I always thought that I have lived a free life, in a free country. I came to realise, however, that I could imagine some of the experiences of persecution in Tibet that they mentioned by connecting to my parents' lives under the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. And not only my parents, but the entire communities who lived their adult lives in the period 1949-1989 in these countries, before the democratic regimes took over. And I heard their stories too many times, the religious persecutions, the forced learning of Russian language, the imprisonment of anyone who was opposing the system, or belonged to an ethnic or religious minority, like my family did. Since migration is also a generational act of story-telling about past histories of movement (Ahmed, 1999), I connected with the experiences of Tibetans in India, experiences of displacement, exile, newness in a difficult land, by resorting to the stories told by my parents about their families seeking refuge abroad. I thus try to reproduce the act of story-telling with modesty and imagination, as well as empathy and affinity with the people I research about, as a witness in an account of "situated and partial forms of knowledge" (Harraway, 1997 cited in Braidotti, 2006, p. 206).

Harraway (1997) offers the notion of modesty as a tool and form of accountability, open-ended dialogue, and critical thinking in research. The aim of the 'modest witness' is to not to judge but simply to be, and to witness. The notion of modesty is not engaged with power while the position of

the researcher is defined in terms of empathy and affinity. “The modest witness is neither detached not uncaring, but a border-crossing figure who attempts to recontextualize his/her own practice within fast changing social horizons...Modesty and a strong imagination are the key virtues” (Braidotti, 2006, p. 206).

## **V. Theme 5. Indian citizenship and passport. Becoming, belonging, wishing, remaining**

The academic literature suggests that the narrative of citizenship has different ends and benefits for Tibetans, depending on the colour of the flag of their adoptive nation. Those who obtained US citizenship became “ambassadors for Tibet” (Hess, 2006) and are enabled to travel to Tibet, using their new passport. They can lobby for Tibetan independence and hope that the global power US has can be a counter-tool to China’s economic power in the world (Hess, 2006).

On the contrary, the Indian passport does not create “Indian ambassadors for Tibet”, and does not facilitate traveling to Tibetan. The geopolitics between China and India are very different and so, there is no single narrative that seems to be suitable for rendering a positive view of the Indian citizenship held by Tibetans. Of course, the economic gains are important for access to education, jobs and land but these are often compared to the ‘higher scope’ of political independence or at least autonomy (‘The Middle Way’ approach) for the six million Tibetans inside Tibet.

McConnell (2013) writes about the agency of Tibetans who refused Indian citizenship so that they could maintain an active exile status and form of non-belonging. I argue that the Tibetans did not necessarily refuse, as an act of individual will, the offer of Indian citizenship, but there were two different types of arguments that contributed to this outcome, one is about the legal and bureaucratic process associated with obtaining Indian citizenship and the other is about the position of the CTA on this matter. I thus argue that Tibetans most likely tried and were refused the individual cases of application for Indian citizenship by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, until 2016. This narrative changed in September 2016, when the High Court ordered all Indian passport offices across the country to issue Indian passports to Tibetans.

The second type of argument places the onus on the TGovE that has maintained a strict, Tibetan-only culture in exile, to preserve a homogenous Tibetan nation in exile than can fight for independence and return to Tibet. And in this narrative, there is no justification for acquiring an Indian citizenship at the individual level. One of my Tibetan interviewees in McLeod Ganj in 2016 asks the sensitive question, about who might be lobbying against Indian citizenship for Tibetans, the CTA or the IGov:



It might be CTA because they do not want to lose our own culture. If we apply for Indian citizenship, then we might lose, like lost our focus. Right now, our focus is to get the freedom back. And if we all become Indians, we might lose our focus and we might lose our culture, also. It has been more than 50 years in exile and we have preserved enough so that we have our own identity. Nobody can say we are Indians. And if we all become like Indians, I do not know, this might be CTA, they might have stopped us to become, or maybe the Indian Government, I do not know. It is a doubt now. (Interview with T., McLeod Ganj, August 2016).

However, the same Tibetan, throughout the interview, seemed to support the case for Indian citizenship, which would bring immense gains for Tibetans and their everyday life. This option is also arguably preferred by the new MPs of the CTA:

Now, this year (2016), maybe the (Indian) citizenships of Tibetans I do not know, maybe it opened up their (Tibetan MPs) eyes and ears, so they elected new ones, new generation. Let us see now, who is better, new generation or older ones.

Another narrative that explains the contentious issue of Indian citizenship for Tibetans is geopolitics and again its links with the CTA. My first interviewee, a highly educated Tibetan who held an important position in the Tibetan Cultural Centre in New Delhi, informed me that according to the CTA, “Tibetans are preferred to have a Green Book and a Registration Card” rather than an Indian passport. When I asked why that was, he replied “this is a very sensitive issue. The Chinese Communists want to split Tibetans.” He added that the Chinese would want Tibetans inside Tibet to give up the struggle for freedom. Therefore, if Tibetans in India become Indian citizens, there is no more hope for the other Tibetans in exile and equally for the Tibetans inside Tibet.

There are many reasons why Tibetans in India would like to become Indian citizens, argued Falcone and Wangchuk (2008, p. 169): facilitated access to traveling, avoiding Indian bureaucracy at FRRO for renewing the Registration Card every year or every five years, accessing certain jobs reserved only for Indian citizens, less hassle for business opportunities and access to buying land in India. However, some of the so-called “losses” that Tibetans may face if they acquire Indian citizenship are important to notice as they suggest both symbolic and patriotic reasoning. One Tibetan interviewee in 2016 spoke to me about the exclusion from Tibetan community of those who hold Indian citizenship, while others spoke about the loss of Tibetan culture, of access to benefits that only refugees are entitled to, such as studying in Tibetan schools or being eligible for jobs in Tibetan offices. The question of Indian citizenship has been associated with ‘becoming’ Indian in many of the interviews I conducted in India in 2016 and this emerged as a disputed topic and refuted option:

Many Tibetans do not want to *become* Indian citizens. If you *become* an Indian citizenship (sic!), then you lose all the, how to say, advantages, from the Tibetan Exile Government. And you lose many, I

think, how to say, good things. If you are refugee, I think you can receive lot of help from the country, there a lot of, like, opportunities. First, they will *lose*, second, they do not want to *become* Indian citizenship. Even I feel like, why to become an Indian citizen? I am eligible to become an Indian citizen. But why? I do not want to. I want to *remain* as a Tibetan. (Interview with W., McLeod Ganj, July 2016).

In another interview with the young Tibetan woman who became the first Indian passport holder in December 2010, after having won her case in the High Court, she talked about the complex feelings associated with having an Indian passport as compared to the Tibetan Identity Card and about the uncomfortable feeling associated with the Indian passport:

I am not sure how it (Indian passport) is helpful, but I definitely know that it is much more comfortable in having an Identity Certificate which I had it earlier. When it comes to traveling or, you know, even as a student, getting more opportunity in terms of your education, you know, when you have a passport you have, when you are a citizen it is different than, you know, when you are stateless. (Interview with N., McLeod Ganj, August 2016).

The theme of Indian citizenship and Indian passport is directly linked with the question of the Tibetan movement understood as a political movement for regaining independence of Tibet. The argument that Tibetans living in India carrying an Indian passport will weaken the Tibetan movement is discredited in a Tibetan newspaper that publishes news and opinions in English about Tibetans living outside Tibet. I regularly read this newspaper to keep myself updated with the Tibetan affairs while I am out of India. The author writes about the meanings associated with holding an Indian passport and asks rhetorically whether this can affect his dedication for the Tibetan cause: “Now, I have become a Tibetan-Indian. What does that mean? Will I start speaking in Hindi, move away from Tibetan society, change all my friends, stop paying the green book (tax to the CTA), and shun the Tibetan movement for a free Tibet?” (Wangyal, TibetSun.net., 24 April 2017).

Having a passport makes life easier, the author argues, who is the same Tibetan who won the Public Litigation Case in September 2016 for granting Indian citizenship to all Tibetans in India. The Indian passport replaces the Yellow Book and enables traveling without long queues and unpleasant questions from Indian and foreign officers, saves time and will make a person more efficient in doing things for the Tibetan cause. Additionally, the exile Tibetan charter, Article 8 supports the double citizenship of Tibetans in exile, Wangyal continues explaining in his article (2017).

The information and opinions on Indian citizenship are divided in the Tibetan community, as the 2016 research data showed and as Falcone and Wangchuk (2008, p. 173) noted: “citizenship is a complex issue for Tibetans in exile, irrevocably tied up with the cultural and the political, the symbolic and the legal, the patriotic and the practical.”

## How to apply for an Indian passport after September 2016

Following the Public Litigation Case initiated by Lobsang Wangyal in 2016, the Indian MEA decided in September 2016 that all passport-issuing authorities in India and abroad, subject to the usual checks and other passport formalities, “shall process all the pending applications of Tibetan refugee applicants born in India between 26/01/1950 to 01/07/1987, for the issue of passports treating them as the Indian citizens by birth under Section 3(1)(a) of the Citizenship Act, 1955” (Tibet Sun Newsroom, 29 March 2017).

Information about how one can apply for an Indian passport is available online, and for instance, a Tibetan website offers simple and step-by-step guidance on the process, as presented below.<sup>18</sup> A

Tibetan applying for an Indian passport has to go through the following 12 steps:

- Filling the online passport application form (link given in the article),
- Paying online Rs 1,000 for a regular 30-page passport, Rs 2,000 for a passport of 60 pages,
- Taking the appointment as per the dates shown on the form and picking a date,
- Printing out the form,
- Going to the RPO (Regional Passport Office) with the form as per the appointment,
- Bringing Aadhaar card and birth certificate as main documents,
- If missing, voting card and class ten certificate would be also acceptable,
- Alternatively, a government document such as Pan Card is accepted as date of birth proof, since many in India do not have a birth certificate,
- Bringing RC (Registration Certificate) and IC (Identity Card),
- Having fingerprint and photo taken for the passport,
- Police doing address verification and criminal record (after a few days),
- RPO sending the passport by speed post, approximately within a month.

Finally, after receiving the Indian passport, a Tibetan can surrender the RC by going to the FRO under the Superintendent of Police (SP) Office in their town / city. These lengthy steps are considered an ease of the other processes that Tibetans in India have to go through, including the procedure of applying for an Indian passport via the High Court and suing the MHA, which one Tibetan woman did in 2010 and won the case. Other Tibetans were refused their application for an Indian passport for reasons that I will present below. And many other Tibetans did not apply for the same reasons. As discussed by many interviewees during my fieldwork in 2016, these reasons are grounded in the nature of the old Indian bureaucracy, which I will briefly discuss below.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.tibetsun.com/opinions/2017/04/24/bye-bye-yellow-book>

## Indian old bureaucracy

A substantive body of literature argues that by introducing Western law, the British colonial power in India destroyed the practices of native Indians, and the local system was replaced by a highly bureaucratic system and ever-growing red tape (Rahman, et al, 2018), a system which has not yet been fully reformed (Singh, 2017).

A Tibetan interviewee explained the complexities and difficulties of getting an Indian passport in the past (before September 2016) with the help of an analogy that I found very useful. He underlined that one needs to know the process to succeed, and the path is not clear for anyone:

It is like saying you can go to temple, Dalai Lama's temple, but if there is no way to go, then it is useless to say we can go...so on the book it says anybody born between years can apply, but then I do not think there is any clear path, clear direction to say ok, if you qualify or if you produce these documents, then you can apply for that (Indian citizenship)...But I do not know, I have not applied so I do not know. I have not really talked to anybody who has applied and who knows the process... (Interview with P., McLeod Ganj, August 2016).

The argument that bureaucratic hurdles are behind many of the struggles faced by Tibetans, and I argue, Indians alike, was supported by other interviewees in New Delhi who were themselves working in administration and issued different identity documents to Tibetans living in India.

So thing is like that, earlier the Indian Government, they have issued that a notice that the Tibetans born in India after 1959 and then before 1980 something they will be automatically be taken as citizens. But then when many people tried to research that right into citizenship then the Home Ministry has said that this is not going to be the case, this is just a guideline based on which the case will be dealt person to person. So that person to person, that is sometimes very tiring for people, sometimes, yeah, that is not very clear...so that is why people like Lobsang Wangyal, he has to go to the Court to seek his right. (Interview with K., New Delhi, August 2016).

However, for Tibetans who do manual jobs, for instance, selling sweaters or handicrafts in shops, the idea of an Indian passport seems to be out of question, very difficult and simply not considered as an option, as one of my interviewees in 2016 revealed:

Indian passport is very difficult. Yes, very difficult to make an Indian passport. I am not Indian person. We are Tibetans, Tibetan people do not make an Indian passport. I am born in India, in Ladakh, we have only Tibetan RC and like this, the Green Book... not Indian, but born in India. (Interview with H., New Delhi, September 2016).

Writing about how the governance in India is not delivering to its people, which included a slow and inefficient bureaucracy as well as a disastrous infrastructure, Das (2013) formulated the argument

about an India that ‘grows at night while the Government sleeps’. This means that economic success and prosperity are spreading across the country due to private investments while governance failure dominates public life. Economic growth, especially after 1991 when India liberalized its economy, was accompanied by social progress and a growing middle class. However, there are millions of people in poverty and, above all, politically the Indian state is lacking efficiency and accountability while corruption seems to be widespread. The Indian state is lacking behind in delivering the basic services, such as providing functioning schools, electric power, primary health centres and honest policemen (Das, 2013, p. 4-5). These arguments help transitioning to the next theme, about the Tibetans’ refusal to ‘become Indians’.

## **VI. Theme 6. Refusing to become Indian, remaining Tibetan. Instrumental citizenship**

This theme is directly linked with the previous theme on Indian citizenship and passport as well as broader questions of identity and belonging. It is important to note that all the themes discussed in this section are interconnected in multiple ways and aim to provide a multi-layered, explanatory analysis of the 2016 research data, supported by relevant academic literature.

One can choose to ‘become’ an Indian or to ‘remain’ a Tibetan, according to some of the Tibetan interviewees I spoke to in 2016. The tension that arose was between having what the Indians have: land, business, influence, access to Government jobs, which are seen as positive aspects of ‘being an Indian’, and the negative features of life in India: the caste system, racial and gender discrimination, lack of safety for women, and unpunished crimes, as mentioned by the Tibetan interviewees in 2016. Some Tibetans expressed their ‘wish to be Indian’ as a way of letting out frustrations over the lack of access to all the elements mentioned above and in order to enjoy equal treatment, to have influence, not to suffer discrimination and corruption, not to be refugees anymore, to buy land and to travel easily.

Contemporary research (Joyal, 2013) about historical and contemporary forms of citizenship in India, defined in terms of identity, legal and social rights, helps placing the case of Tibetans in a larger, explanatory context of refugees in India and their choice of citizenship for instrumental reasons. Niraja Gopal Joyal (2013) writes about the concept of instrumental citizenship when she discusses case of the Rajasthani migrants living on the North-West border of India with Pakistan, from whom citizenship is not about blood ties, belonging or religion, but access to social resources such as subsidized food, public education and healthcare (p. 79). Joyal’s ethnographic research, including interviews, focused on a group of stateless people living in Rajasthan, who initially came from Pakistan at the time of Partition (1947) and their migration continued until 1990. Most of them are

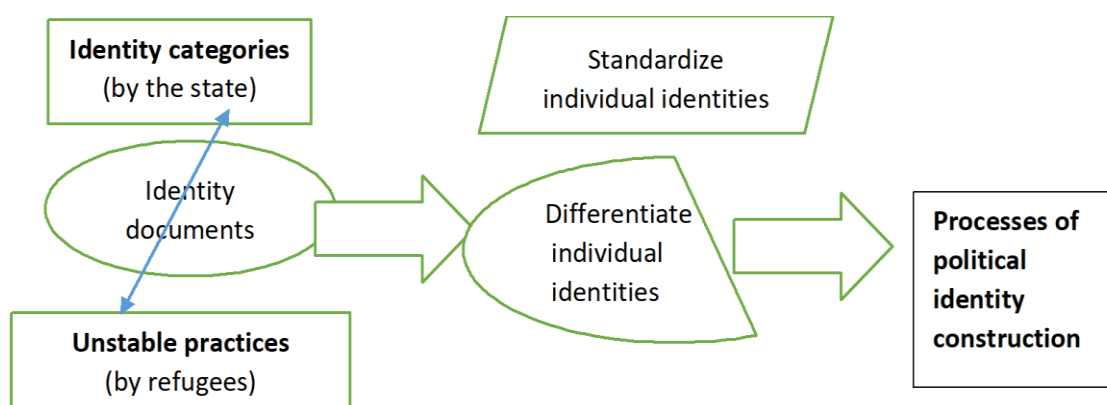
Hindu, but many are from the so-called lower castes, Dalit, and tribal people (Adivasi), who are usually poor, work as labourers and suffer marginalisation and exclusion. This group of people live “on the periphery of citizenship” and constitute a “hybrid category” (Jaya, 2013, p.83), as they are partially refugees, having flown Pakistan due to religious persecution, partially migrants who moved to India in search of economic opportunities and partially indigenes as they belong to the tribes and castes that have lived in this area before the Partition between India and Pakistan. The stateless Rajasthani are, therefore, a vivid example of the peculiar character of migration in the South (ibid).

For Rajasthani migrants who emigrated from Pakistan citizenship is understood as “suvidha” (Hindi word) which can loosely be translated as ‘facilities’, that is access to basic needs: electricity, water, education, land and livelihood (Jaya, 2013, p. 94). But since they are mostly Adivasis and Dalits (poor, lower caste, tribal people), their presence in Rajasthan is perceived by the local population as an economic threat, diminishing the local resources. They are, therefore, suffering a form of social exclusion, being treated as the “other” who is paradoxically, ethnically and racially similar, practicing the same religion, intermarrying within caste groups and speaking variants of same languages, however, their primary identity is not caste and religion but displacement and statelessness (Jaya, 2013, p. 98). The case of the Rajasthani stateless migrants is important because it illuminates how hegemonic ideas of citizenship in terms of identity and belonging are interrogated by alternative narratives of protocitizens or aspiring citizens for whom material inequalities need immediate recognition, argues Jaya (2013, p. 98).

Writing from a different theoretical perspective about refugees in India, McConnell (2013) argues that the centre of the relationship between identity and the state is the construction of a binary between citizen resident and refugee or stateless. Tibetans are considered ‘citizens’ by TGovE, ‘refugees’ in the international community and ‘foreign guests’ by the Indian state. McConnell (2013) rejects the citizen-refugee binary and the “essentialized views of political identities” (McConnell, 2013, p. 978). Juxtaposing this argument with Maalki’s work on refugees, McConnell further states that exile Tibetans in India are “an aberration of categories, an existing betwixt and between the identification classifications that dominate our understanding of the world” (Maalki, 1995, cited in McConnell, 2013, p. 978). These categories are socially constructed, with inherent power relations and there is a need to keep a balance between traditional perspectives that essentialize categories of citizen and refugee, and poststructuralist approaches to transnationalism that support hybridity, fluidity and in-betweenness, writes McConnell (2013, p. 979). The juxtaposition of identity categories ‘from above’ and unstable practices ‘from below’, plus the identity documents that

standardize and differentiate individual identities constitute the core complex processes of political identity construction, (McConnell, 2013), as I represent in figure 24 below. This argument is, however, open to interpretation, I argue, since the identity categories created by the state are not always stable, they can vary and are subject to changes and fluidity, such as the plethora of identity cards issued to Tibetans in India that positions them in-between categories and positionalities of guests/exiles/migrants/refugees and since, recently, citizens living in India in contemporary times.

Figure 24. **Juxtaposition of identity categories**



Source: Author's own based on McConnell's work (2013)

## VII. Theme 7. 'Shining abroad', not in India. 'India shining' campaign 2004

The concept of 'shining abroad' is extracted from an interview with a Tibetan interviewee in 2016 who spoke at length about the possibilities of a better life for Tibetans abroad, out of India. Her view was replicated by other interviewees and confirmed by academic literature as discussed below.

Yeah, they (Tibetans) are more valued (abroad). Their work has more value. Here (in India) even if you work, the value is not the same. We work same, we work here eight hours, we work there eight hours but the value and respect you get is different. And of course life there (abroad) is more comfortable. (Interview with T., McLeod Ganj, August 2016).

The young Tibetan student who suffered discrimination in the JNU campus and fear of lizards stated in our interview in 2016 that she was invited to go to Europe and study for a PhD degree, arguing that Europe would be better for her:

Yeah, I wanna try for my PhD abroad.... all my friends are applying for a Master's but I do not want to apply for a Master's. If I have done my MPhil, I wanna do a PhD. I think Europe would be better for me. For America and for London I have to try for TOEFL and IELTS and I do not know, I am really scared of those kind of stuff. (Interview with K., New Delhi, August 2016).

When I asked a Tibetan official working in one of the Tibetan offices in New Delhi about the Tibetans moving abroad from India, his answer was very diplomatic, focusing on the resettlement of Tibetan refugees in other countries as a result of political agreements since 1990s. He tried to remove any possibility of the TGovE being aware or made responsible for what he called individual decisions of Tibetans to move abroad:

It is like that ... under US Immigration Policy, United States Government have accepted 1000 Tibetan refugees, resettlement, and that was in 1990s, you know, so that is the case. And then Canada has accepted other 1000 Tibetan refugees and recently they have also accepted 1000 refugees. And Australian Government, they tried, they accepted certain number of Tibetan political refugees in Australia. Other than that, like those people going to Europe, going to America and taking refuge, that is an individual matter. Tibetan Government in Exile has nothing to do with it. (Interview with P., New Delhi, August 2016).

These views expressed by Tibetan interviewees in 2016 helped shaping an important argument, an emerging theme about Tibetans moving out of India, moving abroad, to Western countries for better opportunities, or as one interviewee put it: to 'shine abroad'. I argue that the concept of "shining abroad" can be juxtaposed with the central idea of the BJP political campaign in India in 2004: "India shining". The BJP party lost the elections in India in 2004, but won them five years before, in 1999, and then again in 2014 and 2019.

**"India shining" campaign of 2004** claimed to reflect the economic progress of the country, and was expected to help the NDA that BJP was a part of to return to power with a larger majority than in 1999 (The Economic Times, 2004). The message of the campaign was that India was a Great Power and a middle-income nation (Patel, 2013). However, the BJP lost the 2004 elections, partially due to the 'Indian shining' erroneous campaign that was arguably true for only a very small fraction of India, the English-speaking middle classes, for whom India was shining, but left out of its message the realities of hundreds million people living mostly in rural India whose lives have not improved and had not been impacted by the globalisation policies of the IGov since 1991 (The Economic Times, 2004). The failure of the 'India shining' campaign has been interpreted as a failure of the neoliberal project of economic reforms in India (Kaur, 2016). Mr Advani, the leader of the BJP campaign in 2004, said the two catchphrases "Feel Good" and "India Shining" had hurt the BJP. He admitted his party had failed to communicate to the poor that five years was too short a time to achieve equitable development (BBC, 2004).

Arguably, there was some substance in the claims made by the 'India shining' campaign in 2004, supported by a 6% GDP growth, rise in telecommunications and further development of IT and steel



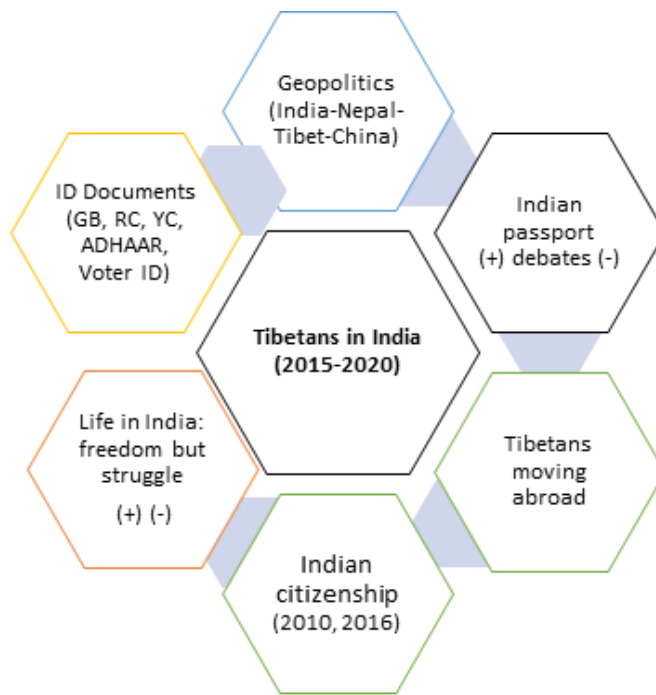
industries, to mention just a few, that were achieved during the five-year tenure of the BJP-led IGov but these achievements were overshadowed by poor rural development and high unemployment for the majority of Indians living in the rural areas (Yasmeen, 2004). Moreover, half of the total population in India, around 500 million citizens are below 19 years of age for whom access to education and employment is paramount (Yasmeen, 2004). Overall, access to education, health and to clean drinking water, which are basic public services remain neglected for the majority of citizens. 'Given these vast glaring inequities, how can one say India is shining?' asks Dipankar Gupta, professor of sociology at JNU (Yasmeen, 2004, no page number).

I observed these different versions of reality on multiple occasions on my trips to India and during my fieldwork in 2016 and I started wondering about how the IGov was tackling inequalities in order to raise people out of poverty and what was missing in their policies. I could also understand better the arguments put forward by the Tibetan interviewees who found themselves unwilling to 'become' Indian citizens for reasons mentioned earlier in this section, and who envisioned better possibilities moving abroad.

### **The central themes of the 2016 data analysis – Visual representation**

In Figure 25 below I created a visual representation of the major themes that emerged from my first ethnographic fieldwork in India in 2016, based on synthesizing the data analysis explained in the previous section.

**Figure 25. Diagram with the central themes about Tibetans living in India (2016)**



Source: author's own (2016)

#### Scene 4. Interpreting the 2016 research data. *Letter to India*

The text below, which I titled *Letter to India* is an imaginary letter sent by Tibetans to India, at the end of their exile period, when they move abroad, to an unspecified destination. The technique of writing the *Letter to India* is explained in Act 3. Scene 1.

Writing the *Letter to India* using my imagination and the technique of writing as inquiry resonates with the practice of Interpretive Ethnography, acknowledging that qualitative research is “endlessly creative and interpretive and the interpretations are constructed” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p. 34).

The *Letter to India* is presented on the following three pages.

## Letter to India

*Thank you, India, for the exile.*

*Thank you for allowing us to stay here for an indefinite period of time, thank you for the land given to us on lease and for the privileges to study Tibetan language and culture, to have our monasteries and schools and CTA, our democratic government in exile. We maintained our culture and identity for more than 50 years and we have had total freedom in India, so thank you!*

*But India, you must admit, you have been using us a tool in your business talks with the Chinese ever since the Dalai Lama sought asylum in 1959. We cannot forgive the fact that in 2013 you made a public statement saying that Tibet is part of China, this we cannot tolerate. Especially since we, Tibetans, are “old friends”, we have ancient relationships of trade and religious affinities. The Dalai Lama is a “special guest” in India and we are all therefore, your guests, some say ‘privileged’ ones.*

*But if you want, you can bring long term independence for Tibet from China, only if you want to... Bear in mind that China is already annexing your territories and giving Chinese passports to Indians living in Arunachal Pradesh... And your expenditure on the militarized India – Tibet (you say China) border is increasing in human and financial costs. Why not have a friend in the north-east instead of an enemy whose military power is now bigger than yours? And they do not talk peace often.*

*Not to forget, your states are also benefiting of our presence since 1960s, like Himachal Pradesh, we attract tourists from all over the world to see the Dalai Lama, to learn about non-violence and Buddhism, they come here and spend lots of money, also bring economic development, well, little of that money is actually used for infrastructure and development given the corruption in the country...*

*We will be honest, we felt like home in India, it was our second home, although not real home. We struggled in India, too. Your corrupt police officers came day by day to check the income and ask ruthlessly for their illegal share. Your landlords held grudges against us for using the land and resources, albeit we always paid our rents on time. Your men were teasing us, Tibetan girls, for looking different and modern. We felt safe in our own communities, but we were also brave enough to live outside them. We worked in Indian companies and offices, spoke Hindi, Telugu, Tamil and English, while speaking Tibetan at home.*

## Letter to India

*Continued...*

*We were many times asked to talk about ourselves, to the media, to your researchers, and even to foreign researchers, everyone had an interest in us, not sure why. Your scholars studied us wondering why we were a special community, who managed to be successful in education, jobs, businesses, films and arts and Miss Tibet competitions. We gave interviews and answered to questionnaires about our identity, our life in India, about Tibet, about our community. We were even asked if we wanted to be Indians! We do not know the answers to all these questions, we only know that each Tibetan has special stories to tell, individual stories and narratives. Everything is encapsulated within us. And we tell our stories in many ways, in drawings, paintings, films, writings, poems, novels, blogs, online articles and songs. We are a people with a memory and a story. Listen to us!*

*However, we were not always successful. The first of us who arrived in India had a very difficult time, in a new land, with new languages, no money, hot weather and different food. Your Government and other countries helped us a lot, and especially you, India helped us the most! We are grateful! We managed to be economically safe by doing hard work, selling sweaters, and moving across the country with this business. It worked well and we, Tibetan women, worked equally hard, being an example for our children. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation were then well-settled in India. But we, the young Tibetans, felt discrimination on a day to day basis. We felt thankful but we did not feel equal. We were born in this country, and yet we are not citizens.*

*Our story changed in 2016.*

*The hope came in December 2010, when a 25-year-old Tibetan girl fought her case in your High Court, and won it, she was the first Tibetan to have an Indian passport. Many others tried but were denied. We do not know why. We know that your Security officers want to check them case by case, but your Government should not make a law if it cannot implement it. We mean the Citizenship Law, (1955) stating that every foreigner born in Indian in the period 1950-1987 can become automatically an Indian citizen. Since 2016 all of us are finally getting Indian citizenship – our right by Law, according to the Indian Constitution (1955), but applied correctly only now, thanks to Lobsang Wangyal's Public Litigation Case won in September 2016 – thus, we all have an Indian passport!*

## Letter to India

*Continued...*

*Our patience with your old bureaucracy that gave us no information, no direction and no guidance on our rights for decades has come to an end. Your political parties and their games are no longer working with us either, at times we could vote, other times we could not, we lived contradictory realities for too long.*

*Now we got our Indian passports. We have something Indian, just a paper, we know, but we have not become something else from what we have always been. We will not become Indians, do not worry, we do not like your caste system, your racism and gender inequalities, your crimes gone unpunished, we will not compete for Indian Government jobs, and we will not be using your resources anymore.*

*Instead we will 'shine abroad'. We are moving out of India, collectively. As an educated community, with good English-speaking skills, trained in modern technology, we will have no issues getting a job abroad, most probably in Western Europe or USA. We usually get scholarships for the brightest students, and our Tibetan science and philosophy are eye-opening for the Westerners. Our values of non-violence, compassion, human rights, and respect for life are sought after by developed countries.*

*We will be in contact, we promise! If we ever miss India, we just have to turn our head to our neighbours to discover they are Indians working abroad! So we can talk the same language, watch the cinema, share dinner and laugh together, we will feel the 'oneness' with the Indians abroad.*

*So long, India, finally we can say good-bye!*

*After 58 years in exile. It is time to make another home!*

*Yours,*

*Tibetan people*

## **Critiquing the imaginary *Letter to India***

In this section I will make use of the concept of researcher's voices and take a different stand: being critical about the letter written above. I therefore use a different voice than the one who wrote the letter previously. This strategy of writing into the data is congruent with the literature that supports the concepts of multiple voices and multiple truths (Snyder, 2005). When asking the question 'whose truth' and 'whose voice' should be pre-eminent in the interpretation of the data, Snyder answers:

All truths, if at all possible—with the voices sometimes in harmony and sometimes discordant; with the participants' voices featured much of the time and with the researcher's voice carrying the melody at others; and with clarity about the reasons for the particular orchestration at all times.  
(Snyder, 2005, p. 138)

I argue that there are some key issues with the *Letter to India* and some critical points that need to be addressed to challenge some of its content. The letter assumes, first, that all Tibetans in India have had the same experiences while living in India and the same, collective opinions. It also states that all Tibetans have Indian citizenship and that all of them decided to move abroad. These elements are forced upon the narrative, to create a unitary story. Nevertheless, the question of Indian citizenship is a delicate one, a sensitive and secretive topic that divides the Tibetans, as evidenced by many of the interviews. There is no data available yet as to the number of Tibetans who applied for Indian citizenship until 2016. Speculations speak about 5% who obtained it by 2007 (McConnell, 2013). The statistics could have changed after Lobsang Wangyal won the case in the High Court, in 2016, which means that all Indian states should provide Tibetans with an Indian passport, those Tibetans who were born in India in 1950-1987 or whose parents were born in India.

Another important aspect of criticism to this letter is the fact that it ignores the Tibetans who are disinterested in the Indian citizenship because they fight for independence and they perceive the Indian citizenship as a deterrent to their goal, well-known figures such as Lukra Jam. Also, as other research pointed out (Falcone and Wangchuk, 2008), the majority of Tibetans living in India are politically passive and they go on with their daily lives without getting involved in the politics of the CTA or the IGov, for that matter. Therefore, it is suggested that these Tibetans would not actually have an interest in getting themselves unsettled after decades or a lifetime spent in India, to move abroad and start again from scratch.

The letter does not include a separate view of the CTA and the Tibetan MPs. It does not distinguish between the views of Tibetans of different age, gender, religion, class, status, or profession. There are no views from monks and nuns as there are no separate opinions from young and old people, educated and less educated, newly arrived Tibetans and well-settled ones. The letter assumes that

the 100,000 Tibetans in India can all fit into one story, told in 1,000 words. Finally, another important point of critique to this letter is the changing political situation in India and abroad, what I would call 'politics of impermanence'. In June 2017, the President of the USA, Donald Trump announced that he would cut all aid that used to support the Tibetans in South Asia for decades, which was counted in million dollars (The Hindu, 2017). His previous policy against migration (2016) and the travel ban against people from eight countries, with a majority of Muslim population, opened the door to racist acts of violence against migrants in the USA. These recent events show that migrants are not welcomed in the USA under Trump presidency. This is an important fact for the Tibetans in India who would like to settle abroad, as the favourite destination seemed to be the USA as argued by Hess (2013) and many interviewees I met in India in 2016.

### **Reframing the quest for Tibetan identity and return to ambivalences**

Reflecting on the data collected in the first ethnographic fieldwork in India in 2016 and the analysis, synthesis and interpretation that was discussed in the previous sections, I asked myself what kinds of answers the 2016 data provided to my PhD research question about what it means to be a Tibetan living in India in current times. One of the answers that emerged was arguably pointing towards the Tibetan Buddhist philosophy of life, summarized in the concept of *impermanence*. The philosophy of impermanence that I came to understand from 2016 research means that everything in the physical world we live in is changing, nothing is permanent, therefore it does not help us find answers by clinging to the present, to the safe, to the known. Instead of that, the wise approach is to accept change and adaptation, to be ready for a perpetual search and no answers. On the political scene, policies are changing because Governments are changing, politicians are like chameleons, once in power, they start suffering of irrecoverable amnesia and this is a fact that needs acceptance. There is also no hope. But this is not an emotional reaction to reality, it is an acceptance of it. It is a fact. There is no hope for China under the communist regime. Therefore, there is no hope for a free Tibet.

The other answer is that the story that was dis/un-covered so far, following the 2016 ethnographic fieldwork, contains a dissonant narrative, a search for *one narrative* for Tibetans in India that I did not find. That is because, I argue there is not one single narrative that could do justice to the different life stories, lived experiences, hopes, expectations, anxieties, memories, and dreams of Tibetans living in India. I must have been naively thinking that I can 'go out there' and discover something that would be easy to categorize, to put a name on, to create patterns about and to derive an answer from. I obviously fell in the trap of what has been termed a colonising ethnography, instead of trying to decolonise it (James, 2015). Therefore, I reframed the quest for what I naively categorised as 'Tibetan identity' and reformulated the questions to be asked in my

second ethnographic fieldwork in India, in 2017: *How to search for local, individualised stories of exile and listen to them as they are and write about them for all kind of audiences, in a language that transgresses culture, nation, borders and belongings?* Another reframed question following the 2016 fieldwork and in advance of the second fieldwork in 2017 was about how to study citizenship experiences outside Western perspectives (McConnell, 2013, p. 975). To be more precise, I started asking myself *how could I, as a researcher born and educated in a different part of the world, understand and interpret practices of citizenship that are contextually grounded?*

Finally, the ambivalences, mixed feelings about who I was and what I was doing in my first fieldwork in India in 2016 found a partial and temporary resolution. I decided to continue to employ feminist methodologies, trying to create a reciprocal relationships with my interviewees during fieldwork, and to continue the overt research, disclosing information about myself as openly as possible, but I felt that the power relations could not be entirely absolved, as I was acutely conscious about my identity in the field as a white woman, a foreigner, an outsider, on the one hand. On the other hand, I reflected on the fact that my family ties with India placed me in-between an insider and outsider. The sociological literature suggests that researchers who use their sense of identity and image as both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' can enhance the knowledge and experiences they bring to the field and help understanding the relation between knowledge and power. This can then lead to the 'enactment of hybridity' in the texts, meaning a form of writing that 'depicts authors as bicultural in term of belonging to the engaged scholarship and the world of everyday life' (Narayan, 1993, p. 672, cited in in Mutua and Swadener, 2004). Mutua and Swadener (2004) refer to an 'insider/outsider' trying to decolonize research as an 'ally' (2004, p. 13). And I planned and hoped that in the second fieldwork in India in 2017 I would be the ally and witness that listens to the Tibetan people and their stories of living in India with a sense of modesty and imagination.

#### **Summary of Act 4**

Act 4 presented the data analysis and interpretation of the first ethnographic fieldwork in India, in 2016 and argued that this PhD research is a process that in the first fieldwork was defined by insecurities, ambivalences and uncertainties about who the researcher is, and what research is. Act 4 showed the first analytical explorations about who Tibetans in India are and what their quest for Indian citizenship entails. This preliminary data analysis produced a number of themes explored with the help of academic literature that situated the Tibetans in a particular time and geopolitical context, that show how Tibetans living in India face struggles and enjoy freedoms, are governed by a plethora of bureaucratic processes and identity documents issues by both the CTA and the IGov and how the process of applying for Indian citizenship has been marked by lack of clarity and a complex



legal battle with two landmark dates: 2010 and 2016. The data interpretation followed the technique of writing as inquiry that produced an imaginary *Letter to India*, arguably written by Tibetans before they leave India and move elsewhere, and I used researcher's voices to critique this letter. The auto-ethnographic reflections following the 2016 ethnographic fieldwork and data analysis led to preliminary research findings formulated as impermanence, an acceptance of the transitory nature of life and lack of hope for Tibet, that seemed to emerge about the life of Tibetans in India. Act 4 ended with reformulated questions to be asked in the second fieldwork in India in 2017 about individualised narratives of Tibetans in exile that transgress boundaries and about a quest to understand experiences of citizenship in India as a researcher-ally. The following section is Act 5, preceded by an Interval.

## Interval

The interval invites the reader to consider and reflect on the previous Act 4 and to prepare for Act 5.

The reader may take a break before returning to *Act 5. Guests, migrants, and citizens who do not belong.*

## Act 5. Guests, migrants, and citizens who do not belong

‘That is what the Indian Government says: that we are the guests of India’ (Tibetan Interviewee, 2017).

*But once you take Indian passport, that is quite reasonable, then you cannot enjoy two facilities...As an Indian citizen or as Tibetan refugee, but you cannot be a refugee as well as an Indian.* (Tibetan Interviewee, 2017)

### About Act 5

In Act 5 I discuss the findings that emerged from the 2017 data ethnographic collection and analysis and I show how the new data about Tibetans in India, corroborated with academic literature, provides new understandings of experiences of migration, exile and citizenship. This helps illuminating some of the answers to the research questions of this PhD Thesis, that explores how Tibetans living in exile in India make sense of their current status, positionalities and identities and how they position themselves vis-à-vis the question of Indian citizenship.

Act 5 does two important things. First, it shows how this PhD research progressed in time from the first ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in India in 2016 and how the second ethnographic fieldwork in 2017 continued to yield new findings and analytical depth about the current experiences of Tibetans in exile in India and the question of Indian citizenship. Secondly, Act 5 takes several new directions showing how the auto-ethnographic and biographical experiences of the researcher are closely intertwined with the experiences of paperwork and the politics of documentation that Tibetans living in India and, to some extent, Indian citizens themselves experience.

The structure of Act 5 is composed of two scenes. In Scene 1 I explain how I became a ‘friend of Tibet’ in 2017 and how, at every step of the PhD ethnographic fieldwork, I had to produce a set of letters, identity cards, papers and documentation that opened the doors to new offices and institutions where I conducted research. I demonstrate how this experience with paperwork helped me better understand the everyday practices of paperwork for Tibetans living in India and this was possible due to the help of ‘an army of people’ who assisted me with the research in 2017. In Scene 2 I discuss the main themes that emerged from the 2017 data collection and analysis and how these constitute new findings, some of which connect to the findings that emerged from the 2016 PhD data collection and analysis. There are no intervals between the scenes since there is continuity of ideas throughout Act 5.

## Scene I. Becoming ‘Friend of Tibet’

This section is important for this PhD Thesis for several key reasons. First, I named this section ‘Becoming a Friend of Tibet’ because I was inspired by one of the documents titled Tibetan Solidarity card or Blue card (doc. No 5 in table 1 below) and the owner of this card is named in this booklet ‘Friend of Tibet’ (Appendix 13). Secondly, by collecting all this paperwork I was able to establish official networks with a set of Tibetan and Indian institutions that was beneficial for and enriched my research, helping me expand and deepen the knowledge about the Tibetans living in India in contemporary times. Thirdly, each of these documents became, to some extent, another expression of my identity and this identity was always re-invented and reshaped, demonstrating the multiple levels of connection and my positionality as a researcher, as an outsider or foreigner, but with multiple links with the place where I was doing research, being an OCI, having lived in India, having an Indian partner and an extended family, also, being a migrant, living in countries other than the one I was born into and having multiple passports and addresses that connect me with different parts of the world. All these different positionalities are important as they reflect ideas about privilege(s), home(s), geo-political contexts, generational links, and multiple levels of identification that place me on an axis from an insider to outsider, or what I mostly identified with in this PhD research, namely an ally, a researcher-activist-friend. Finally, the type of documentation that I had to produce during my PhD research, as exemplified in this section, constitutes a powerful and valuable means of associating my experience of the Indian and Tibetan bureaucracy and paperwork with the experiences of paperwork that my participants told me about, such as the Tibetan identity cards and the Registration Certificate that have to be renewed every year and after 2014 every five years and the experience of applying for an Indian passport, which constitutes one of the research questions in this PhD Thesis. I will return to discussing the paperwork experienced by Tibetans in India in Scene 2.

In this section I will be accountable for and honest about the context of the PhD research and the ties with the community that I built while spending several months of conducting fieldwork in India in 2017. By community here I mean both the Indian and Tibetan people I met and spoke with. I will focus on discussing the bureaucratic and administrative procedures that I encountered and the paperwork I had to produce to have access to certain places and institutions for collecting data, conducting interviews, and doing ethnographic work in India in 2017. I will present and discuss below eight types of paperwork that I had to produce during my PhD research in 2017, summarised in Table 19 below, the visualisation of these documents is available in the PhD Appendices.

Table 19. Paperwork produced for /during my PhD fieldwork 2017

No of doc.	Type of document	Place issued	Date
1.	Research Affiliation with JNU	New Delhi	2016 and 2017
2.	JNU Student ID card + Library ID card	New Delhi	August 2017
3.	Letter to the Library of the Post-Doctoral Indian Institute of Advanced Study (IIAS), Shimla	Shimla	August 2017
4.	Registration card by CTA for the Dalai Lama teaching	McLeod Ganj	August 2017
5.	Tibetan Blue / Solidarity Card / Friend of Tibet card	McLeod Ganj	September 2017
6.	Permission from CTA Security to visit Refugee Center	Dharamshala	September 2017
7.	PAP application to Bureau of the Dalai Lama – permission to visit Tibetan settlement Mundgod	New Delhi	July 2017
8.	PAP Supporting Letter from the Secretary of the Dalai Lama - for Tibetan settlement in Mundgod	Mundgod	September 2017

Source: author's own

Obtaining each of these papers was the result of a long waiting time, at times queuing physically, planning, and networking and establishing relationships with a variety of people while doing fieldwork. Thus, the important argument I am making here is the new approach to the research that I started employing in the 2017 ethnographic fieldwork, focusing on relationships, rather than on numerical targets, such as 'getting 15 interviews done'<sup>19</sup>. And equally important, this paperwork that I applied for and obtained in 2017 enabled me to use my personal experiences of documentation and administrative procedures in India and to connect these experience with the life stories of Tibetans and Indian citizens when they are faced with the Tibetan and Indian bureaucracy.

Some of the paperwork listed in Table 1 above could be obtained by doing online research and contacting people by email, such as the Research Affiliation with JNU University in New Delhi. This affiliation enabled me to meet and interact with academic staff and students at a local University in India and access local forms of knowledge about my PhD research and ask for support in conducting my fieldwork, if necessary. Thus, in my first fieldwork in India, in 2016, I came across the name of Professor Niraja Gopal Jayal from JNU and her research on citizenship in India and sent her an email

<sup>19</sup> This was one of my naïve aims in the first ethnographic fieldwork in India (2016)

about my PhD topic and my request of academic affiliation. She responded and advised me on the Research Affiliation process with the CSLG at JNU (Appendix 14). At her advice, I applied to the CSLG in September. The CSLG approved my request in November 2016 and sent me by post to the UK the Letter about my Research Affiliation with JNU valid for one year (Appendix 15).

In August 2017 I requested a renewal of my affiliation letter with JNU for another year, 2017-2018 (Appendix 16). However, the renewal of the Affiliation was a long and difficult administrative procedure made possible with the help of the CSLG Professors, staff, and especially, the intervention of my extended Indian family. One of Manish's aunts who worked in the JNU administration for 30 years and had retired came to help me renew my Research Affiliation with JNU one day before I had to leave India, as I needed six signatures on a piece of paper from six different people and different offices within five hours of a working day. Normally having this paper signed and stamped by all these people in India would take one month. The aunt did it with me and for me in one day, using all her networks and negotiation skills, as noted below.

The aunt was persistent, she went to all the four offices, spoke to people who knew her and got the signatures done in another one hour. I just followed her like a puppy, my mind was empty and anyhow I could not help or do anything, it was beyond my power, it was in her power. By 16.10 we had the new letter signed and stamped and the new certificate. I had a new affiliation with JNU starting 26 September 2017 (Fieldwork diary entry, 27 September 2017).

The two-year Research Affiliation with CSLG at JNU was very important as it allowed me to meet two academic staff at CSLG every time when I was in India on my fieldwork, Professor Niraja Gopal Jayal and Professor Amit Prakash, who were very supportive of my PhD research and offered academic advice grounded in their expertise and local knowledge about migration, democracy and citizenship in India. The Affiliation also enabled me to organise a PhD seminar with fellow PhD students at JNU in August 2017 where I presented my PhD research in progress and I received constructive feedback.

Another type of paperwork that was possible online was the Permission from the Department of Security of the CTA to visit the Tibetan Refugee Centre in Dharamshala, in September 2017 (Appendix 17). The CTA asked me to provide them with a set of documents by email before granting me this permission, this list included my Tibet Solidarity ID, my PhD student ID, my affiliation with the Tibet London office and a summary of my PhD research. Obtaining this permission from the Security of CTA was not straightforward, nonetheless, as initially I thought that their office was in McLeod Ganj, situated on the premises of the Tibetan Settlement Office. Therefore, I went to the

office in McLeod Ganj physically to ask for this permission, but the Settlement Officer was not there at that time of that day and I was told to wait outside. While waiting I asked another staff member about how I could obtain a Blue Book or a Tibetan Solidarity Card, that I was told about by some of my Tibetan participants during the interviews in 2017. The staff lady told me that this was easy to apply for and I could do it immediately, and asked me to make a donation, so I offered to donate 1,000 rupees (12 pound), which seemed to be ok, as the lady placed stamps of this value on the pages of my new Tibet Solidarity Card.

In terms of paperwork needed for the Tibet Solidarity Card, she asked for an ID proof and passport photos. I showed her my CCCU ID student card and luckily, I had some old passport photos with me. She took them and then asked me to fill in a simple form with my name, date of birth and address. She asked for my nationality as well and I told her Hungarian, but that I lived in the UK and I gave the address of my University, North Holmes Road. I have thus become a Friend of Tibet. And I started reflecting on the nature of my paper-identities, as I had to face these questions many times while doing fieldwork in India. I had to explain the difference between my nationality (Hungarian) and my place of living (UK address) and, many times, the reasons for which I was in India and I was doing research about the Tibetans.

In a discussion about the multiplicity of identities, Amartya Sen argued about the need to decolonize the mind, a concept which demands departure from the idea of solitary identities (Dinesh, 2016). And in this spirit of multiplicity, writes Dinesh (2016), instead of looking at the simplified binary between 'outsider' and 'insider', she suggest that we should look at the spaces in between the two categories and to explore how those in-between spaces manifest on the ground (Dinesh, 2016, pg. 56). And this is what I had experienced in the months of conducting fieldwork in India in 2017, I was in these open spaces, on the ground, where the multiplicity of my identities and belongings and the paperwork reflecting these was perpetually reinforced and re-invented. This was the case, for instance, when I went to JNU to obtain my student card and my Library card, in September 2017, to access published work available at the JNU Central Library (Appendix 18). Completing the JNU registration took me several hours, as I had to go to several offices, to pay the admission fees \$100 in rupees (6,500 rupees) and to fill in seven forms where I was asked the same questions about my name, my nationality, my address. In these forms I gave my address in Hungary, not the one at CCCU in the UK, as I thought it might create confusion to write a UK address for a Hungarian nationality.

Another situation where I had to present myself and ‘chose’ from my multiplicity of identities to obtain paperwork was the day when I went to register for the five-day teaching of the Dalai Lama in McLeod Ganj: 29 August – 01 September 2017. The registration was an administrative procedure that was done physically at the Tibetan Settlement Office. I went there and joined the long queue at noon, on the day I arrived in McLeod Ganj, after traveling by train the night before, with a five-hour delay and getting almost no sleep on the train. The waiting time was two hours and I felt tired, weak, hungry, and hot, standing in a long queue with hundreds of people, including Tibetans, Indians, and foreigners. Finally, after the long wait and paying the fees of 20 rupees (0,25 pound), I obtained my Registration card and my nationality was mentioned ‘Indian’ (Appendix 19).

I joined the line for Indians and Tibetans, as foreigners had a separate one, but I wanted to use my OCI and to go in together with Manish, who was with me in McLeod Ganj for a couple of days. Some Tibetans in the queue kept on telling me to join the foreigners, I think they meant well, but I told them ‘I am an Indian’. (Fieldwork diary entry, 28 August 2017)

The Indian ‘side’ of my identity and my connection with JNU University as a Research Affiliate re-surfaced in another type of paperwork, when I wrote a letter to request permission to access the Library of the Post-Doctoral IAS, Shimla (Appendix 20). In this letter and in the conversation that I had with the Indian administrators of this institution before they signed the form, I used as many forms of my ‘belonging’ as possible: I mentioned my PhD at Canterbury University, UK, my Research Affiliation with JNU University, New Delhi and my OCI and I used my Hindi speaking skills, adding the fact my husband was Indian, all these layers of my identity provided me access to this esteemed Institute for several days while I was in Shimla (Figure 26 below).

Figure 26. **Indian Institute of Advanced Studies (IIAS), Shimla, exterior and interior look**



Source: photos clicked by the author



The new literature that I consulted at the Library of the IAS, Shimla that included books authored by Indian sociologists helped reshaping some of my theoretical and methodological arguments and contributed to repositioning my PhD research in an attempt to explain and understand the patterns of migration in the larger South Asian region.

### Not without the kind help of ‘an army of people’

Naming each person who helped me with my PhD research is not my aim in this section, as many of the people who helped me are mentioned in other parts and sections of this PhD Thesis, but I selected few examples, included in Table 20 below, that I reflect on and discuss briefly below.

Table 20. Examples of people who helped me in my PhD research

Date / Year	Place / City	Name/ position/relationship	How they helped
2016 - 2017	New Delhi, McLeod Ganj, Shimla, <u>Mundgod</u>	Manish – my partner	Traveling together, driving, establishing contacts, brainstorming, emotional support, interest in my PhD research.
2016 - 2017	New Delhi, Shimla	My parents in law	Hiring taxi, taking metro, train, booking tickets, walking tour of <u>Majnu ka tilla</u> , waiting in queue for Dalai Lama teaching in ND
2017	New Delhi	My Indian aunt	Renewing JNU Research Affiliation, get paperwork signed
2016-2017- 2019	McLeod Ganj	Director and staff at NGO Tibet World	Facilitated accommodation, accepted me as a volunteer, helped with interviews
2017	New Delhi	JNU admission staff, CSLG staff	Renewing JNU Research Affiliation
2017	Shimla	IIAS Library staff	Approved my request to access the IIAS Library
2017	McLeod Ganj	Mrs Pema – Tibetan friend of a Hungarian-German friend, brother of Manish’s colleague	Facilitated access to the Tibetan Refugee Centre and helped hiring a taxi and joined me on the trip
2016 - 2017	New Delhi, <u>Mundgod</u>	Secretary of the Dalai Lama Bureau	Applying for PAP letter to visit <u>Mundgod</u> , introducing me to Settlement Officer
2017	<u>Mundgod</u>	Tibetan settlement officer	Access to the Tibetan camps, advice, guidance, daily chats.
2017	<u>Mundgod</u>	Research assistant and interpreter	Walking guide, translation and interpretation, bike rides

Source: author’s own

In order to decolonize the way we do ethnographic research with the crucial help of research assistants, to acknowledge their work, their names, and their role in the research, “incorporating their voices marks a definitive step towards forging a more inclusive and innovative ethnography for the future” (Middleton and Pradhan, 2014, pg. 371-372). Acknowledging the vital work of the ‘army of people’ who helped me during my PhD research, who were unofficially ‘my research assistants’ was something that I became more reflective about and grateful for in the second ethnographic fieldwork in India, in 2017. The kind help of “an army of people” is a quotation that originates in my Fieldwork diary (27 September 2017), when I reflected on and appreciated the extensive support with my PhD research that I received from many people whom I met physically while in India and from others with whom I exchanged emails with. These reflections are also noted in one of my PhD blogposts:

The time I spent in McLeod Ganj and, before that, in New Delhi and Shimla, on the second stage of my PhD fieldwork, taught me how to look at my research from a slightly new angle: to appreciate the human web, the relationships built with people who offered me their support, who agreed to meet me during their busy days for a formal or informal interview, who offered me a cup of tea on a rainy day or a smile on a tense day (PhD blogpost, 12 September 2017).

For instance, I became aware of and more thankful for the help I received from my immediate and extended family in India, my partner, his parents and their siblings, like the aunt who helped me renew my Research Affiliation with JNU in September 2017, as discussed in the earlier section of this chapter. “Recruiting” my extended Indian family for my research was a sentence that I heard during my fieldwork in 2017 and albeit it was said with a good sense of humour, it was quite real:

On this trip to Shimla it is not only Manish and me but his parents too. I did not mind them coming and today we were joking saying I ‘recruit’ more and more family members for my research, soon all the extended family would join (Fieldwork diary entry, 18 August 2017).

In fact, I did not ‘recruit’ anyone for my PhD research, but my partner and his parents offered to help me on many occasions during my fieldwork in India and although initially reluctant, I took their help extensively in 2017, following my PhD supervisors’ advice who suggested that I should do that and be grateful about it since fieldwork can be a long and tiring experience. My partner Manish, who gave his approval to have his name mentioned in my PhD Thesis, travelled with me to most of the places where I conducted fieldwork in 2016 and 2017, although some situations were not very pleasant for him, such as the example below, in Mundgod, and the news about cobras in the camp:

After some more chats with Mr Settlement Officer about the road back to Hubli, and him saying there is dengue fever in Hubli, so better not to stay there, he also said there were cobras in Mundgod but no

Tibetan has ever been bitten because they live in harmony with the nature. Oh well, nice info, indeed!  
Manish got terrified. (Fieldwork diary entry, 18 September 2017)

Receiving assistance from Tibetan and non-Tibetan contacts was essential for my PhD research and I came to appreciate it more in the 2017 ethnographic fieldwork and to acknowledge it in my writing. For instance, in 2016 I met Mr T., the Secretary of the Bureau of the Dalai Lama in New Delhi, via a network of contacts: and he helped me apply for the Protected Area Permit (PAP) to visit the Tibetan settlement in Mundgod, Karnataka, as all Tibetan settlements were considered 'protected areas' by the IGov. And obtaining the PAP is a procedure that takes three months to be approved. For this reason, I could not visit the Tibetan settlements in the South of India in 2016.

I applied for the PAP prior to embarking on my second ethnographic fieldwork in India, while I was still in the UK, on 13 July 2017 (Appendix 21). I informed Mr T. about my application and my planned trip to India in August-September 2017 and I maintained the contact with him before and after arriving in India in 2017 and kept him informed about my research trips to Dharamshala. He was very helpful with my paperwork and offered me further support with my fieldwork in the Tibetan settlements in the South of India. Since my PAP was not approved by the IGov by mid-September 2017 and I had two weeks left of my fieldwork, I asked for his help again. He wrote a supporting letter (Appendix 22) that confirmed that my PAP was in process and this letter allowed me to visit the Tibetan settlements in Mundgod and Bylakuppe (South of India) to conduct my PhD research. Furthermore, he wrote an email to the Tibetan Settlement Officer in Mundgod, introducing me and my PhD research and asking for his support with my fieldwork (Appendix 23).

Upon my arrival in Mundgod, on 18 September 2017, the Tibetan Settlement Officer, Mr. J. thoroughly inspected the documentation that I carried with me: the PAP letter from Mr T. and the PhD ethics forms from CCCU. He noticed the name of the CCCU School: Sociology and Politics. Then he told me that he studied at JNU, which was a point of common interest, I showed him my JNU ID card and told him about my Research Affiliation and my academic guides at JNU. He told me that he had an MPhil in Sociology, that opened the talk and we were openly chatting and smiling (Fieldwork diary entry, 18 September 2017).

This constitutes another example of how the paperwork that I obtained while conducting fieldwork in India in 2016 and especially in 2017 was extremely important for providing me access to places, institutions and people but also for establishing further relationships with the people I met or acting as ice-breakers in conversations, such as the case with Mr. J and our common JNU affiliation and

Sociology studies. As demonstrated in this section, knowing about the paperwork, applying for it and obtaining it was made possible with the help of a large number of people who helped me with my PhD research in a myriad of ways.

Research assistants/interpreters are individuals who are part and parcel of the knowledge production process, and as such we should be obliged to write them into our understandings of our field experiences and the results that we produce. (Turner, 2010, pg. 216)

In line with Turner's argument (2010), I acknowledge that my Tibetan interpreter in Mundgod played a crucial role in introducing me to the people I met, making phone calls to individuals and organisations in the Tibetan settlements, translating my questions from English to Tibetan and the answers of the participants from Tibetan to English, walking with me and my partner in the camps, also taking me on the back of her scooter and joining for dinner. She was a 20-year-old young woman who was then working as a Librarian, and was 'appointed' by the Settlement Officer, Mr. J., as my research assistant and interpreter. Mr. J. did this due to gender and age concerns, as he mentioned later, arguing that we were both young women and so we should get along well. Doing fieldwork and participant observation is an embodied experience and entails bodily engagement and bodily interaction (Okeley, 2007). Certainly, gender and age had an important part to play in making both of us feeling comfortable with each other and with what we were doing. We both shared a sense of humour and became friends.

The fieldwork I conducted in the Tibetan Settlement in Mundgod, Karnataka, where I met mostly with the older generation of Tibetans who told me that the youth moved abroad or to the large Indian cities in search for education and jobs, helped me reflect on the following questions: *What will happen to this Tibetan settlement in future, since mostly older people live here? Will all Tibetans move to Indian cities and abroad in the future? And is this the case in other Tibetan settlements in India?* This is a topic that I discuss and analyse in detail in Scene 2.

## **Scene 2. Main themes: Data analysis - second ethnographic fieldwork 2017**

In this section I discuss the data analysis following the second ethnographic fieldwork in India (2017). I organised the data collected in 2017 with the help of the software MAXQDA. Coding all the interviews took several stages, and several categories and themes emerged, presented visually in the Appendices 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 following the strategy of grounded theory, similarly to the 2016 data analysis. This strategy helped me organise the large amount of data into main themes (Table 21 below) that I will discuss and analyse in the light of relevant literature.

Table 21. Main themes – data analysis 2017

Main theme	Sub-themes / categories
1. <u>Securitization and stepwise migration: Newly arrived Tibetans in India: security checks, education, monasteries, migration</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>decreasing numbers since 2008,</li> <li>goal: education, Tibetan/EN language, monastery,</li> <li>lack of job opportunities in India,</li> <li>some youth return to Tibet, or migrate again, e.g. to US if family networks or back to Tibet.</li> </ul>
2. <u>'Tibetanness': between 'blood' and location. Tibetan emotions - 'Being 90% Indian', 'Having 100% Tibetan blood'</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Tibetanness' is not about passport/citizenship, one can have any other passport, Indian, American,</li> <li>it is about 'emotions', feeling Tibetan, + loyal to Tibetan cause</li> <li>Tibetan army 22 regiment.</li> <li>'Thank you, India' starts when you are 7 years old,</li> <li>Tibetan day and boarding schools – preserving culture and lang, learning Tibetan, then English, then Hindi/ other Indian languages.</li> </ul>
3. <u>Politics of documentation. Questioning loyalties, risking evictions: 'precarious citizens' Tibetans with Indian passport - Individual choice/ homelessness</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eviction of Tibetans with Indian Passport from settlements: 'Be a Tibetan refugee OR Indian citizen',</li> <li>Tibetans with Indian passport:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>still loyal to CTA, says journalist who has Indian passport</li> <li>expected to be responsible for Tibetan movement, says CTA rep..</li> </ol> </li> <li>Tibetans going to Court individually, despite High Court ruling all should get Indian passport.</li> <li>Seven Tibetans in Shimla have Indian <u>passport..</u></li> </ul>
4. <u>Permanent guests and hospitality issues: Nomads in Tibet and life of 'privileges' in India - older generation of Tibetans</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older Tibetan generation hoping for return, but hardship in Tibet: farming, nomadic life, vs. life in India: education, jobs, Dalai Lama.</li> <li>Former Tibetan army fought in 22 Tibetan <u>regim.</u> of Indian Army.</li> <li>Old People's home: for parents left behind by children moving abroad, widows, widowers, terminally ill patients, death rites.</li> <li>Monasteries and nunneries.</li> </ul>
5. <u>'Twice migrants' and unemployment: Tibetans moving abroad: jobs, education, political pressure, multiple migrations</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of jobs for Tibetan educated youth, + No access to Indian Gov jobs - no Indian citizens + Not owning land or property in India,</li> <li>Tibetans in Nepal: Chinese pressure, hostility,</li> <li>1966 Multiple crossings: Tibet-Pitorgar-Dehradun-Hubli-Mundgod</li> <li>2017 Multiple crossings: <u>Mundgod</u> – Bangalore- ND - Canada</li> </ul>

Source: author's own

In the following section I will discuss each theme in detail and reflect on the context in which it emerged, with supportive data from interviews, secondary data from media articles and blogs and academic literature that will lead to new findings about the Tibetans living in exile in India and their quest for Indian citizenship.

## **I. Theme 1. Securitization and stepwise migration: Newly arrived Tibetans**

### **Securitization: regulating through mobility**

This theme helps illuminating the geo-political, social and economic context that contributed to a reduced number of Tibetans who arrived in India recently, especially after 2008, and the strategies for making a new life that the newly arrived Tibetans employ while in India. The academic literature in this section highlights some important features of migration in South Asia, migration management in China, securitization of migration and the concepts of ‘regulating through mobility’ and ‘floating populations’ (Xiang, 2007, 2018). The internal migration in Tibet and inside China which is highly regulated by the Chinese authorities is an important topic to be addressed that will enable a better understanding of the complexities of fleeing Tibet and China and arriving in India.

China’s securitized and militarized rule in the autonomous provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang Uyghur in Northwest China has been framed as ‘modern colonialism’ (Anand, 2018), and Uyghurs and Tibetans have been represented as sources of insecurity for the Chinese state, which then legitimizes state violence as a securitizing practice and serves contemporary Chinese colonial goals (Anand, 2018). Conceptually, refugees and migrants have become hyper-visible in many global contexts due to the ways that people on the move have been securitized by states’ agendas (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020). In this context, securitization is a framework through which the agency of refugees and migrants has been represented and constituted as threatening in nature (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020, pg. 2).

The borders of Tibet with India are heavily securitized, and this is part of the contemporary Chinese model of ‘regulating through mobility’ (Xiang, 2007) since China increased its regularization of social life, of mobility and of migration of its citizens. Xiang (2007) argues that those who emigrate from China become ‘protectable migrants’, which means that in order to protect them, the Chinese state must know all about the migrants, have access to their personal data, while the Police can contact their families and apply pressure on them, depending on the nature of the migratory process and the interest of the state. For instance, in 1986 China introduced the identity (ID) card system to have more social control, a system that laid the foundation for a ‘new regime of mobility’ which constitutes ‘a constellation of policies, cultural norms and networks that condition, constrain or

facilitate migration’ (Xiang, 2007, pg. 3). Furthermore, the administrative system in contemporary China is highly territorialised, with rigid boundaries between urban and rural areas and between provinces and municipalities. A key policy for maintaining this rigid system is the household registration system (called “hukou” in Chinese). In this system, people who were born in rural areas cannot move to the city and obtain urban ‘hukou’ status unless they are authorized to do so by the state. In this context, those migrants who become mobile without the permission of the state authorities become disintegrated from the established social system of social control and support and become ‘floating population’ (Xiang, 2007, pg. 4).

The internal control and management of migrants from China include the Tibetans and the data that emerged from the interviews I conducted in 2017 highlights the concepts discussed by Xiang (2007). For instance, during a walking interview and tour of the Tibetan Parliament, a CTA employee talked about the current political situation of Tibetans inside Tibet and how the Chinese Government managed their internal migration, aiming to prevent them fleeing to India, by controlling their move from one village to another, which has to be authorised by the local government, and in case of no return, the migrant’s family faces consequences. According to the Director of the Tibetan Refugee Center in Dharamshala, in 2017 there were 27 newly arrived from Tibet. Other research participants told me that the number of newly arrived Tibetans in India decreased after the 2008 protests in Tibet, in Beijing, in Lhasa and in India and China made it very difficult for Tibetans to move out of Tibet.

### **The 2008 protests in Tibet and their aftermath**

The 2008 events in Tibet constitute a key moment in the Tibet-China relations and the protests that ended in violence were recorded by international media outlets. For instance, CNN reported an escalation of tensions in what it called ‘ethnically Tibetan regions of China’ (CNN, 2012). The BBC (2010) reported that the unrest in March 2008 was the worst in Tibet for 20 years and violence erupted in Lhasa on 14 March, followed by the excessive use of force by Chinese soldiers, the violence against Tibetan protesters and as a result, Tibet was closed to all foreigners and tens of thousands of Chinese soldiers were sent to the region. Thousands of Buddhists in neighbouring India and Nepal were protesting in the streets of their own cities as a form of solidarity (NY Times, 2008). Since the protests in Tibet against Chinese rule took place just before the start of the 2008 Olympics, there was a perceived threat to the Games (The Guardian, 2008).

The media representation of the Tibetan protests has been criticised as being dominated by the question of violence, while little attention was paid to policy questions and social issues (Barnett (2009). The 2008 unrest in Tibet is important and different than previous Tibetan resistance since it took place in 95 different areas across Tibet, with Tibetans from different social strata, ages, locations and monks and lays actively participating, many of them holding up the Tibet flag and asking for independence (Barnett, 2009). The 2008 protest spread out quickly also with the help of social media and the use of Information Technologies. This also shows that the activism of the Dalai Lama living in exile in India since 1959 has been fruitful and mobilized Tibetans inside and outside Tibet and this, together with the protests over the Olympic torch, 'changed the way politics is done and thought about in China.' (Barnett, 2009, pg. 4). However, the consequences of the 2008 Tibetan protests do not show much hope, rather a reinforced securitization of Tibetan area, with Chinese army patrolling the streets, the closing of Tibet to foreigners and journalists, less monks in the monasteries, and a political atmosphere of radicalisation of opinion for Tibetan and Chinese nationalists, paralleled by the collapse of talks between Beijing and the Dalai Lama, and damage to the geo-political relations between China and other world powers (Barnett, 2009, pg. 23).

### **Newly arrived Tibetans in India – what next? Stepwise migration**

In the light of the 2008 events and their importance for Tibetans inside and outside Tibet, an important question for my PhD research was about how Tibetans managed to escape to India in the last 10 years. My visit to the Refugee Centre in Dharamshala in 2017 made me think about how people were able to flee Tibet and how they would build a new life in India. I asked the Director of the Refugee Centre about these questions and about the reasons that Tibetans come to India for. He said that the main goal was for young and newly arrived Tibetans to go to schools and to monastic institutions and to learn Tibetan and English. Newly arrived Tibetans first reach the Nepal Reception Centre, they receive a No Objection Certificate to travel from the Nepalese Government and since The Special Entry Permit, issued by the Embassy of India in Nepal, allows the Tibetans to enter India. They are sent to New Delhi for further security checks by the Intelligence Bureau, then to the Refugee Centre in Dharamshala. Recent research about Tibetans in India (Choedup, 2015) confirm that since 2003 the Government of India through its consulate in Nepal started to screen Tibetans entering India through Nepal and issued them Special Entry Permits (SEP) under the four categories of education, pilgrimage, refugee and others (Choedup, 2015, pg. 176).

Upon arrival at the Refugee Centre in Dharamshala, the newly arrived Tibetans receive medical assistance and are enrolled in Tibetan schools, where they learn Tibetan, English, sciences and other



subjects. When I asked the Director about what Tibetans do after completing their studies, he spoke openly about the various outcomes and possibilities, including 'dropping out, doing petty business and going abroad' while others study in places like Delhi University. He added that since few of them have relatives in the 40 Tibetan settlements in India, scattered in 10 states, most wanted to stay in Dharamshala.

Further insights into the topic of how the newly arrived Tibetans find life in India, their education and issues about un/employment were revealed during an informal English class conversation at the NGO Tibet World where I was volunteering in 2017. I spoke to two young Tibetans, one of them was 18 years old and the other one 26. They told me how they escaped from Tibet, one of them 13 years ago, the other one two years ago, with the help of a guide hired by the father of one of them. They crossed the border to Nepal, running and climbing the mountains, then they came to India and got their RCs. One of the young men studied in Bylakuppe Tibetan language, culture, and Buddhism, then came to Dharamshala to learn English. The other young man came straight to Dharamshala to learn Tibetan and for the past six months he has been learning English. When I asked them about their future plans, the 18-year-old young man said he wanted to go to New York, where his aunt lives, while the 26-year-old one said he wanted to go back to Tibet, where all his family and friends are, and was planning to find work as English translator in his village. But it was difficult to go back to Tibet from India, without a Chinese passport, he added. I asked them why they did not want to stay in India and they said it was because of the lack of employment opportunities in India which means they cannot earn money to support themselves, and to send back to their families in Tibet. The 18-year-old one said that in New York he would find a job, that is why he must learn English and his aunt is a good chef in a nice restaurant there. I told him I also have an aunt who lives in New York, albeit I have not been there.

The discussion summarised above sheds lights on several key ideas that emerged from the 2017 data about the newly arrived Tibetans in India: they face a lack of employment in India, which leaves them with two options: to move back to Tibet, which proved to be difficult, for reasons that, I argue, have to do with the highly securitised mobility regime in China as discussed earlier in this theme. The second option for Tibetans who arrived in India recently is to move further West, where they have relatives or a network that can support them, such as the case of the young man wanting to move to New York. This strategy has been theorised in the literature on migration as stepwise migration: a type of migration which occurs in a series of movements, for instance a migrant moving from a small town to a larger one, and then to a big city (Nilsson, 2003). Stepwise migration is also a strategy that international migrants with low levels of capital adopt when they face high cost barriers and

restrictive immigration policies that prevent them from reaching their preferred destination, such as the Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong (Paul, 2001). And I will add to this example the case of newly arrived Tibetans in India discussed above.

The young men also spoke at length about life in Tibet under China's occupation, and the struggle to maintain their culture, to speak Tibetan at home, because in the public they have to speak Chinese. They also spoke about the heavy Chinese army in Tibet, the 10 million Chinese who moved there, compared to the 6 million Tibetan residents. And they mentioned the mixed marriages, how the Chinese government encourages Chinese to marry Tibetans to destroy the "pure Tibetans" (their own words). They also said there were other children in their schools with mixed parents, Tibetans and Chinese and those kids spoke both languages and learnt about both cultures. What I understood was that this practice was not appreciated or encouraged because Tibetans would not remain Tibetans anymore. 'The young men seemed to be worried even about Tibetans marrying Americans or French, as they said, because the children will be mixed, so my question remains "who is a Tibetan anymore?"' (Fieldwork diary entry, 29 August 2017). My question about who a contemporary Tibetan is and what constitutes 'Tibetanness' and will be further explored in the following theme, Theme 2.

## **II. Theme 2. 'Tibetanness': between 'blood' and location.**

### **'Tibetanness' and 'hope vanishing'**

The concept 'Tibetanness' originates in an interview with a research participant who used this word during a discussion about the Tibetans' hope to return to Tibet, the issue of Indian citizenship and the Tibetans in India migrating to Western countries. This interview was largely unstructured and the participant, a Tibetan man in his 50s, working in an office in Dharamshala, talked about topics that he considered relevant and at the same time, these topics corresponded to a great extent to my PhD research questions and to the themes discussed in this chapter. To preserve his anonymity, I will not give further details about him in the quotes below. He told me about his parents who fled Tibet and arrived in India in 1960, who always hoped to go back to Tibet and he himself was born and brought up in India, in Ladakh, just like his children, a third generation of Tibetans in exile. He argued that 'hope is vanishing', and especially the younger generation of Tibetans are losing their hope to return to Tibet and they chose between going abroad or becoming Indian citizens:

And still then we wanted to go back, still then we are holding our RC, we are not holding, you know... Indian citizenship, that's the... now, you know, **hope is vanishing**, it is degrading... So there is the issue, you know, most of the young generation they are losing their hope and want to migrate, you know, to other countries, one. And two, they try to get Indian citizenship. Still then, the Tibetanness will never (be) lost, you know, Tibetanness will never (be) lost. And then, of course, citizenship is nothing, it is a paper, is nothing, it is a paper, you know.... (On) that paper depends their livelihood, their education.

His argument was that being a Tibetan – or living the Tibetan identity which he called 'Tibetanness' – in contemporary times in India is living a dilemma. The hope to return to Tibet is vanishing in the geopolitical context of China being a world power, suppressing its ethnic minorities, and controlling the media, while the dialogue between the Tibetans in exile in India led by the XIV Dalai Lama and China stopped in 2011. Secondly, young Tibetans in India apply for Indian citizenship, a 'paper' on which their livelihood and education depend. And thirdly, some Tibetans choose to migrate to Western countries where they take foreign citizenships, as a matter of survival or economic betterment. Nonetheless, these developments do not affect Tibetan identity, which is deeply connected with 'Tibetan emotions', according to the same research participant.

### **Identity, diaspora, blood, and location**

Asking 'who is a pure Tibetan', Lokyitsang (2018, pg. 195) argues that the idea of ethnic or linguistic purity for Tibetans, especially those of mixed parentage or born in the West, is challenging. However, these Tibetans like Lokyitsang, who writes about himself as a 'being Tibetan: British Tibetan' born in London to a Tibetan father and a Japanese mother, claim their 'Tibetanness' and understand the idea of purity not as ethnic categories, but as a shared historical trauma and a present living in exile while aiming to hold onto the past. Lokyitsang (2018) argues against purity as a concept born out of modernity and supports the idea of a Tibetan heterogeneous culture that accepts and is built on hybridity. In this framework, the enactments, and performances of Tibetanness should not cater to purity/impurity binaries, rather should embrace the historical and contemporary multiplicities of Tibetan identities, aiming for authenticity without opposing hybridity and allowing room for changes that will shape different subjectivities of Tibetans living in different lands and under different conditions (Lokyitsang, 2018, pg. 195-210).

The concept of identity is enclosed, restricted and particular, marking divisions in our social lives, when we are told that to share an identity means to be connected at the national, ethnic, regional and local levels which are presented as fundamental to our being in the world (Gilroy, 2000, pg. 98).

The idea of 'fundamentally shared identity' becomes a platform and a tool for absolute divisions, for creating binaries of 'us' and 'them' and in this framework, identity is no longer a process of 'self-making and social interaction' (Gilroy, 2000, pg. 103). The alternative to this divisive understanding of identity is, in Gilroy's work, the idea of diaspora: a concept that questions the cultural and historical mechanics of belonging and disrupts the links between place, location and consciousness (Gilroy, 2000, pg. 123). And this idea resonates to a large extent to the arguments made by Lokyitsang (2018) about the different co-existing Tibetan subjectivities on the global scene. The translocal power of diaspora creates new possibilities that disrupts the 'assumptions of automatic solidarity based on either blood or land' (Gilroy, 2000, pg. 133).

The important dimension of 'Tibetanness' is the fight for the 'Tibetan cause' or 'Tibetan issue' which means fighting for Tibetan independence from China. Being a Tibetan means being active in this three-generation long fight and being resilient, regardless of the citizenship that Tibetans hold:

Of course, Tibetanness will never die 'til the Tibetan issue, whole issue dies. Nowadays, you know, American Tibetans, they are standing for Tibetan cause. ... And Canadian Tibetans, they are standing for Tibetan cause, even in Taiwan, Tibetans living there, they are getting Taiwanese citizenship, they are also taking, they are standing for Tibetan cause. So the paper will not make a big difference.

The fight for Tibet independence is the responsibility of CTA, one research participant argued, and he referred to it as 'a flame', which, if not kept alive, the Tibetan political movement might diminish and even die:

Yes, of course, one thing I would like to tell you. The young generation, they are like flower, and then the CTA leadership should continue the role of flaming Tibet cause, so otherwise the CTA leadership could not prevail the Tibetan cause, then automatically it will die.

Another Tibetan participant, a young man in his mid-20s, who was born in Nepal, came to India to study and was working in the NGO Students for Free Tibet, acknowledged the importance of fighting for the Tibetan cause during the interview in McLeod Ganj. While talking about the increasing numbers of young Tibetans moving abroad from Nepal and India to study, he emphasized how some of them decide to come back and work for the Tibetan cause:

StudFreeTibet: Yeah, so these, from that perspective I think it's good because there are a lot of young people, especially Tibetans, going abroad and trying to study, to continue their studies and then coming

back to India and contributing to the movement (for independence) or working in the Government. And I think that is one positive side, that I have seen last few years or so...

One way of being active in the Tibetan movement is to work in NGOs that lobby for Tibet's independence, another way is to literally fight in the Army. Two of my research participants, in their late 60s, whom I met in the Tibetan settlement in Mundgod, told me the stories of their life in the Tibetan Army 22, a branch of the Indian Army. One of them joined the Tibetan Army when he was 23 years old. This interview was conducted in Tibetan, with the help of an interpreter:

Camp leader (N. interpreting): Actually we are not supposed to make a team of Tibetan Army, because we are refugees, so refugees are not allowed to make an Army, so he asked Indian Army to please allow us, because the reason we gave, first reason was 'we want to be a guard of Dalai Lama', so that for him, who knows in future, like that.... So first reason was that, second was if we, like, as soon as we learn how to fight, we can get our freedom back. That is the reason they allowed us to make a team of Army.

The other research participant served in the Tibetan Army for 27 years, and he spoke Tibetan, English, and Hindi during the interview. He said that Tibetans 'are actually 90% Indian': 'We are actually 90% Indian... Yes, we are 100% not Hindi, but 90% Indian'. (Retired Tibetan Army Officer speaking in English all the time to me, Hindi to Manish / my partner and Tibetan to the camp leader and my interpreter). When I asked him what about the remaining 10%, he told me that his 'blood was 100% Tibetan':

Interviewer: Ok, can I ask you something? (addressing the Retired Tibetan Army Officer). You said that you lived in India for so long and you fought in the Indian Army and you are 90% Indian, so what is the 10% Tibetan?

Retired Tibetan Army Officer: Actually, we are, my blood is Tibetan 100%, but we live in India, we are using all the Indian goods and foods, but actually, specially, our religious thoughts are from India, all the pilgrims in India, very happy to go for this pilgrimage, but it's same time, it is, we are also lucky, because our old people say that you have to, Dalai Lama's blessings you can't get, now in India we get many times to visit him.

His argument is relevant for the question about Tibetan identity in exile. Being born in India means that a Tibetan child will study in a Tibetan school, learn first Tibetan, then English after 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and after 5<sup>th</sup> grade will start learning Hindi or other Indian languages depending on the state where they live. While visiting the Tibetan day-school in the Majnu ka tilla camp in New Delhi in August 2017, I was told by the English teacher during the walking interview that children must learn Tibetan to preserve their culture and identity. But when they are seven years old they also start learning English

and they are taught how to be thankful to the country that hosts them and their parents and grandparents, by making drawings of the Indian flag and writing in English: 'Thank you, India', even before they start learning Hindi or other Indian languages, as depicted in Figure 27 below:

Figure 27. Tibetan children's drawings in the Tibetan school-day, Majnu ka tilla, New Delhi



Source: author's own during Majnu ka tilla camp tour, with permission of School Staff, 23 August 2017

It is important to specify that this particular view on being Tibetan in India - "90% Hindi, but 100% Tibetan blood" - comes from a first generation Tibetan, who came to India when he was two years old, whose parents told him fresh stories about life in Tibet and who fought for 27 years in the Tibetan army. He talked proudly about that and had a positive view on the work of the IGov for Tibetans. He was grateful that the Indian Army allowed Tibetans to learn how to fight while being part of the Tibetan regiment 22, albeit after he retired he did not receive any pension from the IGov, since he was not an Indian citizen. This was, however, not a reason to be resentful, and it was amended in 2017:

Retired Tibetan Army Officer: Since 1964 to 2008 there is no pension for retired person, we are all retired, I am retired since 2007, he is since 2008. But few years back, since 22 March 2017 the Indian Government announced they are also giving pension to us. Retired Tibetan Army Officer: But I am not having pension because we are not Indian citizens. It is ok, we are not citizens, it is ok...

When I asked him and the other Tibetan participant, also a retired Army officer, if they were interested in having an Indian passport, they replied that if one wants to apply for Indian passport, one has to give up all Tibetan certificates, like IC, RC...everything and they do not want to do that: 'We are ready to go for Tibet if change get (laughing)' (Retired Tibetan Army Officer). This view seems to reflect both hope to return to Tibet if independent and attachment to the 'proof' of being Tibetan: Registration Certificate and Identity Certificate.

While this perspective is shared by some of the first-generation Tibetans, other younger Tibetans also subscribe to a similar view, like the activist and writer who posts regular articles on social media, in Tibetan and Indian news outlets, Tenzin Tsundue. He writes that for 55 years India has not pressured or coerced Tibetans to integrate. ‘The visionary work of the Dalai Lama, supported by India, helped Tibetans preserve their identity by nurturing a deep sense of culture, history and heritage in the young. For this, Tibetans remain ever grateful to India’ (Hindustan Times, 2014). However, other research participants told me about their struggle to get an Indian passport which entitles them to travel easily, to study in Indian Colleges on the same status as local students and to own property and apply for IGov jobs. This is a double-edged status: Tibetans deciding to become Indian citizens are requested to move out of the settlements by an eviction order. They may become homeless Indian-Tibetans, a topic discussed in theme 3.

### **III. Theme 3. Politics of documentation. ‘Precarious citizens’, ‘Citizens who do not belong’**

#### **Tibetans voters in Indian elections. The dilemma of an Indian passport: ‘roots and routes’**

Before the general elections in India, in April 2014, the Election Commission issued a new order which directed all the Tibetans born in India between January 26, 1950 and June 30, 1987, and their children, to be registered as voters (Tibetan Review online, October, 2017). There were around 40,000 Tibetans who were eligible to be enrolled as voters across India, but only a small number registered and even less actually voted (Ghosh, 2016, pg. 143). According to Indian news sources, around 1,000 Tibetans registered to vote in the state of Himachal Pradesh, a small number compared to the total Tibetan population in the area, around 22,000 (Times of India, 2017). In the Tibetan settlement in Shimla there were seven Tibetan who obtained an Indian passport, the Settlement Officer told me during the interview conducted in 2017. One of the explanations put forward for these low numbers is that the vast majority of eligible Tibetans prefer to maintain their status as ‘foreigners’, allowed to live in India on a temporary basis on a renewable RC (Tibetan Review, 03 October 2017). Additionally, the IGov informed all the Tibetans applying for an Indian passport that they should give up their residence in the Tibetan refugee settlements and cease to receive any benefits from the CTA.

There are two strong and opposite views about Tibetans claiming Indian citizenship represented by two important figures in the Tibetan exile community in India. The first one is the poet and activist for Free Tibet, Tenzin Tsundue, who ‘vehemently opposed it, reasoning that it would undermine Tibetan nationality, and our legal, historical and basic moral claims over Tibet’ (Hindustan Times,

2014). He posted on his Facebook page a copy of the letter sent out in 2018 to all Tibetan settlement officers in Himachal Pradesh by the Police office in Kangra, asking the Tibetans with Voting Cards to surrender their RC, since the RC is a proof of their 'foreign status' and a contradictory document to the Voting Card, which is a proof of 'Indian identity' (Figure 28 below):

Figure 28. Letter to Tibetans to surrender their RC if issued Indian Voting Cards: February 2018

**To** All Tibetan Settlement Officers,  
Mecleodganj, Bir Tibetan Society, Dege Division,  
Nagchene Division, Tashi Jong Tibetan Camp

**From** The Superintending of Police  
Kangra at Dharamshala H.P.

**NO:** FRO/2018-5824-97 **Dated** 03-02-18

**Subject:-** Tibetan Refugees issued Electoral Cards without surrendering their  
Registration Certificates.

**Memo,**

A copy of letter No 25022/57/2017-F.IV dated 01/12/2017 from Ministry of Home Affairs Govt. of India and a copy of letter No Home-B (F) 6-1/2017 dated 23-01-2018 from the Principal Secretary (Home) to the Govt. of HP have been received through Addl. Director General of Police CID Shimla on the subject cited above.

Vide above letter it has been informed that around 1000 Tibetan Refugees have registered themselves as voters and exercised their voting rights in the State Assembly Elections and 296 Tibetan Refugees have exercised their franchise in the State without surrendering their RC,s. The possession of Registration Certificate indicates their foreign status whereas the acquisition of Indian Voter I Card would enable them to prove their Indian identities, which have security implications.

In this connection, you are requested to direct all such Tibetans Refugees who have registered themselves as voters, under your jurisdiction, to surrender their Registration Certificates, at this office with in one month. So that compliance report could be sent to the Government of India.

**Superintending of Police**  
Kangra at Dharamshala

**Endst No** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dated** \_\_\_\_\_

**Copy to:-** SHO Baijnath, Mecleodganj with the direction to liaise with the  
Tibetan Settlement Officers of their jurisdiction and ensure compliance at earliest.

**Superintending of Police**  
Kangra at Dharamshala

Source: Facebook post by Tibetan activist Tenzin Tsundue, 28 February 2018



The debate about having Indian citizenship and the right to vote in Indian elections, or 'remaining' refugees / foreigners is a topic that arguably divides opinions in the Tibetan exiled community in India. Tibetans find themselves in a dilemma over the right to vote and Indian citizenship which seems to contradict the campaign for a Free Tibet. Some Tibetans feel that since they have spent six decades as refugees in India, taking Indian citizenship will end the feeling of 'rootlessness', while others feel that becoming Indian citizens would destroy their six-decade-old campaign for an independent Tibet (Menon, 2014). This perceived dilemma or conflict can be conceptualised using Gilroy's metaphor: 'roots' and 'routes', where 'roots' reflect ethnic experiences from the past, and 'routes' correspond to future ethnic expectations, and these constitute 'diasporic journeys' (Sarwal, 2017, pg. 2). Ideas about roots may appear natural and authentic although they are the products of inventions and imaginations (Braakman, 2005, pg. 138). Routes encompass 'forms of diffusion and hybridisation' for populations such as Afghans living in Germany who struggle with identifying spaces of belonging 'between senses of roots and routes' which require a continuous negotiation (Braakman, 2005, pg. 80). For younger Afghans in Germany the influences of routes are stronger than for the older generations who cling to memories of past lives in Afghanistan (Braakman, 2005).

### **Permanent address and politics of documentation**

At the other end of the spectrum Tibetans like Lobsang Wangyal, journalist and editor of the online newspaper Tibet Sun, made his views known by writing articles in the online journal about how he obtained his Indian passport and offered advice to others. He asked me to write his name on the research ethic form and did not wish to preserve his anonymity during the interview, making it clear that his opinion can be shared while disseminating my PhD research findings. After ten months fighting two legal battles in the High Court in ND, Lobsang Wangyal finally obtained his Indian passport (Tibet Sun, 2017). After the two cases filed by Lobsang in May and September 2016, the Indian High Court ordered all Indian Passport offices in the country to issue passports to Tibetans. However, in his case, and other cases as well, the police produced a negative report twice, obstructing his application for a passport, stating that he did not own a house or property that would demonstrate that he was a permanent resident (Tibet Sun, 2017). Lobsang told me during the interview in 2017 the detailed story of how he obtained his Indian passport, after he was asked repeatedly to go to the Police station for verification and the Police issued a negative report twice, based on the fact the Lobsang lived in a rented accommodation and had no proof of permanent address. In the end the procedure took three months instead of one month and a long bureaucratic struggle:

Lobsang Wangyal: Police verification is the procedure so when they get there, the Police tries to obstruct it, for this reason or that reason, so many Tibetans are stuck. (...) But in the end Police will come here and verify if I stay here or not. Basically their main thing is to do two things, if I am, the address I provided in the verification is correct, if I am the one staying here or not, this is, they verified the address, this is what the Police Verification is about. Two, if I have any criminal record or charges against me or ongoing cases against me. (...) They said I am staying in a rented house, I do not have a property... I said, I told them, according to which passport rule, do I need property to say, they were like, Police...

When I asked Lobsang what was, in his view, the reason for such a long and burdensome procedure, he replied that this is a problem with the entire Indian system, it may be related to being issued a passport or any other thing, like going to see a doctor and waiting in long queues, in unsanitary conditions. And above all else, “nobody complains” said Lobsang. The paperwork for Tibetans applying for Indian citizenship has been referred to as ‘bureaucratic messiness of who is considered an Indian citizen and what constitutes the requirements for being an Indian citizen’ (Choedup, 2015, pg. 177).

I argue that the story of Lobsang’s Indian passport shows the contradictions within the Indian system: the High Court ruled out that all Tibetans should get an Indian Passport, but the Police needs to first establish the permanent address and criminal records of every applicant in order to process their application. If there is no proof of permanent address, the Police produces a negative report. But Tibetans are not permanent residents in India and by law, they cannot own property or house, they all live on rented accommodation or on land given on lease by the IGov, so it seems impossible to demonstrate a permanent address in this case. The question of permanent address and lack of house ownership shows the precarity of Tibetans’ status as guests living in India, who cannot own property or land and thus, cannot have a ‘permanent address’. While reflecting on this argument I decided to turn the question back to myself and, in the light of the discussion about the paperwork that I had to produce while doing fieldwork in India in 2017, I noticed that I had to write different kind of information about myself, my nationality and my address on different forms. For instance, on my Tibetan Blue card, I added my Hungarian nationality but the post address of my office at Canterbury Christ Church University in Canterbury, as I felt that this connected me more with my status as a researcher and with being a ‘friend of Tibet’. On a different occasion, when I filled in the application form for my JNU student card, I had to give my address in India, for the time of my PhD research there, which again I do not have, so I gave Manish’s parents address. This made me reflect

on the question of ‘what is my permanent address’? And I realised that I do not have one! The address where my parents live, and where I go once in several years is not my address anymore, I lived there until I was 14 years old, after that I lived in rented accommodation in several cities where I studied for my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The address of the flat we bought in Budapest after Manish moved there with me is not my ‘permanent address’ either, as I have not been there in several years, and someone else lives there on rent. In the UK I lived in a rented flat in Canterbury for four years and since 2019 I moved to Birmingham in another rented flat! I do not seem to have a permanent address or the documentation to prove it, should anyone ask me to do that. I always use a temporary address. To some extent, this reflection helped me connect with the story of Lobsang’s case of lacking permanent address and his struggle with the Indian bureaucracy, albeit I am aware of my position and privileges of moving between different places and having more than one address. Daley et al. (2018) wrote about the limbo of refugees in protracted situation as ‘permanent temporariness’ (pg. 24), such as the case of Burundian refugees in Tanzania. The ontological security in protracted refugee situations is dependent on the social context and the governance of the settlements which are, politically, ‘spaces of exception’ managed by international agencies or by the government (Daley et al., 2018, pg. 24).

The everyday practices of bureaucracy in India have been analysed and interpreted as a form of ‘encountering the state at the local level’ (Gupta, 1995, pg. 378). And in these encounters there are a series of processes and performances that take place, with members of the different levels of society having a practical knowledge of the state authority as invested in its civil servants and institutions such as the police. What is important to note here is that the state and the community, polity, society are all ‘culturally constructed in specific ideological fields’ and therefore we must always contextualise the construction of the state – and its representatives in uniform, such as the police in this case – within particular historical and cultural articulations (Gupta, 1995, p. 389). But the construction of the state has to be situated with respect to the location of the speaker whose position illuminates why s/he imagines the state in a particular, symbolic way, argues Gupta (1995) . Thus, I argue that Lobsang’s encounter with the Indian police must be contextualised and understood critically. He knows the police officers in Dharamshala well, based on the story he recounted during our interview in 2017, and after he received a negative report twice, due to the lack of permanent address, he continued to go to the police station and to provide further documentation, a back and forth procedure that after three months got him the Indian passport that he applied for.

In a different example from a recent research, Choedup (2015), found only one Tibetan who followed the “proper channel” to obtain Indian citizenship, which he needed to practice dentistry in India. The process took him almost two and a half years and repeated visits to the local Indian offices for more supporting documents. As of June 2014, he had not yet received his Indian citizenship and he received another letter from India’s MHA asking him to submit another official form. He gave up the hope of Indian citizenship (Choedup, 2015, pg. 182-183).

### **Tibetans with Indian passport – evictions from settlements – ‘citizens who do not belong’**

The IGov, in the directive issued to all Tibetan settlements in India, asked the Tibetans who were issued Electoral Cards and Indian passport to surrender their RC, move out of the Tibetan settlements and cease receiving any benefits from the TGovE. When I asked a representative of a Tibetan organisation in Dharamshala about this, she replied that Tibetans who take an Indian passport get the same facilities from the IGov like Indian citizens. As refugees, Tibetans benefited from the help of the IGov, such as having land given to them on lease, access to Tibetan schools. Her view was clear: one cannot be both a Tibetan refugee and an Indian citizen, and thus one cannot continue to live in the Tibetan settlement, this would mean enjoying two facilities simultaneously:

*But once you take Indian passport, that is quite reasonable, then you cannot enjoy two facilities...As an Indian citizen or as Tibetan refugee, whatever, you are getting good support from the Indian government, but you cannot be a refugee as well as an Indian. (Interview with TWA, September 2017, my emphasis)*

This situation bears some similarities to the case of Burundi refugees becoming citizens in Tanzania (Daley et al., 2018). Burundi people fled the genocide in their country in the early 1970s and have lived in refugee camps in Tanzania until 2007 when the Tanzanian state offered them the choice of citizenship, which was termed ‘en masse citizenship’, or repatriation (Daley et al., 2018, pg. 25). Approximately 80% of them chose citizenship, albeit many families were split, with parents choosing repatriation and youth choosing citizenship. Before 2007 individual applications for citizenship were possible, but costly and hampered by bureaucratic and political hurdles. The government of Tanzania initially wanted to close the settlements to facilitate integration of the new citizens, but these efforts stopped due to international outcry in 2016. Therefore, the refugee settlements continued to act as gated communities, both containing and excluding the new citizens and demarcating them as ‘citizens who did not belong’ (Daley et al., 2018, pg. 27).

The subject of Tibetan evictions from the settlements attracted discussion amongst Tibetans living in India and also Tibetans living abroad, for instance a Tibetan from Paris suggested that first, all Tibetans should be encouraged to take Indian citizenship if that meant a better future for them than living in refugee camps. And secondly, since those entitled to Indian citizenship were mostly those Tibetans who came to India during 1960s and their children, the housing provided by IGov should now be vacated, and given to homeless Tibetans who have recently arrived in India (Tsering, 2018). This recommendation suggested a way forward and a means of solving many issues: CTA should reclaim all the vacant properties of Tibetans and use them to house homeless Tibetans and new arrivals from Tibet. There were many Tibetans who have become homeless, especially in Dharamshala, writes Tsering (2018) while the newly arrived Tibetans struggle to afford rent, they have no source of income and no support from CTA, they felt that they have been let down by exiled Tibetans after escaping the Chinese. Moreover, they were being discriminated against. The new arrivals constituted a group of pariahs (called 'sanjors' in a denigrating tone in Tibetan), a minority in the Tibetan community in India due to their poverty, heavy regional accents, and lack of knowledge of both English and Hindi language (Tsering, 2018).

Officially, the position of the CTA on the question of Indian citizenship has been made public online: 'CTA neither deters any Tibetan from applying for Indian citizenship nor does it encourage Tibetans to apply for Indian citizenship. Tibetans holding passports of other countries (including India) are considered people of Tibetan origin.' (Tibet.net, 2017). However, these Tibetans who took the citizenship of another country, 'cannot be called Tibetan refugees and cannot avail the benefits provided by the CTA such as scholarship, jobs' (Tibet.net, 2017). The members of the CTA expressed diverse and arguably conflicting views on the topic of Indian passport and citizenship. The Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament, told me during the interview conducted at CTA office in 2017 that double citizenship is a matter of personal choice:

Interviewer: So The Tibetan Government supports the idea of double citizenship?

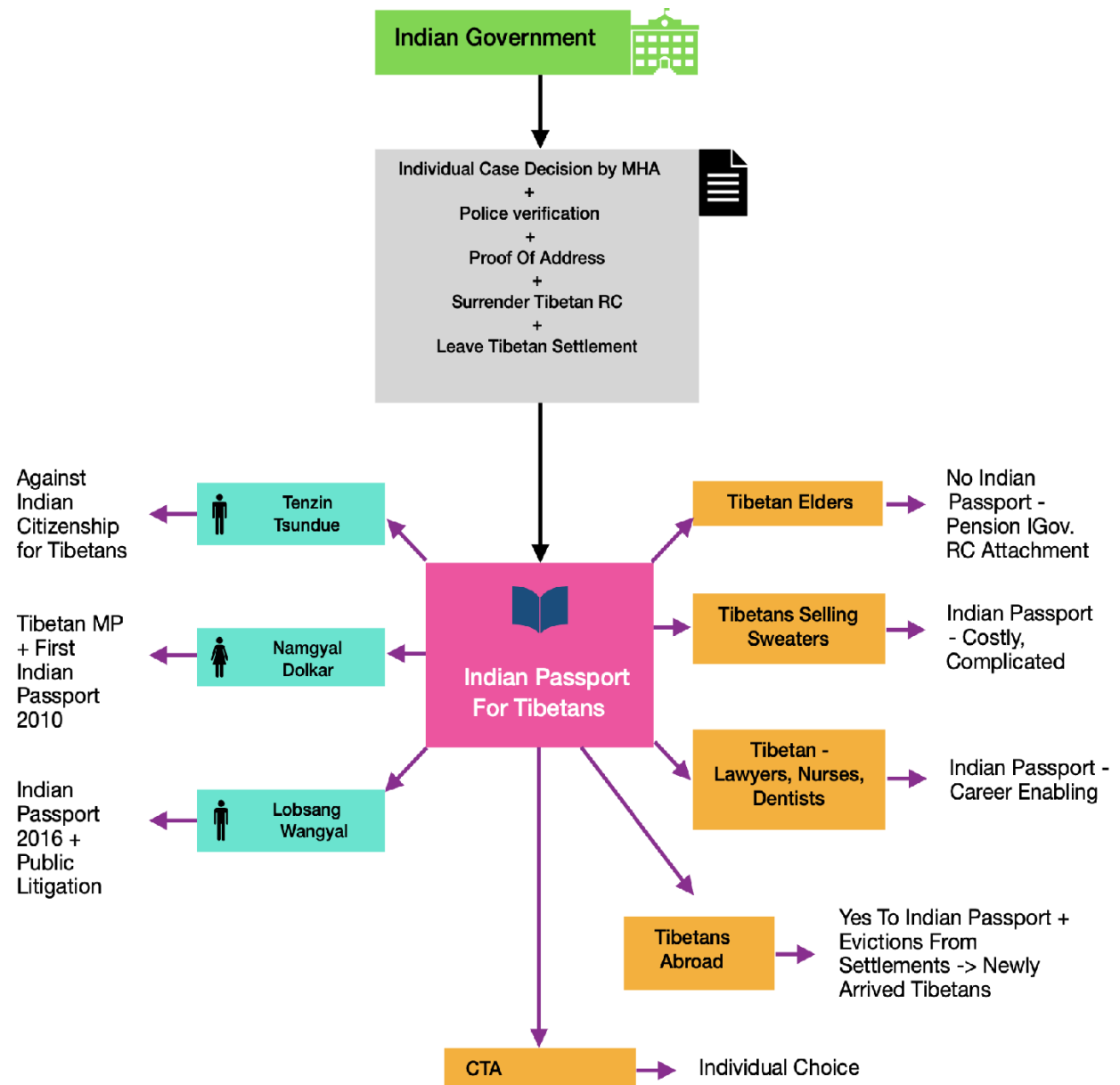
DS Tibet Parliament: We are not saying support, not object, not support, it is individual (choice).

Members of the CTA have personally opted for different citizenships, for instance three of the seven ministers in the CTA administration acquired foreign citizenship through naturalization in the USA, Canada, and India (Choedup, 2015, pg. 172). The leader of the CTA, Prime-Minister Lobsang Sangay declared that he "had left it up to each individual to decide whether to vote in India" (Sharma, 2014, no page number). However, the 27- year old MP Namgyal Dolkar Lhagyari who is the first Tibetan to obtain her Indian citizenship after a legal battle in 2010, stated: "as an Indian citizen and as a person

of Tibetan origin, I have my duty towards both the countries, I am trying to do just that by exercising my right to vote.” (Sharma, 2017, no page number).

I summarised the various approaches of Tibetan institutions and individuals and the position of IGov towards Indian citizenship in figure 29 below.

Figure 29. **Axis of approaches to Indian citizenship and passport - IGov, CTA and Tibetans**



Source: author's own, with the help of my partner, Manish

## **On Precarious citizens, strategic citizenship, and flexible citizenship**

Sassen (2002) argues that the institution of citizenship has undergone major transformations in the last few decades, including dual and multiple forms of legal citizenship. This would then enable multiple allegiances, and, some argue, could undermine the sovereignty of the state. Increasingly, citizenship studies have been characterized by the importance of denationalised, transnational and post-national constructions of membership, including the move towards more nation-states accepting dual and multiple citizenship (Sassen, 2002). The major transformations produced by globalisation, international migration and different forms of governance have been conducive towards what has been framed as 'the global turn' in citizenship studies, which takes into consideration multiple and relational territories or scales: global, national, transnational, local and translocal and include four dimensions of citizenship : legal status, membership, rights and participation (Stokke, 2017). Sociologically, the practice and institution of "citizenship" included three components: collective identity, privileges of political membership and social rights and claims (Benhabib, 1999, pg. 720). However, these theoretical understandings on citizenship have been developed based on research conducted in European and Western countries.

The case of the 'Tibetan citizenship' – meaning Tibetans living in exile and holding the Green Book issued by the CTA - is considered a unique form of diaspora citizenship, granted by a Government in Exile, which is not recognized by any other state, and so can be considered a symbolic form citizenship (Shachar, et al., 2017). This case then supports the theoretical view that citizenship is a relative concept with particular and partial forms and with 'different degrees of citizenship being enacted in different times and places (McConnell, 2013, pg. 978). Moreover, Tibetans constitute 'an aberration of categories' between citizens and refugees, an ambiguity that reveals the socially constructed nature of these categories and the power relations within and which leads us to thinking away from closed categories and binaries towards 'processes, practices and relationships' (McConnell, 2013, pg. 978).

Tibetans are also holding a 'precarious citizenship' (Lori, 2017), concept theoretically applied to those populations who cannot gain access to secure and permanent legal statuses for long, protracted periods and thus are compelled to maintain an ambiguous and temporary legal status, which could be exemplified by the RC held by Tibetans in India, renewable every year, and since 2015, every five years. This category of 'precarious citizens' is spreading, argues Lori

(2017) because they constitute a strategic government response in order to avoid resolving dilemmas about citizenship, especially when the state has to respond to difficult questions about the incorporation of minorities or refugees.

It has been argued that the Tibetan exile citizenship, when situated in the context of transnational studies, shows that Tibetans engage in a form of transnational articulation of “flexible citizenship”, using Ong (1999)’s terminology, that enables them to access political and economic resources in the West while preserving the legitimacy of the CTA in India and maintaining the exile society in India as an active site of cultural and national identity (Choedup, 2015, pg. 190). Taking this argument further, and in the light of the broader discussion presented in this theme, I suggest that Tibetans living in exile in India and applying for an Indian passport and citizenship engage with and perform a type of ‘strategic citizenship’ (Harpaz and Mateos, 2018) that reflects a global shift towards dual citizenship, a multiplicity of allegiances and strategic meanings of citizenship associated with rights to global mobility. However, I argue that not all Tibetans living in India have an active interest in and pursue other citizenships, and I refer here particularly to the older generations of Tibetans who came to India in 1960 and whose stories suggest that they may remain ‘permanent guests’ in India instead of becoming Indian citizens. I will address this topic in more detail in the following theme.

#### **IV. Theme 4. Permanent guests and hospitality issues**

##### **Tibetan settlements – Mundgod: fields of maize and visiting the Old People’s Home**

During the second ethnographic fieldwork in India in 2017 I met several Tibetans belonging to the older generation who arrived in India in the 1960s as small children or young adults, with their parents and siblings. For instance, I met an older Tibetan lady in McLeod Ganj, Mrs. P. who helped me gain access to and visit the Tibetan Refugee Centre, as discussed earlier. We had informal conversations about her life in Tibet and about her current life in India. The lady, in her late 60s, spoke English and was leading an active lifestyle, selling hand-made sweaters, and hosting international students in her home in McLeod Ganj. While doing fieldwork in the Doeguling Tibetan Settlement, Mundgod, Karnataka, the South of India, I conducted group and walking interviews with four older Tibetans, two men and two women. Three of them spoke to me with the help of a Tibetan interpreter and one person spoke English. Listening to their stories illuminated some of the questions I had related to life in Tibet and shed light on new topics that I have not necessarily



considered before meeting them, like the topic of the Tibetan regiment and their active role in the Indian army.

These interviews and walks in the Tibetan settlement in Mundgod are important also because of the very particular context in which they took place: Mundgod is a village where people work in agriculture, in paddy fields, growing rice, maize, mangoes, and traveling across India to sell sweaters for six months per year. There are nine camps, 11 villages, nine Monasteries and one Nunnery, as well as one hospital, several local schools and an Old People's Home in the settlement, and a total population of 17,000 Tibetans.<sup>20</sup>

The relatively slow pace of life in this camp, with people walking on the roads, many monks and nuns amongst them, and some driving scooters, rather than driving cars, is very different than the life in the New Delhi Tibetan settlement, situated next to a main road, with ongoing traffic, construction work and the pollution from the Yamuna River. It is also different to the busy life on top of the hills, in McLeod Ganj, with many Indians and foreign tourists visiting all times of the year, heavy traffic on narrow streets, busy restaurants and street markets.

During September, when I was doing fieldwork in Mundgod, it was the monsoon season, with rains every day that were going to last for a few months. This was a challenge for me and for the car hired to take me to the camps, and once I got stuck in the maize fields, as shown in Figure 30 below. My reflections on this experience, as noted in the Fieldwork diary, show a mix of feelings of worry, because I was getting late to meet the Settlement Officer, of uncertainty as I did not know the roads and in the end acceptance of the situation accompanied by a sense of humour:

Following the google maps, we were very close to the Tibetan camps and had to take a turn on a country side road, it had started raining so Manish said he could not go by car on such a narrow and muddy road. Then straight in front of us there was a muddy and flooded country road, leading to the fields. Manish said he wanted to go back and take a 10 km round about to Mundgod. I did not agree as we were already very late, it was 12.30. So I got out of the car and walked on the muddy road, putting my trousers up to my knees. I walked for about 10 minutes and saw that this small road would lead into another country road with potholes, in the middle of corn fields. I could not see anything else ahead, so I came back walking in the mud until my crocs got filled with it. I also smiling saying "ok, this is real fieldwork!" ( Fieldwork diary entry, 19 September 2017)

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<sup>20</sup> Reimagining Doeguling, [http://www.doeguling.com/?page\\_id=841](http://www.doeguling.com/?page_id=841)

Figure 30. **Author walking in the rainy fields in Mundgod Tibetan settlement, 19 September 2017**



Source: photo clicked by my partner Manish who drove to Mundgod

The older generation of Tibetans whom I met in Mundgod constitute most inhabitants of this settlement, the young ones moved abroad or to Indian cities looking for education and jobs, as I was told during the interview with the camp leader in 2017:

Camp leader (interpretation to EN by N.): Many of them migrated...

Interviewer: Where do they migrate? India or?...

Camp leader (interpretation to EN by N.): Abroad, mostly abroad. And mostly the people who are left here are old ones, older ones.... And the young ones, they went to hostels, different schools, in India... So the remaining ones here are old people.

The migration of the younger generation also meant that some of the elder Tibetans may be living their last years of life in the Old People's Home in Mundgod, if their children moved abroad or cannot look after them or they are terminally ill. The Old Age Home is financed by the CTA and currently holds around 80 people (information provided by one of the nurses, in the interview in 2017). The visit to the Old Peoples' Home in Mundgod was particularly uncomfortable for me as I was surrounded by people in their old age, at the end of life, in a space that seemed occupied by feelings of imminent death and questions were actually running in my head about the purpose of

life. I felt that life should not be followed by death but maybe by a transformation of the body into something else, without going through weakness and suffering. I also thought that these Tibetans and their stories would be lost forever, and this was painful. But I also met older generations of Tibetans who told me their stories while sitting in their gardens, surrounded by family, neighbours, cows and dogs, as discussed below.

### **About elderly Tibetans, stories of Life in Tibet and observing sounds, animals, and rain**

During the interviews conducted in their houses and their gardens in the agricultural settlement in Mundgod, the older Tibetans shared memories of their life in Tibet, for some of them mostly nomadic life, where families and young children were busy doing farming and had little time to study. During these interviews I was more aware of the sounds around me the animals, the rain and thunder, and the environment in which I conducted the interview, and I made a note of it:

86y old Tibetan lady (N. interpreting): Even in Tibet she was, like her family was farmers. She used to do farming and all. **(Cow mooing in the background)**... She is like, when they were like, in Tibet, they used to have cow...Yeah, they used to have yak, sheep and horses, also. They used to go outside, take all the cattle in some other place, they used to go and she is like, I asked her whether she went for schooling and all, 'I didn't get time'. She had to take care of horses... **(Cow mooing again, torrential rain falling)**. (my own emphasis on the sounds and animals).

Another research participant had a similar story of life in Tibet and he flew to India in 1960s. He was nomad in Tibet, has never been to school, he had to take care of cattle and all his family. Upon arrival in India in 1959 or shortly after 1960, the first generation of Tibetan refugees received sponsorship from the IGov and from foreign organisations, but also had to work hard on construction roads, and set up a new life in a new place, initially living in tents, and some of them clearly remembered those times and recounted them during the interviews we had in 2017:

86y old Tibetan lady (N. interpreting): ... ok, what she said, first, when they reached St Dew, they sponsored all the families, like aid them and everything, and then later they said only three members will get sponsorship..

Interviewer: Aid from whom?

86y old Tibetan lady (N. interpreting): From Indian Government. So and then, the one who are like, who can walk, not walk, work, sorry... Then they did not give the sponsor(ship) for them. So they can earn by themselves. They did make roads and other, even making construction, making dams and all.

Ok, from Dew, they went to Dharamshala... They lived in tents and then after few months they stayed there and then they informed them to come here (to Mundgod).

When I asked about the life in Tibet and life in India, the older generation Tibetans spoke about a 'life of privileges' in India, of material prosperity, 'shelter', schooling and 'facilities', much of these being the outcome of the Dalai's Lama efforts to gather support for the Tibetan refugees worldwide, compared to a life of 'struggle' in Tibet. Living in a Tibetan settlement in India means having the chance to see the Dalai Lama on his regular visits to the camps, when large number of Tibetans receive him and he gives teaching in the Buddhist monasteries there, as often reported in Tibetan and Indian news, his latest visit was on 11 December 2017 (Phayul. com, 2017). Seeing the Tibetan spiritual leader and 'receiving his blessings' is considered a privilege, which is made possible by living in India, while in Tibet before 1959 it was much more difficult, also due to the lack of infrastructure, and so people had to walk for long periods of time to reach Lhasa.

### **On guests, politics of hospitality, and Tibetan Army 22**

The Tibetans living in India enjoy the hospitality of their hosts, the Indian state, which considers them 'guests', according to many of the interviewees I met in 2017, as quoted below:

Assistant DS: Yeah, you know, we are not known as refugees here, we are known as the guests of India.... That is what the Indian Government says, that we are the guests of India.

Interviewer: yeah, but guests for how long?

Assistant DS: As long as Tibet issue will be solved.

This unofficial status of 'guests' links the case of Tibetans with the concept of "cultures of hospitality": fluid notion that depends on the cultural and political context and may have consequences for migrants in terms of their rights and responsibilities and different politics of mobility assume different ethics of hospitality (Gill et. all, 2011). When people seek to cross borders and find a safe space, hospitality may be offered or refused to them and they assume one of the two subject-positions: hosts or guests (Bulley, 2017). The term 'hospitality' has a long history and tradition: from an ethical and religious duty, hospitality became part of the legal system of the nation-state and of the procedures about the rights and duties of citizens towards non-citizens, hospitality eventually became institutionalized (Franceschelli and Galipò, 2020, pp. 96-97). However, there is a dualism between hospitality and hostility, and this was applied in recent research to the visual representations of the island of Lampedusa. Lampedusa was portrayed as the place where migrants were rescued and

saved, but also as an island incapable of dealing with incoming migrants, and sentiments of hostility: 'Lampedusa has become a powerful symbol of the ambivalence of migration policies and border regimes that mark the limits of hospitality' (Franceschelli and Galipò, 2020, pg. 98). An alternative to the limits of hospitality in contemporary times marked by violence and displacement at global scales is a feminist hospitality understood as acts of socialising care and as a form of continuity between the personal and political, seeking 'a radical openness to the Other that is both disruptive and connective' (Hamington, 2010, pg. 31).

The treatment of aliens, foreigners, and the 'others' is a test case for the moral conscience and political reflexivity of liberal democracies, argues Benhabib (1999). Moreover, this plays a part in defining the identity of the sovereign nation, which is a process of fluid and open debate insofar as the lines separating "we" and "you," "us" and "them," are often based on historical injustices. The rights of foreigners and aliens, refugees or guest workers or asylum seekers indicate that 'threshold', that 'boundary', at the site of which the identity of "we, the people" is defined and renegotiated and made fluid (Benhabib, 1999, pg. 736). Hospitality has been considered a performative act of identity: to give comfort to the stranger, the host must act; to resettle displaced people, a host nation must act and in this action which constitutes the performance of hospitality, the host is reinstating its identity. (Hamington, 2010, pg. 24).

These theoretical interpretations of hospitality linked with performative acts of identity on behalf of the host and renegotiated positionings of 'us' and 'them' can be understood in the case of Tibetans in India by looking at the example of the Tibetan Army 22 discussed below. The Tibetans from the first generation were grateful to India for allowing them not only to take shelter on its territory but also to form a Tibetan regiment in the Indian Army. This regiment known as 'Tibetan 22' was kept secret and was created with a double purpose: to secure the safety of the Dalai Lama and to prepare the Tibetans to fight so that when they were able to return to Tibet, they could have an army to defend themselves, according to the research participants I met in Mundgod in 2017. This data was confirmed by recent research (2015), Choedup mentions that in 1960s joining the military service was an attractive employment opportunity for young Tibetans who did not have any schooling. The Army provided an attractive salary and benefits including family insurance, with hundreds of youngsters having signed up to join the service (Choedup, 2015, pg. 116). The Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force was recruited in 1962, just before the India-China conflict, and Tibetan refugees constituted the majority of this Border Force (Ghosh, 2016). Preference was given to Tibetans due to their physical attributes and their ability to survive in very high altitude and extreme climate, and after 1965 other

ethnic groups were recruited, such as the Nepali Gurkhas (Singh, 2016). The Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force took part in the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 (Arpi, 2012). During the Kargil crisis of 1999 India allowed thousands of Tibetan refugees to form a regiment called the Vikas regiment, known in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir as ‘the Lama Fauj’ (Ghosh, 2016, pg. 143).

However, in contemporary times scholars note that the Tibetan Army 22 has largely been forgotten and the efforts and sacrifices of those who took part in its services should be more valued by India today (Arpi, 2012). In a recent development (2016) I learnt that 5,727 Special Frontier Force (SFF) Tibetan veterans who retired before January 2009 were restored service pension in line with the benefits available to all retired Indian Army personnel (Tibet Sun, 2016). In 1985 the Tibetan fighters were given rank parity with the Indian army personnel and in January 2009, they were finally brought at par prospectively in pay, allowances, and pension with the personnel of the Indian Army. The High Court, when making their decision, issued the following statement: “They (Tibetans) were not army regulars, nor are they Indian nationals. Yet, they stood at the border, shoulder to shoulder with Indian Army personnel, to patrol and defend our borders” (Singh, 2016). This shows that India has finally acknowledged the defensive fight of the secret Tibetan army for their adoptive country. And I argue that this case also demonstrates how the Tibetans who joined the army and fought India’s wars for five decades have contributed to an ethnic of hospitality that blurred the boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Benhabib, 1999).

In the interviews I conducted with the older generation of Tibetans in Mundgod, in 2017, the topic of return to Tibet emerged with participants expressing their hope or desire to go back to Tibet, albeit some of them admitted they might be too old to do that. I found their statements resilient when they spoke about how in the first few years of their arrival in India, they had such a strong belief that they would return to Tibet, that they refused to grow mangoes, which take five years to bear fruits:

Retired Tibetan Army Officer: We are ready to go for Tibet if change get. In our ancestors, especially I am also arrived in this settlement in 1966. At that time the Government gave us, first, the real mango, coconut, banana, papaya. All people rushed for banana and papaya...They gave the fruit after some time, they said we give the coconut after 5 months, sorry, 5 years, ‘oh, 5 years, we do not want’... Tibetan camp leader (N. interpreting): They believe like ‘we plant mangoes, it takes 5 years to grow, we’ll get the food’ but they believe like ‘in 5 years we will be back in Tibet!’

While the older generations of Tibetans maintain hopes for returning to Tibet, the younger ones are facing challenges while living in India, competition for jobs, no right to own property or land, or

political pressure in Nepal, and thus many of them decide to migrate to a third country, in a chain of migratory movements or ‘twice migrants’, that I will discuss in the following theme.

## **V. Theme 5. ‘Twice migrants’ and unemployment: Tibetans moving abroad**

### **Migratory movements, transit points and empty houses**

Media sources reported a declining number of Tibetans in India, from 150,000 down to 85,000 since 2011, “with a large number either migrating to the US or returning to China/Tibet” (Tripathi 2018). These estimates about the total number of Tibetans in India vary in hundreds of thousands, depending on who is counting, but the argument about Tibetans’ migratory movement is important to consider in this section of the PhD Thesis. The reasons for this decline are multiple, including the absence of a national refugee policy by the IGov, Tibetans are recognised as ‘foreigners’, not refugees in India, and they cannot own property or apply for IGov jobs. The birth rate among Tibetans in India is also declining (Tripathi, 2018). The later statement was confirmed by the research participants and the Tibetan interpreter I met in Mundgod in 2017 who talked about the reducing birth rate of the Tibetan population, due to family planning, despite Dalai Lama’s advice to ‘grow more families’.

In a move that had been considered as purposefully discouraging Tibetans from applying for Indian passports, the IGov simplified the regulations to travel and study abroad for Tibetan refugees and allowed the online renewal of their RC (Indian Express, 2018). For traveling abroad, Tibetans were issued an Identity Certificate (IC). Until 2018 the IC had to be accompanied by a “return permit” issued by the FRRO. After February 2018, the IC is accompanied by a no-objection certificate allowing Tibetans safe and hassle-free return to India (Indian Express, 2018). The migration of Tibetans from India to other countries has been linked with the lack of jobs for educated Tibetan youth in remote Tibetan settlements and no access to IGov jobs in larger cities and this was a reoccurring topic in many interviews I conducted in India in 2017:

Assistant DS: They (Tibetans) cannot get any job in Indian Government, like we would not get Government jobs, so, and also Tibetan settlements are quite in remote areas... we have 34 Tibetan settlements and most of these settlements are in remote area. So, you know, those youngsters, they come to cities, like Delhi or Mumbai or Bangalore, they study there, they try to get a job, work there, but, you know, finding a job in India is quite difficult, until and unless you are really, really good at it....But also a lot of Tibetans are planning to move out of Tibet, to Western countries. So that is why, you know, we have a lot of Tibetan who try to move to other countries because there are other job

opportunities, with better pay.

Another young and educated Tibetan whom I met in McLeod Ganj in 2016 and in 2017 told me about her application to study in Australia, after failing to secure a Fulbright scholarship or a job with the CTA in Dharamshala. The Tibetans I met in Mundgod in 2017 mentioned that the younger generations migrated abroad or to Indian cities. While in Mundgod I met an 86-year-old Tibetan lady, living alone in the house of a Tibetan family who was traveling in India to sell sweaters and then moved to Canada. The lady has taken the role of caretaker of the empty house. In the same conversation joined by her neighbours, the Tibetan participants emphasized the fact that none of them owns any land or property in India, so their houses are rented properties: 'Yeah, allotted but not named on them. We do not have properties here. This land belongs to the IGov.'

Migrating to a third country is a movement that Tibetans in Nepal also chose – or are compelled to make – in an hostile political context: under Chinese pressure, the Nepalese Government started imposing restrictions on the freedoms of Tibetans, such as their right to vote in Tibetan elections or to celebrate the birthday of the Dalai Lama. The multiple migratory movements that Tibetans make have a connecting point in the Tibetan settlement Majnu ka tilla in New Delhi: this is a 'transit point' for Tibetans migrating internally in India to do the sweater business and for Tibetans moving abroad, to Western countries, as my research participants recounted during our walking interview in the ND settlement in 2017. The ongoing background sounds of construction work that I encountered on both fieldwork trips in Majnu ka tilla camp in New Delhi in 2016 and 2017, and people selling foreign currency EUR, £, \$ became a part of the data and I made a note of it, as shown in the interview quote below:

TWA: So many guest houses, Pema House, Nema House...**Our colony is a transit point**, where almost all Tibetans used to gather. Before traveling to foreign countries, they first have to stay in here, in Delhi. And those who are doing sweater business, before going to Ludhiana from their settlements, they used to come here, this is supposed to be the transit point.

**(we are all walking from the temple down on the street. People greet us: Tashi Delek. Other people speak in Hindi, both men and women. This is a market area, with shops on both sides of the road. There is noise of construction work. Someone says in the background: "Nowadays I buy dollars, not Euro.")** (Fieldwork diary entry, 23 August 2017, my own emphasis in bold).

My research in India in 2017 showed that Tibetans move to Western countries via several means and for different purposes, as discussed below.



## **Migrating Westward: smugglers, ‘twice migrants’ and resettlement programs**

One way is to first go to other countries such as Thailand with the help of smugglers and from there to European countries, where they apply for asylum. This information emerged from an informal interview with a Tibetan monk during the English conversation classes in McLeod Ganj:

The discussion (about monks being interested in young women) was quite funny for me, although at a certain point we talked about other things, like Tibetans and Asians migrating illegally to western countries, with the help of people smugglers, after paying lots of money. The Tibetan monk told us that usually they first go to Thailand and from there many people are willing to smuggle them, especially via ships. When they reach European countries, they apply for asylum and usually receive the refugee status. I asked him if such illegal activities take place in Dharamshala and if he knows anyone, he said no, because Dharamshala is a small place.’ (Fieldwork diary entry, 30 August 2017)

Corroborated with recent reports (Purohit, 2018), this type of migration seemed to be well known in the Tibetan community and public figures, such as journalists and members of the CTA were aware of it. Tibetans who moved to Europe or North America in recent years first gained entry through a tourist visa and later sought political asylum as refugees but often, their statelessness made it difficult to obtain even a tourist visa and in these circumstances, they used agents who obtained fake documentation and charged various rates, for going to the US, for instance, it was 2,000,000 Indian rupees (equivalent to 20,000 pound) (Purohit, 2018). The CTA admitted to these happenings and to the smuggling of Tibetans out and charged with sums of money. The CTA advised Tibetans to not get involved in such acts, as there were cases of people being dropped in Africa and arrested and the CTA had to work with UN agencies to have them released (Purohit, 2018). The migration of Tibetans from India Westwards was seen as having two different outcomes: increasing the awareness about the Tibetan fight for independence globally and simultaneously producing a ‘brain-drain’ phenomena with skilled people moving out of the Tibetan community in India (Purohit, 2018).

I argue that the multiple migrations of Tibetans can be paralleled to other populations, such as those of South Asian origin who migrated to the UK from other countries, for instance from the African continent and who have been referred to in the academic literature as ‘twice migrants’ (Bhachu, 2015; Della Puppa and King, 2018). The examples of East African Asians who ‘onward-migrated’ to the UK in the 1960s and 1970s have been replicated in more recent times by other populations such as the Bangladeshi immigrants in Italy who were onward-migrating to London (Della Puppa and King, 2018). The reasons for becoming ‘twice migrants’ were different in each case, for instance the

Italian-Bangladeshis moved to London to escape manual work in Italy, to provide better education to their children, and to join the largest Bangladeshi community outside of their home country. But they were also disillusioned by factors such as the high cost of life and accommodation in London and difficulty in making social contact beyond their ethnic group (Della Puppa and King, 2018).

Another type of migration of Tibetans from India to Western countries is via resettlement programs. Several Western countries had such programs in the 1990s, for instance the US, Australia, Switzerland, as my interviewees mentioned during my fieldwork in India in 2016 and 2017. And recent research highlighted these movements and their implications for some of the older generations of Tibetans in India. For instance, when the CTA announced the resettlement of 1,000 Tibetan exiles from India and Nepal to the USA in 1990 many older Tibetans were critical of this project because in their opinion the CTA had given up hope of returning to Tibet and they were fearful that going to the West would pose the risk of the loss of Tibetan culture since they saw the Western countries as a place without religion, meaning without Buddhism (Choedup, 2015, pg. 195). And some of the Tibetans who moved Westwards later returned to India, albeit few in numbers (Choedup, 2015). These examples of Tibetans returning to India, to the Tibetan settlements seemed to occur mostly for elderly Tibetans who wished to retire and live in an environment where they could devote their life fully towards religious practice (Choedup, 2015, pg. 196).

### **Return to Tibet, multiple crossings, and circular migration**

Some Tibetans in India also wish to move back to Tibet, like the young Tibetan man I met during my fieldwork in Mundgod in 2017 who mentioned the lack of employment in India and his plan to return to Tibet and work as an English translator. I listened to a very similar approach from another Tibetan participant in McLeod Ganj, a young woman who obtained a degree in law from India, but she could not practice her profession since she was not an Indian citizen, and her plan was to return to Tibet and work as a tourist guide, using her English language skills acquired while living in India. And there were cases of Tibetans living in India who would like to go back to Tibet to visit their parents, but whose visa request has been rejected eight times by the Chinese authorities (Purohit, 2018). However, research shows that those migrants who returned to their place of origin found it challenging to reintegrate and had difficulties re-entering the labour market (Hugo, 2013).

The multiple crossings and migrations that the new generations of Tibetans living in exile in India make, such as the family who moved from Mundgod to Manali, left their house empty in the care of

the 86-year-old lady whom I met during my fieldwork, then they moved to New Delhi and from there to Canada, remind of the older generations of Tibetans who completed multiple crossings to reach India, in 1966: from Tibet to Nepal, then to Pitorgar, in India, to Dehradun, then to the town of Hubli and then to the camp in Mundgod, as my interviewees in 2017 recollected:

Camp leader (N. interpreting): Actually what happened, him and a neighbour of him, they crossed in the South of **Tibet**, so it's very, like, nearby from India to travel, so only few months it takes from there... he was first taken to **Pitorgar**, and then they dropped them to **Dehradun** and then all the way to taking train to **Hubli** and then to **Mundgod** (my own emphasis in bold).

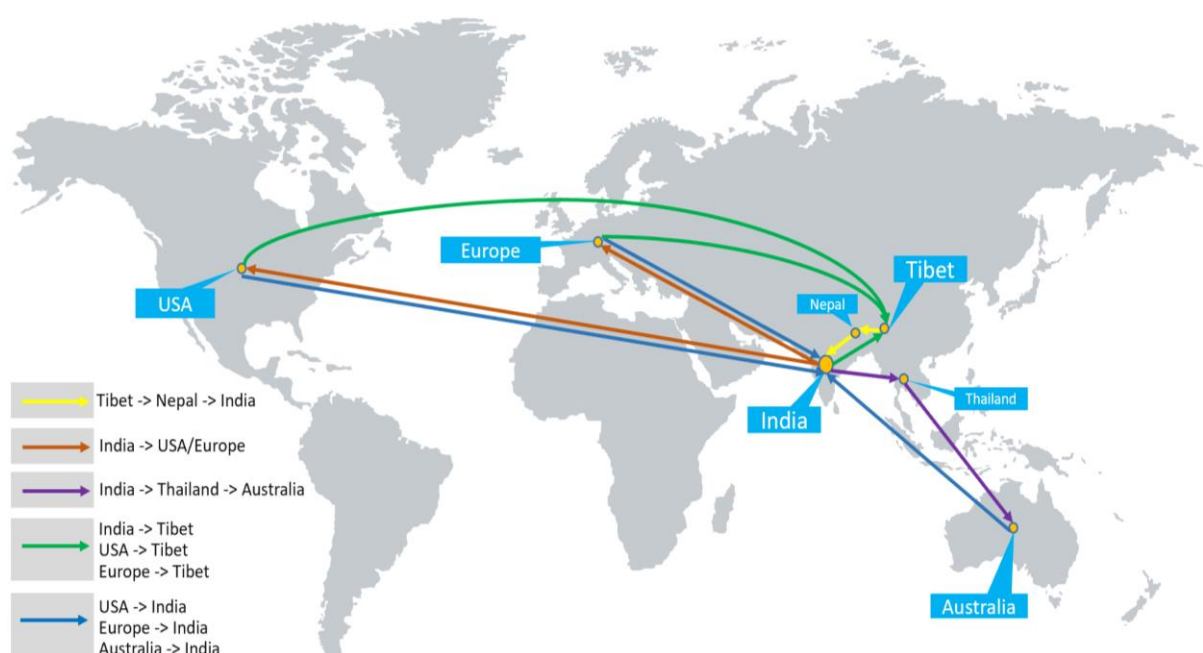
Recent reports estimated that 50% of the Tibetan exile population would be settled in the West by 2020 (Tsering, 2018). Currently, nearly 40,000 Tibetans emigrated from all the Tibetan refugee camps in India to the West and from Dharamshala, about 10,000 Tibetans moved Westwards (Tsering, 2018). I highlight the fact that these numbers cannot be verified but there is an important question to be asked in the current context of Tibetans moving out of India: what happens to the emptied houses of those who left? Tsering (2018) suggested that all Tibetans who wished to become Indian citizens to do so. And the CTA should take back their property associated with their prior refugee status and re-distribute it to Tibetan refugees who still have the RC, are homeless or newly arrived from Tibet, in a precarious state. Tsering also asked an interesting question: "why do not kind-hearted Tibetans invite homeless Tibetans into their homes when they have a room empty because the elder son went to America?" (Tsering, 2018, no page number). He then referred to the 2016 refugee crisis in Europe, when people from France, England, Germany and other countries welcomed Syrian refugees into their own homes and sheltered them and asked why Tibetans could not do the same for fellow Tibetans. And if this gesture of hospitality did not happen on its own, Tsering (2018) argued that the Tibetan PM could take a survey of the vacant properties in the Tibetan settlements and discuss re-allocation of dwellings with the Indian Home Minister.

Sassen (2000) writes about migrant and refugee populations in Europe and immigration policies that resulted in nation-states welcoming incomers as "guests", expected to have a temporary status, but these guests became permanent settlers, like the Turkish guests in Germany. Immigrants and refugees are "today's settlers", indicating that old concepts of belonging do not fit present realities, since migrations are acts of settlement and habitation in a world where the divides between origin and destination are blurred (Sassen, 2000). I argue that the migratory movements of Tibetans can be considered acts of settlement and of habitation, in their search for a place called home or for a better life, more jobs, education, the desire to be with their family, or simply survival and safety, be

it in India, back in Tibet, or in Western countries. This ongoing processes of migration, uprooting, settlement, habitation, then migrating again that Tibetans are an example of constitute what the academic literature termed 'circular migration': an age-old pattern of mobility, whether rural-urban or cross-border, patterns called: repeat, rotating, multiple, seasonal, cyclical, shuttling, or circuit-based modes of migration (Vertovec, 2007, pg. 5). Circular migration denotes repeated migration experiences between an origin and a destination where migrants share work, family, and other dimensions of life between two or more locations (Hugo, 2013, pg. 2). Many of today's migrants are not 'first movers', they made multiple trips within their home country and abroad. With each move, migrants learn more about migration, where and how to find jobs and housing and such knowledge and set of social connections and experience is termed 'migration-specific capital' (Vertovec, 2007, pg. 5). And finally, after few moves, a migrant's legal status is irrelevant to the likelihood of repeat movement, once people learn how to cross borders, they are less concerned with whether they migrate legally or not (Vertovec, 2007).

The discussion in this theme focused on the multiple movements that Tibetans make, from Tibet to India via Nepal to seek refuge, from India to Western countries via resettlement programmes, smuggling or new asylum applications or using an Indian passport, from India back to Tibet, or from Western countries back to India for instance at the time of retirement. To provide a visual representation of this discussion I use a map and an explanatory note, in Figure 31 below.

Figure 31. **Map with Tibetans' migratory movements between multiple places**



### Explanatory note Figure 31:



Source: author's own, with the help of my partner, Manish

### Summary of Act 5

In Act 5 I argued that Tibetans in India inhabit a temporary space as guests of the Indian state, until they reclaim a permanent home, a hope that is diminishing for some of them. Becoming citizens of India may open doors for new opportunities abroad or access to employment and material benefits in India, but it may also be an unacceptable political status for some Tibetans.

Act 5 Scene 1 employed auto-ethnographic and self-reflexive tools in regards to the politics of paperwork and documentation that I had to produce in order to conduct my ethnographic fieldwork in India in 2017 and that allowed me to better understand the experiences of Tibetans who go through repeated encounters with the Indian bureaucracy and the Indian state. Scene 2 contributed to illuminating new analytical insights about what it means to be a Tibetan living currently in India by demonstrating how the migratory movements of Tibetans from and between Tibet, Nepal, India, Thailand, Western countries, can be situated in academic literature on stepwise, circular and twice migration and phenomena of brain-drain. I discussed how the questions and dilemmas about the Indian citizenship situate the Tibetans' case in the field of citizenship studies, as they practice situated and relative forms of precarious citizenship, strategic citizenship and flexible citizenship and they are 'citizens who do not belong'.

The following section is Act 6. *Enacting disruptions, Participatory and collaborative performances*, preceded by an Interval.

## Interval

This interval signifies a transition from Act 5 to Act 6.

The interval invites the reader to consider and reflect on the previous Act and to prepare for the disruptions that will follow in Act 6.

During this interval, the reader may also take a short break before returning to *Act 6. Enacting disruptions. Participatory and collaborative performances.*

## **Act 6. Enacting disruptions.**

### **Participatory and collaborative performances**

#### **About Act 6**

Act 6 presents the analysis and interpretation of the sharing of this PhD research findings in the form of the theatre play 'Amma la', during the third ethnographic fieldwork in India, in July 2019. This analysis helps answering the research questions of this PhD Thesis about the current positions and identities of Tibetans living in exile in India and the meanings and possibilities of Indian citizenship for Tibetans (2015-2020). In Act 6 I continue writing in a disruptive way that blurs the distinction between social sciences and the arts and re-connects them with theatre approaches and self-reflexivity. This form of disruptive writing disrupts the traditional categories of methods, data, analysis, and dissemination in social research.

Act 6 illuminates how methods like theatre, arts and performance that I employed in this PhD research enrich and transform our understanding about social research with migrants, refugees and exiled populations, with citizenship quests, in a place like India and in the contemporary world. Performing the play 'Amma la' with Tibetan participants in India in 2019 was a method of sharing the research findings in a collaborative, creative and novel way that opens possibilities for shared meanings and transformative re-interpretation of the data, within embodied, artistic and performative dimensions. The details of how Tibetan participants enacted the play in the three Workshops in India in July 2019 are explained in *Act 3. Disruptive Methodologies*.

Act 6 is divided in 2 Scenes. Scene 1 situates the play 'Amma la' and its enactment by Tibetan students-volunteers in India in 2019 in the literature on performance, ethnography and theatre, that helped the analysis of the Performances of the theatre play 'Amma la'. Scene 2 is a multi-layered analysis of the 'Amma la' performances in India (2019) based on six stages or layers of analysis. There is no Interval between the two scenes, thus I emphasize the continuity of ideas in Act 6.

#### **Scene 1. Mixed theatre approaches**

##### **Situating 'Amma la' in the literature on ethnography, performance, and theatre**

The Theatre Workshops culminating with the performance of the play 'Amma la' in McLeod Ganj in July 2019 sit theoretically and methodologically at the intersection of performance ethnography (Denzin, 2003; Anderson, 2007; Flynn and Tinius, 2015), verbatim theatre (Paget, 2009) and political

theatre (Lustgarten, 2015), and participatory drama (Brown et al., 2017). The devising and performance of the play 'Amma la' in India in 2019 also borrows from ethnotheatre and ethnodrama (Turner, 1982; Saldana, 2011). It could also be argued that the play 'Amma la' constitutes a form of experimental theatre within performance ethnography (Gatt, 2015) that is not complete and foreclosing, but processual and prospective. And finally, performing 'Amma la' is a form of process drama (Bowell and Heap, 2013) and applied drama (Amkpa, 2014), focusing on improvisation (Vourloumis, 2014), and the process of creating and acting a scene for the benefit of the participants-actors, and not on the polished and rehearsed performances for a specific audience. For these reasons, I argue that the play 'Amma la' is constructed on and theoretically supported by what I will simply call 'mixed theatre approaches to research', or 'mixed theatre methods'.<sup>21</sup>

Performed ethnography or ethnodrama is considered an applied method of performance ethnography and has been used for representing and disseminating research data "with the potential to engage diverse audiences with the research in ways that are empathic, emotional, and embodied as well as intellectual" (Given, 2008, no page number). Performance ethnography was pioneered by Victor Turner (1982) as a research methodology and is considered a staged re-enactment of fieldwork notes taken during ethnographic research (Anderson, 2007). One of the key elements of performance ethnography is 'the power to engage and at some level to move an audience' (Anderson, 2007, pg. 80). Victor Turner also coined the concept ethno-drama, compound word of 'ethnography' and 'drama' (Saldana, 2010). Ethno-drama is the written playscript or screenplay composed of dramatized selections of narrative collected from interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, diary entries, social media, email correspondence and newspaper articles (Saldana, 2018). Ethno-theatre uses fieldwork notes for theatrical productions (Saldana, 2018). Ethno-drama combines critical ethnography with performance to construct a new form of theatre that aims to translate action research into reflexive performances and uses interactional theatre to construct meaning and understanding with the participants (Mieniczakowski and Morgan, 2015). The difference between the two concepts, performance ethnography and ethnodrama, mainly resides in their historical origins and the ways they have been interpreted over the years (Anderson, 2007).

Similarly, the concept of Verbatim theatre usually represents the voices of marginalised groups through their own words (Anderson, 2007). Verbatim theatre is a "category of staged performance in which the actual words of real people are edited into a script and performed on stage by actors"

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<sup>21</sup> I am thankful to my friend and fellow PhD researcher, now Dr. Nancy Alibhaisi for the brainstorming sessions and her advice on using these methods and calling them 'mixed theatre approaches' in my PhD research.



(Long, 2015, pg. 305). Traditionally, a team of actors assisted in the development of verbatim theatre performances by collecting and then performing the interviews (Anderson, 2007).

Long (2015) argues that Verbatim theatre is a response to the frustrations and difficulties faced by researchers in communicating “the atmospheres and complex characters met in the fieldwork” via the established means of disseminating ethnographic findings: text and film (Long, 2015, pg. 306). In a similar way, Zagaria (2016) found the tools of film and text to be inappropriate for conveying the impressions gathered during her fieldwork on the island of Lampedusa in 2011 to audiences within and beyond academia. She then returned to the island in 2013 with several theatre makers from the School of Physical Theatre Jacques Lecoq, to carry out a month of collaborative fieldwork research and to develop a performance about life, death, and migration on this island. The theatre show ‘Miraculi’ was performed by her team in 2014 in front of a local audience in Lampedusa (Zagaria, 2016), as explained in her work:

We came up with characters by mixing stories and traits belonging to different people we had met while in Lampedusa, aiming to preserve their anonymity by creating fictional persons that were nevertheless drawn from the real life stories we had collected (Zagaria, 2016, pg. 21).

Therefore, in Zagaria’s (2016) theatrical representation, the research participants did not ‘become’ actors in the play ‘Miraculi’ and nor did she and her co-team actors repeat their exact words, as in a verbatim type of documentary theatre. Instead Zagaria (2016) tried to create representations of a ‘fabricated reality’ (pg. 21) that was as close as possible to what she and her team had seen, heard and witnessed during their fieldwork in Lampedusa. And this is how Zagaria (2016) introduced the theatre play to the Lampedusan audience in 2014:

Good evening. We are actors, and we come from different countries. Tonight, we will tell you about Lampedusa as we experienced it. The characters are fictional, but you might recognise some stories (Zagaria, 2016, pg. 24).

In a similar fashion to Zagaria’s (2016) play ‘Miraculi’, the play ‘Amma la’ performed in McLeod Ganj in India, in July 2019, is a representation and interpretation of the PhD data collected in the form of semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, participant observation, walking and ambulant interviews, and fieldwork notes during the 2016-2017 PhD fieldwork periods. In this sense, it can be considered as ethno-drama and performance ethnography. The performances by several groups of Tibetans show that the enactment of the play ‘Amma la’ can be interpreted in the light of multiple forms of theatre: physical theatre (Bailey, 2019; Callery, 2002), process drama (Bowell and Heap, 2013), forum theatre (Boal, 2002; Kaptani, 2019), applied drama (Amkpa, 2014) and political theatre (Lustgarten, 2015; De Michelis, 2017). For this reason, I chose to use the concept ‘mixed theatre

approaches’ or ‘mixed theatre methods’ to situate the play in the literature and to work with a conceptual and methodological tool that creates an open space for analysis. The analysis of the 2019 ‘Amma la’ performances will be presented in Scene 2. I use several stages or layers for organising, structuring, categorising, and interpreting the data, as explained below.

## Scene 2. Multi-layered Analysis of the ‘Amma la’ theatre performances 2019

In this section I discuss the data synthesis and analysis of the 2019 ‘Amma la’ performances. The video recording of the ‘Amma la’ Theatre workshop is available for viewing here:

[https://1drv.ms/v/s!AoBJqdBQIjgVpHPv2g\\_vizKRe04t](https://1drv.ms/v/s!AoBJqdBQIjgVpHPv2g_vizKRe04t).

The reason I chose this multi-layered analysis was to enable a deeper understanding of the ‘Amma la’ performances that connects the use and usefulness of mixed theatre methods with the key ideas and concepts of this PhD Thesis. The six layers of analysis are summarized in table 22 below.

Table 22. Multi-layered analysis of ‘Amma la’ performances in India 2019

Layers of analysis	The action	The outcome
1.	organising and translating the 2019 ‘Amma la’ performances	online link with video recordings of the performances + EN subtitles. PhD Theatre Workshop link: <a href="https://1drv.ms/v/s!AoBJqdBQIjgVpHPv2g_vizKRe04t">https://1drv.ms/v/s!AoBJqdBQIjgVpHPv2g_vizKRe04t</a>
2.	structuring and presenting the data from ‘Amma la’ visually	tables presented in the Appendices 29 and 30
3.	categorising data from the ‘Amma la’ according to criteria: verbatim, innovative, mixed performances	tables presented in Appendix 30 + facilitated the analysis in Act 6
4.	identifying common elements in all 13 ‘Amma la’ performances	Discussion of eight common elements in Act 6.
5.	analysing and interpreting ‘Amma la’ using literature on theatre and performance	Situated the ‘Amma la’ analysis in ‘mixed theatre approaches’, Scene 1 of Act 6
6.	manual coding, categorising, and establishing emerging themes	Presented in Appendix 31 + analysis of four key themes in Act 7

Source: author’s own

In Table 23 below I present a visual summary of the groups who enacted the ‘Amma la’ performance using verbatim technique, introducing few changes, creating a completely new story, or mixing

innovations with the playscript. I return to analyse this data on the following pages, in relation to the similarities between the performances of all 13 groups.

Table 23. **Groups that enacted ‘Amma la’ verbatim/ with change/ full new story / mixed elements**

Group no.	Place / institution	Type of enactment	Change introduced
1	TIPA	Verbatim	none
1	LTWA	Verbatim	none
2	TIPA	Verbatim	none
2	LTWA	Verbatim	none
5	TIPA	Verbatim + change	Tenzin was enacted by a boy
7	TIPA	Verbatim + change	brought to life the character of the cook, role played by a girl
4	LTWA	Verbatim + changes	Added a narrator as new character and Tenzin’s role was played by a boy
6	LTWA	Verbatim + changes	Narrator introduced the story and the characters in English, then in Tibetan
6	TIPA	Complete change	Full new story – creativity + reinterpretation
3	LTWA	Complete change	Full new story – creativity + reinterpretation
3	TIPA	Mixed elements	‘Amma la’ script + innovations
5	LTWA	Mixed elements	‘Amma la’ script + innovations
7	LTWA	Mixed elements	‘Amma la’ script + innovations

Source: author’s own

In another layer of the analysis I identified similarities in the 13 ‘Amma la’ performances by structuring and categorising ideas and themes that were recurrent in the performances of the groups, based on repeated visualizations of the video recordings of the performances and on taking notes manually on the key ideas emerging from each performance and the repetition of these. Thus, I identified eight types of similarities, summarised in Table 24 below.

Table 24. **Common elements highlighted in the ‘Amma la’ performances**

No.	Common elements in the ‘Amma la’ performances
1.	The use of mobile phones
2.	The role of the narrator
3.	Fluidity of characters: Amma la + Tenzin + Namgyal + the tree
4.	The role of the audience
5.	Bringing characters alive and giving them names
6.	Lack of employment for young Tibetans in India
7.	Gender relations
8.	Alcohol and drug issues amongst young Tibetans in India

Source: author’s own

In the following pages I provide an analysis of these similarities or themes that emerged and I connect these with relevant academic literature, with other types of research and findings and with some of the ideas discussed in the previous Acts of this PhD Thesis.

## **I. The use of mobile phones**

This is an interesting commonality between several groups, and it has two implications. In the first case, the Tibetan participants used their mobile phones to enact scenes in the play, such as Group 6 at TIPA where the main characters call their husbands and sons who did not come home, and Group 7 at LTWA, where two characters conversate via mobile phones about their lives in India and the USA respectively. In these instances, the use of mobile phones becomes part of the performance and shows the importance of mobiles phones and new technologies in the life of Tibetans in India to connect with each other and with their family and friends living abroad. As educated youth in India, the Tibetans are part of a growing number of people who are increasingly using smartphones in their daily lives. The market for the use of smartphones in India is growing, and the most recent data shows a total 31.7% of the population were smartphone users in 2020 (Statista, 2020). This rate is expected to double by 2022 (Business standard, 2019). secondly, some of the Tibetan participants stored pictures of the playscript 'Amma la' given to their group on their phones and checked it time and again while enacting the play, to remind them of the script. For instance, group 3 at TIPA and group 2 at LTWA used their mobiles for this purpose. Most of the groups memorized the script or the new story.

The use of mobiles phones by people migrating or living as refugees has been an important tool for conveying messages to the world about their experiences. For instance, the asylum seekers living on Manus island sent stories about their life via SMS to activists, lawyers and playwrights and this is how the theatre play 'Manus' was born. This way, detained asylum seekers connected with civil society in Australia and with their families (Rea et. al., 2018), and had their stories enacted by a team of actors in the play 'Manus' (2017), which reaches audiences in Iran, India and beyond, which was discussed in Act 1 of this PhD Thesis, *Scene 2. Theatre and performance as disruption of narratives. Embodied knowledges.*

On other occasions, asylum seekers shots short films on their mobile phones, such as the Iranian artist Abouzar Soltani who made the film 'Fish' in 2019 for his 10-year old son, while both were detained for one year on the Hungarian-Serbian border (Thorpe, 2019). Ironically, the author Soltani was not allowed by the Hungarian authorities who detained him to attend the premiere of his film at The International Human Rights Film Festival in Hungary, on 14 November 2019 (Verzion, 2019).

These examples show the experiences of people who migrate, seek asylum and are detained and how they make use of their mobile phones to record and disseminate their stories.

## **II. The role of the narrator.**

This is another common element in more than half of all performances. Seven out of the thirteen groups at both TIPA and LTWA decide to have a narrator to tell the story. This is a new and creative idea that the Tibetan volunteers-actors added to the 'Amma la' playscript which did not originally contain any narrator. In the performances of the seven groups, the role of the narrator is enacted by a young woman or a young man or at times a monk and s/he communicates with the audience at times in Tibetan and other times in Tibetan or in both languages, like group 6 at LTWA. Sometimes the narrator reads his/her script from a piece of paper and other times s/he does not use any supportive material.

The narrator's role involves a transformation and sharing of multiple roles, like in group 3 at LTWA, where a nun decided to play both the role of the narrator and the role of Amma la, in a novel and artistic interpretation of the story. And to mark out the transformation from one character to another, she uses her robe, so whenever she puts the nun robe on her head, she became Amma la, when she takes it off she is the narrator.

The narrator is also the co-author, teller and interpreter of a new story, like in group 6 at TIPA, where the narrator tells the audience that in this story, which departs completely from the playscript of 'Amma la' there is a mother, father and their son called Tenzin:

Narrator: Once upon a time in snow land (Tibet), there was a small village. In that small village lives a father, mother and their son called Tenzin. One day, mother is worrying about Tenzin and she is calling Tenzin. Tenzin does not pick up the call, this makes his mother more worried about him.

The end of the same performance is interpreted by the narrator in a creative and visionary way. The narrator tells the audience after the performance: 'You should treat your parents in the same way as they treated you'. The audience here is made of 30 young people whose parents live in India and it could be argued that the Tibetan participants in this group felt it was important to convey this message to the audience, to remind them of something that needs to be re-considered and re-valued. This new perspective on parental and generational relationships implies an expectation and suggestion that children should be more responsible towards their parents. This means that currently Tibetan children may not take this responsibility seriously, and they are encouraged to revise their ways.

I argue that the role of the narrator as someone who tells a story connects the 2019 'Amma la' performances of the Tibetan participants with the academic literature focusing on five constructed and debated narratives about Tibetans living in India, employed in the earlier stages of the PhD Thesis and discussed in Act 1. *Scene 1. Narratives in exile. Geopolitics of knowledge production.* Narratives enable the production, interpretation and representation of stories or accounts of lived experience (Bignold and Su, 2013). The use of narratives in understanding human and social life is a source of insight and a "mode of knowing" (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 7) that involves contestation and interpretation. For instance, in the 2019 'Amma la' performances the Tibetan participants enacted narratives of agency by choosing which stories to enact in a verbatim theatre format and which stories to create in a deviceful way, based on their own ideas and their personal and community-based experiences about living in India in contemporary times. Thus, I argue that the narrators in the 'Amma la' performances interpreted the stories of lived experience of Tibetans in India through embodies, artistic and innovative perspectives, offering new insights into the life of Tibetans in India that confirm the findings of this PhD research and adding new interpretations.

### III. Fluidity of characters: Amma la, Tenzin, Namgyal, the tree

**The character of Amma la** is enacted by young women in all the performances except in group 1 at LTWA, where it is played by a monk, who walks slowly, wearing his monk robe that covers his head, miming back pain and holding an imaginary stick in her/his hand. This gender switch is a decision made by group 1 at their own initiative and, together with the examples discussed below, shows how the Tibetan participants co-created the performances of 'Amma la' with imagination and creativity but also reflects current political ideas about the composition and representation of Tibetan life in India, where the role played by the monastic community remains very important (Tanaka, 1997). The monastic community helps preserving Buddhist traditions and religious practices, but they also hold seats in the Tibetan Legislature. The four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the traditional Bon faith elect two members each in the Tibetan Parliament in exile (Tibet.net, 2020).

**Tenzin's character is fluid in several ways.** In the 'Amma la' playscript Tenzin is a young woman, possibly the daughter of Amma la, although this is not clearly specified in the play. In the performances of the Tibetan participants at TIPA and LTWA the character of Tenzin is enacted by a young woman in Group 1 and Group 2 at TIPA and in Group 1 and Group 6 at LTWA. In the other groups' performances, Tenzin's role is played by a young man. This reflects the diverse gender composition of each group and the independent decisions they chose to make regarding the role of

each character. The groups of Tibetan participants at both institutions were almost equally divided in terms of gender.

In one of the group, namely Group 6 at TIPA, there is an innovative interpretation of the 'Amma la' play and the group decided that the character of Tenzin remains completely absent, he is only talked about by his mother and by the neighbour, both female characters, but he never shows up. In this performance, Tenzin is a naughty boy who does not pick up his mother's calls and does not come home. It could be argued that this group made their own decision of which character stays, which character speaks, and which character is absent, and this shows how the participants chose how to enact their own interpretations about Tibetans lives in India. I argue that these individualized and embodied narratives were expressive of their own views and understandings of life, of family and gender relations, and also of the experiences of their families and communities whom they have lived with and observed during their lives in India.

**Namgyal's character is fluid in several ways:** In the 'Amma la' play Namgyal is the neighbour's son, a young man who wants to migrate to Canada and Amma la and Tenzin wait for him to come and borrow a suitcase from their house. He is an absent character in the playscript, and the two main characters wait for him, but he does not arrive in the end. The 'Amma la' playscript is an adaptation of the theatre play 'Waiting for Godot' (Beckett, 1954), where Godot is the absent character whom everyone else is waiting for endlessly.

In the performances of the Tibetan participants in 2019, the character of Namgyal is enacted by different people, in different symbolic ways, at times he is present and other times he is absent. For instance, in Group 3 at TIPA Namgyal is an absent character, Amma la and Tenzin talk about and wait for him. But in the end of this performance there is a symbol of hope and change, expressed in the act of Tenzin who decides to go and give the suitcase to Namgyal directly, instead of waiting for him. This act will be analysed and interpreted in *Act 7. The Final Act*, focusing on the concept of Hope.

In the performances of Group 5 and Group 7 at TIPA Namgyal is again an absent character, only talked about by the two main characters who wait for him to appear. In a different and innovative interpretation of the 'Amma la' playscript, Group 6 at TIPA decides to have Namgyal's role played by a young man who delivers a gas cylinder to the neighbour's house. Namgyal is thus present and visible in the performance albeit he does something completely different compared to the 'Amma la' playscript. In another artistic and original performance, of Group 3 at LTWA, Namgyal is a completely different character, he is not the neighbour's son wanting to go to Canada. Instead, Namgyal is a drug addict and an alcoholic with a bad reputation in the Tibetan community whose father is a very devout person, who prays every day, suggesting he is a monk, according to this group's novel

narrative. In the end of this performance, Namgyal befriends Tenzin who brings him to a monastery where he becomes a monk. I will return to this symbolism at a later point in this section.

In the performance of Group 5 at LTWA, Namgyal is the younger son of a family with two sons, again an innovative interpretation of the 'Amma la' playscript. Namgyal appears for few seconds on the stage, to inform his brother and his mother that he would come home this evening. The dialogue in this performance depicts Namgyal's character as naughty, careless and always late home, whose mother worries about him. He is the opposite of his older brother, Tenzin, whom the mother asks to look after the house when she is away.

Finally, in the last performance, of Group 7 at LTWA, Namgyal plays the role attributed to him in the 'Amma la' play, but there are important changes in the person and the actions of this character, initiated by this group. Namgyal's role is played by a nun and thus a gender switch occurs very interestingly, Namgyal is physically present in this performance and s/he arrives at the end, has a short dialogue with the main two characters and collects her suitcase and calls a taxi, thus putting an end to the waiting process. The symbolism of this act will be discussed in more details in *Act 7. The Final Act. Waiting and Hope*.

**The tree as a living, fluid character** is enacted in several performances. For instance, the performances of Group 1 at TIPA and Group 6 at LTWA contain the role of a young man who enacts the tree, standing behind Amma la and Tenzin, with his arms lifted horizontally.

Group 2 at LTWA decides to have a monk playing the role of a tree. The Tibetan monk adopts a non-human position or a possibly neutral character in this performance, he enacts a tree standing with his hands lifted vertically, and this could arguably mean offering protection and shade to the other characters and overall, enriching the matrix of social identities at play in this group's performance. Long (2015) writes about how audiences and actors identify affectively with characters in a matrix of social relations that include class, gender, and I would also add religious identity to Long's list.

The role of the tree is very different in the performance of Group 4 at LTWA. There are two trees in this performance, whose roles are enacted by a young woman and by a monk, respectively. The monk enacting the first tree in this group plays a very active role by the movements of his body, without any dialogues. Thus, he puts his robe on both his arms and he stretches them up, like the wings of a bird. The robe also covers his face. And he moves his maroon robe-covered arms above the two sitting characters all the time, like dancing, and these movements send the audience into a loud and relentless laughter. The narrator and the young woman enacting the second tree try to restrict



the movements of the 'first tree', by gently touching his arm, to no avail. The 'tree' decides to remain very active, dancing and moving his arms throughout this performance.

The viscosity of his performance is fascinating and represents a mode of performance that pursues storytelling or drama through physical means, where the physical and visual aspects of the performance are at least as important as the dialogue is. And this corresponds to a form of physical theatre (Lecoq, 2001; Callery, 2002; Bailey, 2019; Zagaria, 2016). "In physical theatre, the primary means of creation occur rather through the body, than through the mind. In this form of theatre, the spoken word is considered as just one element of the performance" (Callery, 2002, pg. 4).

These elements of a theatrical play, such as mime, acrobatics, mask, commedia, dance or visual theatre that go beyond the written text are also defined as 'theatricality', and the non-textual often becomes more important than the language (Grammatikopoulou, 2017).

Therefore, I highlight how this performance added a new dimension of creativity to the reinterpretation of the 'Amma la' play, by focusing on the physical, visual and bodily elements, while keeping the text of the playscript unchanged. It also shows how written word, which is prioritized in Western academic knowledge over bodily expression (Madison, 2012), can become less important in a theatrical play where the participants decide that non-textual elements such as a dancing tree can take the central role.

Overall, the fluidity of the characters in the 2019 'Amma la' performances of the Tibetan participants can be interpreted through the lens of literature that explains the various, fluid and innovative adaptations of the theatre play 'Waiting for Godot' (Beckett, 1952), that 'Amma la' is an adaptation and appropriation of. In a play like 'Waiting for Godot', which was as enacted on diverse stages in the world, 'the core of the play lies in universal existential problems and any character can be anyone' (Tanaka, 1997, pg. 58). There were adaptations of Beckett's play 'Waiting for Godot' using more characters than the original, such as the 1979 Andre Engel's adaptation, produced in Strasbourg, in which the two main characters were fragmented into ten characters or Tamiya Kuriyama's adaptation in Tokyo with multiple characters in 1980 (Tanaka, 1997).

Other productions of 'Waiting for Godot' used the original script, dialogues, and setting, but inserted innovative, cross-gender or cross-cultural characters. For instance, in Japan, the director Yukio Ninagawa directed 'Waiting for Godot' with an all-female cast in 1994 (Tanaka, 1997). In the performance by the Haifa Municipal Theatre in Israel the two main characters of the play 'Waiting for Godot', Estragon and Vladimir, were enacted by Palestinian actors in Arabic language, while other secondary characters were played by Jews using Hebrew language, except for one speech

which was delivered in Arabic. This adapted, cross-cultural performance, described the tragedy of Palestinians who were deprived of their land, the sore relations between Palestinians and Jews, but also the possibility of them helping each other, thus opening up new perspectives and new hopes (Tanaka, 1997). I will return to the symbolism of hope that emerged from 2019 'Amma la' performances in Act 7, the Final Act of this PhD Thesis.

#### **IV. The role of the audience.**

All performances at the two institutions in India in 2019, TIPA and LTWA, had an audience composed of the remaining groups who were waiting to perform or those who have already done that. What is important to highlight here is the reaction of the audience in some of the performances and how that enriches our understanding of these acts, in the light of academic literature. The audience constitutes an important constitutive element in performance ethnography, where the research data is disseminated or shared with the potential to engage different audiences with the research in ways that are empathic, emotional, embodied and intellectual (Given, 2008).

One of the key elements of performance ethnography is 'the power to engage and at some level to move an audience' (Anderson, 2007, pg. 80). The audience constituted a lively part of the 2019 'Amma la' performances. An audience can be active or passive, emphatic, laughing, or clapping. For instance, at the end of each performance at both TIPA and LTWA the audience clapped. In other cases, the audience went beyond that and expressed other feelings, as discussed below.

Laughter and clapping constitute the audience's response to the performance of group 3 at TIPA, following the conversation between the young couple in love who hold hands and go to rent a hotel room. When the teenage girl asks the teenage boy to show her how much he loves her and not to be shy and instead of asking for a double room she asks for a single hotel room, the audience is elated and cheerful, laughing and applauding loudly the boldness of the characters and their dialogue and the possible implications of a young couple in love, asking for a single hotel room.

Laughter is also the response of the audience in the performance of Group 6 at TIPA, when Amma la calls her son Tenzin on mobile, he does not pick up, and she exclaims: 'This son is giving me lot of trouble!'. The audience laughs again when the two female characters talk about how they seem to be trapped in bad marriages, driven by karmic destiny, and how useless their husbands are, who do not come home, do not work and wander around with friends.

The audience laughs also when the Tibetan-participants turned actors at LTWA stumble or forget their lines, such as Tenzin's character in Group 1 and in Group 5. And laughter is the overwhelming response of the audience to the viscosity and endless movements and dance performed by the

monk playing the role of a tree in Group 4 at LTWA. The audience also laughs at the innovative character of Namgyal, in Group 3, who walks on the made-up stage in a shaky manner, about to fall, miming a drunk person, and tapping his chest with his hand, while he mimes the actions of injecting himself with drugs in his arm. The audience laughs at several performances at LTWA when some of the characters enact sounds of rain and thunder with their voices or with crushed bottles and when other characters enact the barking sounds of dogs or the mooing of cows.

Empathy is another type of response from the audience. For instance, in the performance of group 1 at LTWA the audience murmurs: 'Oh, Amma la', with an empathic tone when the character of Amma la is played by a monk who enters the stage slowly, enacting back pain and holding an imaginary stick, albeit everyone knew that this was an act put together in front of the audience, and so they also found it amusing. The same empathic tone is expressed by the audience when a young woman enacts the character of the neighbour, Karma la, who seems to be old, has pain in her knees and walks with the help of a stick, in the performance of Group 5 at LTWA.

Different audiences offer various responses and types of feedback when watching a performance enacted on the stage. Long (2015) writes about an audience who, rather than being emotionally touched by what they see on the stage, when the performance was written as and meant to be a tragic situation, they laugh at it, perhaps as they might "expect to see 'a good evening's theatre'" (Long, 2015, pg. 326). In the case of the play 'Amma la', I intended the tone of the dialogues to be overall nostalgic and emotional when I wrote the playscript (November 2018), especially when Amma la remembers the time of her arrival in India. However, the audience in India in 2019 decided that many of the performances were rather entertaining, such as the situations mentioned above.

The entertaining tone of many of the performances, especially at LTWA, could be explained simply because all the students were anxious about doing something they have never done before: enacting a short drama in front of their peers, myself and their English teacher and so I suggest that laughter may have contributed to easing up the tension, for both performers and audience.

In other instances of a verbatim theatre performance, the audience who attended talkbacks after the event became either very upset with what was done, very uncomfortable or very depressed by it, argues Long (2015). This type of feedback is often attributed to the "richness of insights into the psychology and subjectivity that a verbatim performance and its distinctive mode of ethnographic sociality provides" (Long, 2015, pg. 329). The audience can decide what to do: whether to adopt, reject, laugh or cry at what they see, in an interpretative framework through which the audience makes sense of what they see and how they see it.

Laughter in a theatre play could be understood through the prism of other theatre plays enacted with and by refugee populations, such as the theatre play 'Borderline', about the funny side of the Calais migrant camp (Lyons, 2017). I underline here the fact that the two situations are not comparable in their content, the Tibetans living in India constitute a very different population than the migrants living in Calais, UK. The important point here is to connect the use of humour by refugees-actors and audiences in other theatrical performances.

The director of the play 'Borderline' is a therapist who volunteered in the Calais migrant camp and witnessed a spectacle of comedy and drama when a fashion show was organised with asylum seekers parading down a makeshift catwalk wearing some of the ridiculous items that had been donated, such as a wedding dress and swimming costumes (Lyons, 2017). After the camp's demolition, she worked with some of the asylum seekers and refugees from Calais, creating the play 'Borderline', a comedy about a tragedy. The cast was composed of 13 people, seven of whom were migrants previously living in Calais. The actors took various roles including volunteers, French police, a police dog, and a UK Home Office employee announcing the camp's demolition (Lyons, 2017). 'Tragedy and comedy are two sides of the same coin', said one of the actors, a Syrian refugee, adding that humans find humour even in the darkest moments of life and by analogy, the situation in Calais is a tragedy, but people used to find moments to enjoy themselves and to have fun by making a comedy of the situation and of how different countries, individuals and immigration officials dealt with it (Lyons, 2017).

In a nutshell, the theatre play 'Borderline' was about two things: representing the absurdities of the camp and allowing the play to be a therapy for the actors, through telling their stories and through the friendship developed between the play cast (Lyons, 2017). Secondly, the play 'Borderline' aimed at changing the public perception about the Calais camp and its inhabitants by conveying a different image compared to the one published in the media and tabloids, and by stressing out the resilience, talents and sense of humour that the migrants-turned actors possess (Psychedelight.org, 2020).

To some extent, I argue that the Tibetan participants-students who enacted the 'Amma la' performances in India (2019) re-presented the drama and comedy of their lives in exile but they also told their own, personal and community-based stories by changing and re-interpreting the play in creative and innovative ways. Furthermore, they showed their individual and group talent and sense of humour through their collaborative performances. And overall, they reiterated the resilience and agency of Tibetans living in India, which reminds about some of the concepts discussed earlier in this PhD Thesis, such as the narrative of Tibetan agency in exile, presented in *Act 2. Scene 1. Narratives in exile. Geopolitics of knowledge production.*

## **V. Bringing characters alive and giving them names.**

This constitutes the original and creative idea of the Tibetan participants-actors in many of the performances. The characters brought alive in the performances were originally briefly mentioned and talked about in the 'Amma la' playscript.

I highlight how bringing characters alive and naming them enhances the innovative dimension of the 'Amma la' performances and supports the artistic, collaborative, and interpretive framework that theatre approaches add to research. For instance, the characters of the soldiers whom Amma la mentions when she talks about how she fought in the Tibetan regiment 22 of the Indian Army come alive in the performance of group 2 at TIPA. They are enacted by three teenage boys who stand in one corner of the room, lifting weights and doing exercises, and a fourth one enacts the role of their leader/ instructor, while Amma la and Tenzin perform the verbatim playscript. The discussion about the Tibetan regiment 22 of the Indian Army is explored in Act 5 of this PhD Thesis.

The role of the neighbour, Karma la, who goes to Manali to sell sweaters, comes alive in the performance of Group 6 at TIPA and Group 5 at LTWA. And the daughter of Karma la comes alive in the performance of Group 7 at LTWA. The character of the cook, who is talked about in the dialogue between Amma la and Tenzin in the original 'Amma la' playscript also comes alive in the performance of Group 7 at TIPA. This character is enacted by a young woman in this group who comes to the house of Amma la and starts chopping real grass and vegetables and enacts washing them. And the friend of Tenzin, who is mentioned in the 'Amma la' playscript in passing, a young woman who obtained a new job in New Delhi as a nurse, becomes a visible and present character in the performance of Group 6 at TIPA. She plays a brief role, serving tea to Amma la and her neighbour.

Namgyal is another character who comes alive in the performances of Group 3, Group 5, and Group 7 at LTWA. The fluidity of Namgyal's character was discussed in details in point three of this section. The daughter of Karma la, who lives in the US, and is not named in the 'Amma la' playscript, is innovatively named Sonam by Group 7 at LTWA. The character of the teenage boy who goes to rent a hotel room with his girlfriend is creatively named Dhondup in the performance of Group 5 at TIPA. Ladhon is the name given to the neighbour who has an empty house in the enactment of Group 7 at LTWA. And Lhakpa is the given name to the cook who came from Tibet and is looking for accommodation, also in the performance of Group 7 at LTWA.

Naming is a powerful act and shows initiative, ownership, and authorship. And this technique used in ethnographic theatre constitutes a form of knowledge production, inclusive of different,

collaborative ways of knowing and learning together 'that disrupt conventional understandings of individual subjectivity, authorship, and authority' (Vidali, 2020, pg. 2). This argument exemplified above demonstrates that using drama to share the research findings is a meaningful and powerful tool that brings together researcher and participants in a transformative process. I argue that the act of naming situates the 'Amma la' performances in the literature on process drama, which is improvised in nature and in which the students are 'co-creators of the dramatic experience as well as the audience for their own work' (Bowell and Heap, 2013, pg. 5). I also state that by naming characters, the Tibetan participants enacted acts of co-authorship and co-creation of knowledge.

## **VI. Lack of employment in the Tibetan community.**

This is another element reoccurring in three of the 'Amma la' performances. This idea is an important finding of the PhD research that the Tibetan participants reiterated in their creative enactments in 2019 and is closely connected with the remaining two similarities between the 2019 performances: gender relations and the issue of drug use and alcoholism which I will discuss below. For instance, the performance of Group 6 at TIPA, which is one of the novel interpretations that departs completely from the 'Amma la' playscript, focuses on the dialogue between two women whose husbands are not employed and are not at home, but 'roaming around with friends'. One of the women had a job but stopped working.

The topic of unemployment was also enacted in the performances of Group 3 at LTWA and Group 7 at LTWA with new implications. Namgyal is a drug addict and alcoholic character, thus by implication unemployed, who is saved only by returning to Buddhism and becoming a monk in the enactment of Group 3. And Tenzin is the young man who sits idle and smokes in the Tibetan settlement, again suggesting he had no work, in the performance of Group 7 at LTWA.

Unemployment in the Tibetan community in India, especially amongst the youth is an important discussion in the current literature. In the period between 1998 and 2008, the number of jobseekers amongst the Tibetans in India increased by 103.7% with 17% in the underemployed/unemployed category (Gupta, 2019). This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that Tibetan youth are well educated and are looking for opportunities to match their skills, which cannot be found in the Tibetan settlements where the work focuses on agriculture and sweater selling. The job opportunities and higher incomes are typically found in the large Indian cities, where the competition is fierce. As non-citizens of India and having a temporary identity document that must be periodically renewed, Tibetans are at a disadvantage in the private sector jobs that may also require them to travel. Additionally, there are many IGov jobs that they cannot apply for given the same reason that they are not Indian citizens (Gupta, 2019, pg. 342).

I will return to this discussion about unemployment and how this connects with other key themes of the PhD, such as migration and Indian citizenship in *Act 7. The Final Act* of this PhD Thesis.

## **VII. Gender relations and the role of women**

This element stands out in two performances. The two female characters in Group 6 at TIPA speak about their sons and husbands who are unemployed and away from home. And Amma la and her neighbour, Karma la, enact two female characters who work until their late age to support their families, as shown in the performance of Group 5 at LTWA. On the contrary, their sons are idle and irresponsible.

I argue that in the first case, of Group 6 at TIPA, the characters enacted a gendered reinterpretation of the narrative, with a focus on two women talking about their husbands who do not work, do not come home and do not pick up their phone call. Moreover, one of their sons seems to step into their father's shoes and has been away since the previous night, not picking up his mother's calls. The female characters conclude that it is karmic destiny to have a bad husband who behaves in this way and not to walk out of this marriage. This view carries insights on gender relationships, family and marriage in a Tibetan context, as enacted by Tibetan young women. Arguably men and boys are invisible and irresponsible in the family, while mothers and wives manage the house, by arranging new supply of gas cylinder and being constantly worried about the whereabouts of their husbands and sons. However, it is important to add here that this is not a generalisation about the Tibetan women who work hard and Tibetan men who are not employed. The topic of unemployment is structurally explained by some of the factors I mentioned in the discussion of point (7) above and I do not claim to reduce it to a strictly gender approach.

In the second case, of Group 5 at LTWA, the old and limping neighbour, Karma la, is determined to continue with her yearly business trip to Manali, to sell sweaters, and thus provide for her children, despite her precarious health. This might explain how the young Tibetan students-actors have themselves experienced or saw around them mothers and grandmothers doing the sweater business relentlessly, regardless of their old age, out of concern for their families. In a similar way,

The topic of gender equality and relationships in Tibetan exile communities is addressed by the work of the Tibetan Women Association (TWA), and amongst other activities, one of their publications is the online magazine *Dolma: The Intellectual Expression of and for Tibetan Women*<sup>22</sup>. *Dolma* publishes articles authored by both Tibetan women and men that deal with issues of gender-based violence, women empowerment, women political representation in the CTA and other similar topics. In their

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<sup>22</sup> <https://tibetanwomen.org/dolma-magazine/>

latest edition (2016) available online, some of the authors (Tseyang, 2016) argue for a more equal representation of women in leadership roles, more policies aiming at gender equality and preventing gender-based violence that Tibetan women rarely come forward to admit. The CTA passed new guideline to have 33% women as Settlement officers (2013) and ongoing discussion about a 20% women quota in the TGovE was the topic of a questionnaire sent out by TWA.

The hard work of Tibetan women is another finding of the PhD research that the participants spoke about during my first ethnographic fieldwork in India (2016), as discussed in *Act 4. The quest for Tibetan identities* in this PhD Thesis and the Tibetan participants reiterated this in the reinterpretation of the 'Amma la' performances in 2019.

### **VIII. Alcoholism and the use of drugs by young Tibetans in India.**

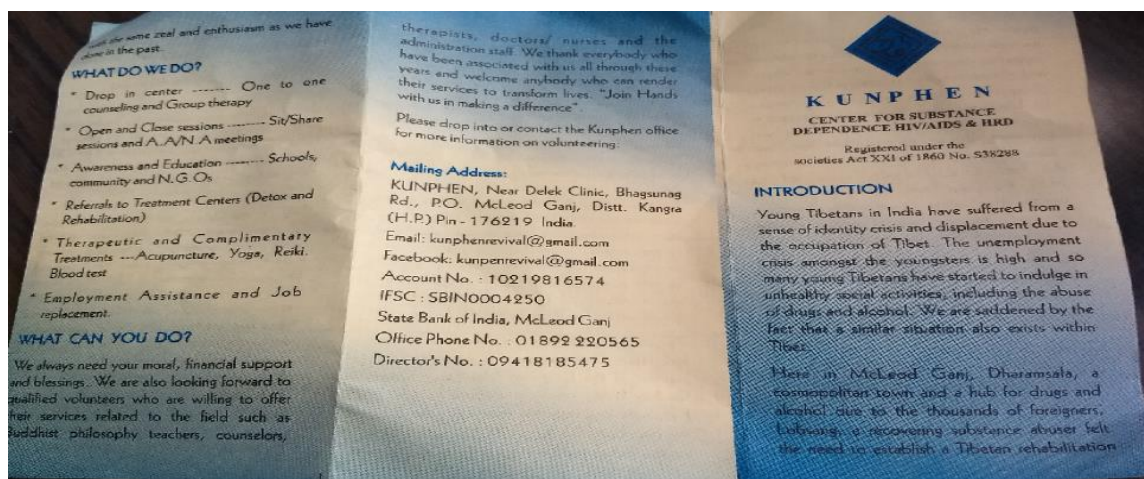
This is the final element discussed in this section and is common in two of the 2019 'Amma la' performances, where Namgyal is a young Tibetan suffering of alcoholism and drug addiction as shown by Group 3 at LTWA and Tenzin is sitting idle and smoking weed in a Tibetan settlement, as enacted by Group 7 at LTWA. The drug and alcohol addiction may be considered a personal and structural problem that have to do with the lack of jobs and the refugee status of Tibetan youth in India, particularly for those who arrived recently from Tibet. I encountered some of these personally during my previous fieldworks in India, in 2016 and 2017, as noted below:

Not to forget, this evening while walking back home after dinner, one young Tibetan standing on the street asked Manish and me whispering if we were interested in some drugs. We did not reply but I was immediately thinking of the media articles I was reading last year about lack of job opportunities for Tibetans and their fall into the drug underworld mafia. (Fieldwork diary entry, 29 July 2016).

On my second ethnographic fieldwork (2017), when I attended the Dalai Lama's teaching in the Buddhist Temple in McLeod, at the entrance of the gate a young Tibetan gave me a flyer about a newly founded Tibetan NGO: *Kunphen: Center for Substance Dependence HIV/AIDS and HRD*, that offered rehabilitation to those suffering of drug addiction (Figure 32 below):

**Figure 32. Flyer about Kunphen. Center for Substance dependence, Dharamshala**





Source: author's own picture, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Fieldwork in India, 04 September 2017

However, in the end of the two performances mentioned in this section there is a newly created space for hope, which is brought about by the Tibetan participants through their innovative re-interpretations of or doing away with the 'Amma la' playscript. Thus, in Group 3 at LTWA Namgyal is saved from his drug and alcohol addiction by his friend Tenzin, who takes him to a Buddhist monastery to become a monk. Namgyal ends the play on his knees, praying a Tibetan prayer 'Om Mani Padme Hum' in front of a monk who blesses him by placing his hand on his head.

And in the performance of Group 7 at LTWA the hope arrives in the person of Namgyal, the character everyone has been waiting for. Namgyal's role is enacted by a nun, who enters the stage with a smile on her face and asks Tenzin to give her the suitcase. She collects the imaginary suitcase and waves to an imaginary taxi to stop and pick her up. The theme of hope will be explored in depth and in connection with the other findings of this PhD research in the final act, *Act 7. Hope and Waiting*.

## Summary of Act 6

In Act 6 I presented and discussed the analysis of the performances of the theatre play 'Amma la' in India in 2019, in the final ethnographic fieldwork, as a form of sharing the PhD research findings with the Tibetan participants. I employed a multi-layered analysis of the data that emerged from the 2019 'Amma la' performances by organising and structuring the data in a visual format, identifying, and analysing the common elements of all the 13 performances. I interpreted these themes and connected them with previous findings of this PhD Thesis and with relevant academic literature.

In Act 6 I demonstrated how methods like theatre, arts and performance, which I titled 'mixed theatre approaches' produce rich, innovative, embodied and collaborative research with migrants, refugees and exiles, with citizenship quests, and how these co-produced knowledges are situated in

a particular time and place. In the case of this PhD research, these knowledges are about what it means to be a Tibetan living in India in contemporary times and the possibilities of Indian citizenship. By having the 'Amma la' performances enacted by the Tibetan participants this PhD research created a collaborative space for new interpretations of the 'Amma la' playscript by the participants themselves who changed the narrative in their own ways. And this constitutes one of the key contributions to knowledge of this PhD Thesis.

The following section is *Act 7. The Final Act: Waiting and Hope*, preceded by an Interval.

## Interval

This Interval connects Act 6 and Act 7.

The reader may use this time for a short break before the commencement of the *Final Act. Waiting and Hope*.

## Act 7. The Final Act. Waiting and Hope

‘Just like moons and like suns, With the certainty of tides, just like *hopes* springing high, Still I'll rise.’

Maya Angelou – ‘Still I Rise’ (1978)

### About Act 7

Act 7 contains the final discussion of this PhD Thesis. In this PhD research I explore the politics of waiting and hope in India and the embodied experiences of Tibetans living in India as guests and citizens. I elucidate this analysis and discussion based on connecting the key themes identified in the 2019 data emerging from the ‘Amma la’ performances with academic literature and with the earlier key findings of this PhD research (2015-2019) as presented in the previous Acts, Scenes and sections of the PhD Thesis. I critically explain how the findings shared as the collaborative ‘Amma la’ performance with the participants in 2019, confirm, contest, and transform the findings of this PhD Thesis. This discussion ends with summarizing the contribution of Act 7 to the PhD Thesis.

I present in table 25 below a visual summary of the key themes that I identified following the analysis of the ‘Amma la’ performances. The technique of the 2019 data analysis that includes data synthesis, coding, and categorising in five stages of manual coding is available in Appendix 31. Each theme encapsulates several categories that I summarize below.

Table 25. Key themes – ‘Amma la’ performances and connections with PhD Thesis

<u>No of Key theme</u>	<u>Theme title</u>	<u>Categories within the theme</u>
<b>Theme 1</b>	<b>Enacting disruptions</b>	performing – embodiment – <u>viscerality</u> - soundscapes as ‘Live Methods’ – sounds and animals – whispering - laughing – emotions
<b>Theme 2</b>	<b>Waiting, non-migration, remittances</b>	time - process – unemployment - India as ‘the waiting room’
<b>Theme 3</b>	<b>Authenticating identity</b>	language - identity documents - RC, Aadhaar card, voting card, Indian passport
<b>Theme 4</b>	<b>Hoping, agency and the suitcase</b>	migration – impermanence - empathy – solidarity – kindness

Source: author’s own

## I. Theme 1: Enacting disruptions:

### Embodiment – viscosity - soundscapes as ‘Live Methods’

The argument of this theme, summarised as ‘enacting disruptions’, reflects the key ideas of this PhD Thesis in two important ways. First, I argue that by enacting and performing embodied experiences about their lives in exile in India in the 2019 ‘Amma la’ performances, the Tibetan participants collaboratively produced new knowledges about migration, identities, and citizenship in multimodal and visceral ways. And these new knowledges created through ethnographic performances both contest the boundaries between sciences and the arts and re-join them with the help of theatre approaches and self-reflexivity. This corresponds to a ‘modality of radical knowledge coproduction, one that disrupts authorship, self, linearity, and proposition-based knowledges’ (Vidali, 2020, pg. 1).

Secondly, I demonstrate throughout this PhD Thesis that by employing theatre approaches and self-reflexivity in research I disrupt the boundaries between traditionally distinguished structures and categories of methods, data, theory, dissemination, insofar that I write every Act of the PhD Thesis in a disruptive way that combines theoretical arguments with methodological statements and modes of analysis. Theatre making is simultaneously ‘a method, a mode of analysis, a location for theory-building, a form of re-presentation and a vehicle for public engagement’ (Vidali, 2020, pg. 2).

Theatre is an endeavour to democratize the practices and theories of citizenship and the relationship between the researcher and the participants (Erel et. al., 2017; Kaptani and Yuval-Davis, 2008). This is exemplified in the discussion of the theatre play *Me? I just put British*, presented in Act 1. Scene 2 of this PhD Thesis. Theatre making is about doing research in a performative framework, engaging with bodies to make statements and this is disruptive to speech and text-based knowledge production and the convention dualisms between body and mind (Vidali, 2020; Madison, 2012).

Moreover, theatre making is about bringing multiple voices together and presenting more than one narrative in isolation (Majumdar, 2019). ‘There is no one kind of Tibetan’, said Abhishek Majumdar (2019) about the making of his theatre play ‘Pah-la’ (2019), play which was inspirational for sharing my PhD research findings using theatre approaches, as discussed in Act 3. Scene 2 of the PhD Thesis.

For Majumdar, the role of theatre and the responsibility of the playwright is to present more than one or two narratives in isolation. In the making of the play ‘Pah-la’ (2019) Majumdar went beyond representing a narrative of protest and a narrative of oppression when depicting the Tibetan protests in 2008 in China, by demonstrating that there were many sides, for instance he argued that the freedom struggle is also a class, gender, religious and nationalist struggle (Majumdar, 2019).

Theatre has a responsibility to contest binary narratives, said Majumdar (2019). This interpretation

corresponds to my early PhD research findings, following the 2016 ethnographic fieldwork. The story that was dis/un-covered following the interviews and participant observation in India in 2016 showed a dissonant narrative, a search for *one narrative* for Tibetans in India that was not found. That was because, I argued there was not *a single* narrative for the many life stories, lived experiences, hopes, expectations, memories, and dreams of Tibetans living in India.

By interpreting the PhD data in the form of the theatre play 'Amma la' (2019) and having it staged and performed by Tibetan participants in India I aimed to convey and share the research findings beyond academic audiences and, more importantly, to open the space for reflection, collaboration and embodied and creative enactments of non-binary narratives. I used theatre approaches as an exploration of alternative forms through which to convey, present, and allow for contestation, negotiation and re-creation of ethnographic knowledges which have the potential to provide new understandings of 'incompleteness, the ongoing, not-yet human experience' (Gatt, 2015, pg. 349).

Having these performances enacted by Tibetan volunteers, students and non-actors meant offering an avenue for addressing issues of interpretation and representation, due to the immediacy and the possibility of 'answering back' inherent in performance, and thus can make space for subaltern knowledges, and new insights into forms of reflexivity that are not reduced to a mind/body dichotomy (Gatt, 2015, pg. 335). Drama, in its performative sense, has been understood as a space for creating 'symbolic interpretations of social reality' (Amkpa, 2014, pg. 12). Moreover, precisely because the play 'Amma la' was enacted by Tibetan volunteers-turned-actors in 2019 in front of a Tibetan audience, the space for innovation, re-interpretation, and creativity in the way the play was performed remained completely open. The volunteers-turned-actors could choose what to do with the playscript given to them, how to use it, which words to speak and which ones to cut and replace with their own, which language to use, and at times they used more than one, and they decided on how much meaning and importance which part of the playscript had, and in some cases the sounds and gestures became more important than the spoken words.

### **On sounds, soundscapes, and emotions**

All the 'Amma la' performances (2019) contained enactments of sounds of nature, such as rain, thunder, lightning, and sounds of animals such as dogs barking, cows mooing, snakes hissing or birds chirping. The participants also enacted emotions, laughing, whispering, expressing love, humour, heroism, pain or illness. The basic table of emotions in Tibetan theatre has similarities to Indian Sanskrit theatre, argued Nunez (2005). These emotions enacted in Tibetan theatre historically include love, humour, grief and illness, anger, energy and heroism, fear, disgust as well as astonishment and amazement (Nunez, 2005, pg. 6). And the Tibetan participants used their

creativity and spontaneity enacting a very similar range of emotions in their 'Amma la' performances in India in 2019. I argue that these visceral performances inclusive of sounds and emotions constitute enactments of 'live methods' (Back and Puwar, 2012), mobile, multi-modal and sensory methods (O'Neill, 2018) which I employed in the second PhD fieldwork for data collection, analysis and interpretation of this PhD Thesis, as explained in Acts 3 and 5 of the PhD Thesis.

Sounds are important tools that help us understand our context and environment in daily life.

Soundscapes have been conceptualized as a powerful tool that humans use to relate to their surroundings (Guzy, 2017). These soundscapes can be designed by an individual, or can be the by-product of historical, political, and cultural circumstances, they may be musical compositions, ethnographic field recordings or recordings of a rainforest by an ecologist (Guzy, 2017).

The word "soundscape" was coined by composer R. Murray Schafer to identify sounds that describe a place or a sound-based memory that is always pertinent to a place (The British Library, 2020).

A very different interpretation of soundscapes emanates from the work of Laura Kunreuther (2017), based on Ashmina Ranjit's work: "Happening/An Installation: Nepal's present situation, 2004" that was performed on the streets of Kathmandu, Nepal in 2004 with the aim of dramatizing the suffering during the Maoist civil war and a state of emergency that banned large gatherings of people on the street (Kunreuther, 2017). In Ranjit's artistic work (2004) performers walked silently in pairs, then one person would fall to the ground, enacting death, while the other drew their outline on the street in white chalk. Their performance was a visual spectacle and a sonic act, with performers carrying handheld FM radio sets, using a soundtrack of people crying. This performance of sound and silence on the streets constitutes 'democratic soundscapes' for Laura Kunreuther (2017, pg. 17). By reviewing Ashmina's performance in Nepal, in 2004, and conceptualizing it as a democratic soundscape, Kunreuther asks the question: 'What does democracy sound like?' (2017, p. 19). The answer positions democratic soundscapes in the place and time when they occur and that transforms them. For instance, the soundscape of Kathmandu was marked by silences on the streets during the general strikes that used to close the city in protest (Kunreuther, 2017). Democratic soundscapes ask us to think about how the material sounds of democracy are produced through media, voices, performed through silence or through noise. Democratic soundscapes may encourage us to rethink how these enhance or transform the meaning of being citizens and subjects in a democracy (Kunreuther, 2017, pg. 26).

Borrowing Kunreuther's argument (2017), I argue that the soundscapes enacted by the Tibetan participants in the 'Amma la' performances (2019) show a contextualized and time-based understanding and meaning of democratic participation in the life of the Tibetan community in India

in 2019. These performances, if enacted elsewhere, for instance with Tibetans living in the UK or any other country, would be enactments of sounds of those places, identities, subjectivities, and memories. Therefore, the use of drama to share research findings and co-create knowledge with non-trained, volunteer-performers highlights its important contribution to co-learning in 'cultural spaces' and to connecting with discourses in which the writer, the performer, the reader, and the audience are all situated' (Amkpa, 2014, pg. 13).

I argue that these situated performances revealed new insights about what it means to be a Tibetan living in exile in India in contemporary times, which constitutes the central research question in my PhD research. And the Tibetan participants co-created situated knowledges that answered this research question in innovative ways, as discussed in Act 6.

## **II. Theme 2: Waiting, non-migration, remittances: – India as 'the waiting room'.**

The second theme that emerged after the synthesis and analysis of the 2019 'Amma la' performances focuses on the central concept of waiting, intertwined with ideas of time, non-migration, remittances, and unemployment. I titled these connections 'India as the waiting room', concept that I will explore, analyse, and interpret in the following pages of this section. In this section I demonstrate that the contemporary Tibetan experiences of waiting in India bear similarities to those of other groups or populations of non-migrants in India. I expand these comparisons to the experiences of populations such as youth in South Africa, migrants, and refugees waiting for paperwork, exemplified by relevant academic literature. And I argue that waiting is a deeply shared human experience, across geographies and cultures, with different meanings for different people.

Samuel Beckett's play 'Waiting for Godot' dwells on the notion of waiting, an indefinite waiting for someone who never comes, and for something that never happens (Janeja, 2019). Before Beckett wrote 'Waiting for Godot', the idea of a play in which nothing happens was impossible (Bradby, 2001). 'Beckett is the first dramatist to focus exclusively on the act of *waiting* and to make this into his dominant metaphor for existence.' (Bradby, 2001, pg, 25).

The 'Amma la' playscript is inspired from and an adaptation of this play, as argued throughout this PhD Thesis. But the play 'Waiting for Godot' is neither absurd, nor hopeless, writes Kamyabi (2007). The universality of this play originates from the fact that in a world of injustice, wars, sufferings, colonization and oppressions, all human beings find a meaning for life in their waiting, and are hopeful (Kamyabi, 2007). In a similar way, the 'Amma la' performances enacted by Tibetan participants in 2019 show that being a Tibetan in India in current times means waiting for a variety of possible outcomes, as shown in Table 26 below.



Table 26. **Meanings of waiting in India for Tibetans**

No.	Dimensions of 'waiting' - Being a Tibetan in India
1.	<b>Waiting for Tibetan independence for 59 years and for return to Tibet</b> (enacted by Group 4 at LTWA)
2.	<b>Waiting for new dialogue between TGovE and China, which stopped in 2011</b> (enacted by Group 6 at LTWA)
3.	<b>Waiting for pension from IGov, as a retired Tibetan who fought in the 22 Tibetan regiment of the Indian Army</b> (enacted by Group 2 at both TIPA and LTWA)
4.	<b>Waiting for remittances from family members who moved abroad, which is what non-migrating Tibetans in India do often</b> (enacted by Group 4 at TIPA)
5.	<b>Waiting for documents such as an Indian passport that enables one to get a better job</b> (enacted by Group 6 at LTWA)

Source: author's own

I argue that these meanings and possibilities of waiting illuminated by the 2019 'Amma la' performances, in the context of Tibetans currently living in exile in India, between guest-foreigners-migrants-refugees-citizens, create a new analytical category which I termed 'India as the waiting room'. And this constitutes an explanatory tool that helps situate and understand the experiences of Tibetans in India that this PhD Thesis focuses on.

Waiting as a methodology for understanding social change is the topic of recent ethnographic work with young people in India (Jeffrey, 2010; Jeffrey and Young, 2012; Jeffrey, 2019). Waiting constitutes a social experience and basis for mobilisation for lower middle-class young men who are underemployed in India (Jeffrey, 2010). These young men wait sometimes for years or generations or entire lifetimes in provincial towns, such as Meerut, for their goals of educational achievements and employment to be fulfilled. This is a crisis that particularly affects the lower middle classes, young people engaged in the 'business and art of waiting' and hoping, while managing time pass 'in a Godot-like existence' (Jeffrey, 2019, pg. xiii). In contemporary neoliberal India people in their 20s and early 30s suffer intense social insecurities (Jeffrey and Young, 2012). Half of the total population in India is under the age of 25 and two thirds are less than 35 years old (Sharma, 2017). Youth in India are concerned about issues related to lack of jobs, gender inequality and education (Tandon, 2018). This topic was explored in depth in relation to the political question of Indian citizenship presented in Act 2 of this PhD Thesis.

I argue that the contemporary experiences of the youth in India waiting for 'better days' of good governance can be paralleled with the temporalities of waiting and expectations of development in several African states, particularly following the neoliberal structural adjustments policies that sharpened inequalities, poverty and marginalization, as Stasik et al. (2020) highlight in a collection of essays focusing on several African states. 'In the face of economic decline, political exclusion and unmet expectations, Africans wait' (Stasik et al., 2020, pg. 2). They wait for a better future with more opportunities for alternative forms of social and political action, conceptualised as 'everyday micropolitics of waiting' (Stasik et al., 2020, pg. 5).

Waiting is a political process, argue Janeja and Bandak (2019), especially when modernity is about speed, being and doing in the moment, in the immediacy. But waiting is not necessarily understood as an absence, rather as the ground for conversations about suffering, modernity, agency, and difference (Jeffrey, 2019, pg. xv). 'Politics of waiting' refers to the engagements with the structural and institutional conditions that coerce people to wait, such as the precarious situation in which many of the world's human inhabitants are forced to wait, often indefinitely, for food, education, health care, employment, welfare benefits or housing (Janeja, 2019).

The politics of waiting in India, for instance, examine the experiences of young men waiting for employment in small towns or poor people waiting for social and administrative services (Jeffrey, 2010). These kind of experiences, to some extent, are shared by displaced people, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers waiting for rescue in Syria, in camps in Jordan, Turkey, Kenya or at the risk of drowning in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea while trying to reach Europe. Waiting is therefore a technology of governance, used to exercise control over people or to control their movement (Janeja, 2019).

Nonetheless, waiting can also be an active political strategy of resistance and political mobilisation by migrants for example, highlighting the interaction of creative agency and social structures. For instance, the peasant communities in the Sudan who resist imposed waiting caused by displacement and state coercion. When facing the apparently hopeless situation of losing their homes and livelihood to the rising water of a dam, Sudanese showed resilience and strength by rebuilding lives at the shores of the reservoir, and 'openly confronting governmental politics of displacement' (Stasik et al., 2020, pg. 5). In another example, Katarzyna Grabska employs a gendered perspective to the notion of waithood focusing on the connections between waiting, migration, and personhood in the case of young female Eritrean migrants stuck while in transit, in Khartoum (Stasik et al., 2020).

These examples show how, in contexts of oppression, the act of waiting itself can also become a form of resistance to power. And these strategies of resilience, agency and tenacity, at times turned

into protest, were enacted by various communities throughout history to resist imposed colonial rule, but they are also relevant in today's neoliberal economies and in response to the exercise of state violence (Stasik et al., 2020). The removal of long-term political leaders in the Gambia, Zimbabwe, and the Sudan, through political protests after decades of waiting for political change, and promised services, constitute examples supportive of this argument. (Stasik et al., 2020, pg. 5)

Waiting is a part of human life and has been examined in relation to hope, doubt and uncertainty (Bandak and Janeja, 2018). Waiting is a category where opposites co-exist: doubts and possibilities of hope, like the asylum seekers from Syria waiting to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe or waiting to return to Syria when safe, or waiting for long time for residence or identity documents, or waiting for news from 'those who made it' to safety or abroad (Bandak and Janeja, 2018). Asylum-seekers in the UK wait for between two and nine years for a decision about their legal status. Waiting in this case has been conceptualised as a phase or stage in the search for protection, hope and security or waiting for 'normal lives' (Rotter, 2010). Waiting time is as an expression of power over somebody else and in the case of migrants, it is the state that exercises this power, argue Bendixsen and Eriksen (2018), such as the case of 700 Palestinian asylum seekers in Norway waiting for a change in their legal status and coming together in a demonstration in Oslo to get their paperwork. Waiting shows 'a plurality of ways of being and inhabiting time' (Bandak and Janeja, 2018, pg. 5). Waiting might also be considered a key aspect of liminality. Waiting in liminal or transitional space is waiting for things to come, like the migrants queuing in South Africa in front of the office of Home Affairs who are waiting for something to happen. Such queuing can be considered as being in a liminal phase or 'betwixt and between' (Sutton et al., 2011, pg. 30). 'When you are waiting, you are not on the ground. You are hanging in-between somewhere, in limbo' said Manal, an asylum applicant from Algeria waiting in the UK asylum process for six years. (Rotter, 2010, pg. 7). Waiting involves a mixture of despair and hope and in relation to liminality, it is viewed as an ambivalent time and space, an 'in between' (Sutton et al., 2011, pg. 32).

I argue that Tibetans living in India constitute another example of a population in a liminal phase, somewhere in-between multiple possibilities and outcomes of the waiting process, as demonstrated in this section and discussed in Act 1, Scene 1 of this PhD Thesis, where I critically analysed the academic literature that situates the Tibetans in a narrative of in-betweenness. I refer to Bhaba's concept of 'hybridity' (1994) and those populations who live 'border lives' on the margins of different nations, in-between contrary homelands. Bhabha's concept of the border, the 'beyond' considers the opportunity for new, hybrid forms of knowledge which I found useful for situating this research about Tibetans in India in the early stages of analysis.

## Remittances

I now turn to another dimension of waiting, in relation to the Tibetan experiences of living in India, that is the concept of remittances, meaning money received from Tibetans living abroad by those who do not migrate. For instance, in the performance of Group 4 at TIPA the young couple in love, looking for a hotel room to rent out, exchanges their foreign currency to local Indian rupees. This constitutes an example of how Tibetans in India receive money from abroad, remittances from their family and friends and other contacts in the West, and how they spend it.<sup>23</sup> Tsering (2018) estimated that nearly 40,000 Tibetans emigrated from all the Tibetan refugee camps in India to the West and about 10,000 Tibetans from Dharamshala alone. The topic of Tibetans migrating westwards emerged strongly during my second fieldwork in India (2017), in the town of Mundgod, the state of Karnataka, where I met mostly with the older generation of Tibetans, they seemed to constitute the majority of inhabitants of this settlement, since the young ones moved abroad or to Indian cities looking for education and jobs. The camp leader told me that in almost every household, there was one person who migrated abroad, and the young ones went to hostels, different schools, in India, so the remaining ones are old people. Remittances constitute a source of income for Tibetans living in India, in a contemporary scenario of worrying rates of unemployment, as discussed in Act 6 and as argued by Gupta (2019). In another piece of ethnographic research conducted in the South of India, the findings confirm that remittances constitute an important source of income for Tibetans living in agricultural settlements in India, income which was ‘increasingly transforming the settlement’ (Choedup, 2015, pg. 117).

By analysing narratives of waiting as narratives of love and money in Korean-Chinese transnational migration, Kwon (2015) shows that the nature of remittances could be interpreted as promises of love for those implicated in family and love relationships. Her ethnography of waiting elaborates on the experiences of those who do not migrate but nonetheless sustain a critical dimension of migratory practice, which I argue bears similarities with the case of Tibetans in India living off the remittances they receive from their family members living abroad. Kwon (2015) thus illuminates how the work of waiting enables mobility for some and not for others and helps perpetuating the circulatory routes of migration. The last dimension of the concept of waiting, namely waiting for documents such as an Indian passport, is an important theme that I discuss in the following section, in connection with ideas of authenticity, identity, language and other identity documents for Tibetans in India.

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<sup>23</sup> Notes from the Post-fieldwork diary: 16 October 2019. I am grateful to my Tibetan friend and interpreter for helping me structure this argument, based on our regular meetings and discussions in London.

### III. Theme 3: Authenticating identity; language and identity documents

#### Registration Certificate, Aadhaar card, Voting card, Indian passport

The third theme contains the key categories of language and identity documents, such as RC for Tibetans, Aadhaar card, voting card and Indian passport, which I summed up in the concept 'authenticating identity'. I demonstrate how two of the thirteen performances of the 'Amma la' theatre play evolves around and reiterate the theme of authenticating identity-language-ID documents. These are the performances of Group 3 at TIPA and Group 6 at LTWA. A few other performances contain implications of this theme in subtle ways, that I will discuss later in this theme. This theme relates to the findings presented in Acts 4 and 5 of this PhD Thesis, where I discussed the identity documents for Tibetans and the possibilities emerging from acquiring an Indian passport, but also the broader question of 'identity', that I will return to in this section.

The first performance that underpinned the key categories of this section is the performance of Group 3 at TIPA, where the young Tibetans decided to do away with the 'Amma la' playscript and created their own story for the first half of the performance. In this newly created story, a young couple walks hand in hand and talks about renting a hotel room. But when the receptionist at the hotel asks for a payment of one thousand Indian rupees and an ID proof, the couple realised that first they need to exchange the foreign currency they have into local currency. And so, the teenage boy, Dhondup, shows his Aadhaar card as ID proof to the receptionist, then leaves to exchange the currency. At the made-up exchange office, he exchanges 500 Euros into Indian rupees. The staff here too asks for his ID proof and Dhondup shows the same Aadhaar card to complete the exchange. In the following scene another character enters the scene, a Tibetan teenage boy, trying to exchange 1,000 Euros but he forgot his ID card at home and the staff refuses to complete the transaction for him and asks him to bring his ID card first.

The use of the Aadhaar card in this performance, at their own initiative, shows that young Tibetans are aware of the utility of this document as an identity proof in India and perhaps they themselves use it in their daily lives. As the second scene shows, without an Identity card daily business is not possible, such as exchanging currency. The Aadhaar card in India is a controversial topic in terms of the identity question, since it can be used as a proof of identity for all residents of India, and not only for Indian citizens. Moreover, for Tibetans applying for an Indian passport, a copy of their Aadhaar card is a mandatory part of the application process. Aadhaar is not an authentication of Indian citizenship since the governing authority decided to issue Aadhaar to all residents irrespective of citizenship, tying it to other state issued documents like ration and Below Poverty Line cards (Chhotray and McConnell, 2018, pg. 115).

States govern with paper and this is what makes the bureaucracy, but the Indian state seems to be having a ‘marked obsession with paper’ (Chhotray and McConnell, 2018, pg. 114). In the case of Tibetans, according to the findings discussed in Act 4 of this PhD Thesis, the set of identity documents that they have while living in India consist of the following, shown in Table 27 below.

Table 27. ID documents that Tibetans have in India

No.	Type of ID doc.	Description / Purpose
1.	Green Book (GB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>informally known as ‘proof of Tibetan citizenship’,</li> <li>issued by CTA to every Tibetan when they turn 16 years old,</li> <li>based on which they pay taxes to the CTA.</li> </ul>
2.	Registration Certificate (RC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issued by IGov to Tibetans in India,</li> <li>renewable every year and since 2014 every five years</li> </ul>
3.	Yellow Card (YC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issued by IGov,</li> <li>for traveling purpose</li> </ul>
4.	Aadhaar card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issued by the Government of India,</li> <li>to all residents of India</li> </ul>
5.	Voter ID card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issued by IGov to those who can vote in local and national elections,</li> <li>to Tibetans since 2014</li> </ul>

Source: author’s own

Tibetans may also have other documents which are not listed here, for instance driving license. I will return to discussing the voter ID card and the Indian passport on the following pages of this section.

### Aadhaar card

The national Aadhaar card is part of India’s Unique Identity Scheme. It contains a 12-digit unique number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), number produced by taking into account the biometric details of a person, their iris scan and fingerprints, and demographic information like date of birth and address (Economic Times, 2020). The Aadhaar card was first issued in 2010, is free of cost and provides biometric data for every applicant over the age of five.

Registering for Aadhaar card requires two types of documents: Proof of Address (POA) and Proof of Identity (POI). The documents accepted as Proof of identification (POI) are PAN card<sup>24</sup> or birth certificate and for Proof of address (POA) an applicant can provide any of the following: passport, ration card, voter identification card, driving license. In 2019 approximately 95% of people in India had an Aadhaar and used it once a month on average, out of a total population of 1,380,276,000<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> PAN (Permanent Account Number) is an identification number assigned to all taxpayers in India. (<https://cleartax.in/s/pan-card>)

<sup>25</sup> Total population in India in July 2020 according to <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/india-population/>

(Economic Times, 2020). The Aadhaar Scheme constitutes the largest national biometric identification programme in the world, which was initially justified as a 'welfare enhancing project' for the rural and urban poor to enable them direct access to state welfare subsidies, and to eliminate corruption and the middlemen (Chhotray and McConnell, 2018).

However, the Aadhaar card has been considered controversial. The biggest challenge to the AadhaarScheme has been the invasion of individual privacy: collecting and storing unique biometric data in a centralised database may open the door to unplanned and unknown uses (Chhotray and McConnell, 2018, pg. 115). And the Aadhaar card has been theorised as the 'cornerstone of a new citizenship regime in India' when situated within the shift to neoliberal governance in India, and growing role of the state in accessing and holding large, private data of its citizens (Chhotray and McConnell, 2018, pg. 116). McConnell (2013) writes about the micro-politics of everyday life and the ways in which the state controls the access to benefits, rights and responsibilities by issuing, renewing and stamping different identity documents, thus creating categories of more and less privileged groups. Identity papers of different kinds play a central part in authenticating claims to citizenship, the construction of identity and the experiences of (non)citizenship for migrants, refugees and socioeconomically marginal individuals who negotiate their relationship with the state (Chhotray and McConnell, 2018). Identity documents and the daily performances of paperwork offer an important insight into the history and politics of state governance, the complexity and contradictions of state power and individual agency and resistance (Chhotray and McConnell, 2018, pg. 122-123).

### **Voter ID Card**

Another example of documents as claims to authenticating identity is the Voter ID card, which had been issued to Tibetans living in India since 2014, when the Election Commission of India issued a directive to enrol all Tibetans born in India and of voting age, in the national electoral rolls before the general elections (Gupta, 2019). The MHA, however disagreed with this decision on grounds of security concerns and the geopolitics between India and China. Despite this, the decision was not revoked and so, Tibetans became voters without becoming Indian citizens.

This self-contradictory position of the IGov, produced by delinking the right to vote from citizenship for Tibetans in India and insisting that Tibetans had to legally seek Indian citizenship, situates Tibetans in a position of liminality: non-citizens but voters (Gupta, 2019). This liminality for Tibetans means being 'located 'betwixt and between' sovereign articulations of political identity' (Gupta, 2019, pg. 331). Moreover, Tibetans' quest for a voting card is not necessarily a quest for political participation or citizenship in India, argues Gupta (2019). Based on her recent research with Tibetans

in India, she concluded that possessing a Voting card did not mean for the participants a direct link to Indian citizenship, rather her respondents equated citizenship with holding of an Indian passport and not a voting card or voting in Indian elections. And possessing an Indian voting card did not influence political self-identification, with most respondents claiming to be a 'Tibetan' or 'Tibetan Refugee' or 'Tibetan from India' as their primary political identity. 'This simultaneity of self-identification as Tibetan and Indian captures the liminality and fluidity of exile identities' (Gupta, 2019, pg. 343). The spiritual leader of Tibetans, the XIV Dalai Lama frequently referred to himself as a 'Son of India' and, along similar lines, one of Gupta's respondents in replying to the question of identity stated, 'I am Tibetan by blood but Indian by experience' (Gupta, 2019, pg. 343). I argue that the findings of Gupta's research (2019) corroborate to a large extent with the initial findings of this PhD research and the answers of Tibetan respondents during my 2017 fieldwork who also stated: 'we (Tibetans) are actually 90% Indian...but our blood is 100% Tibetan'. And this is what the 2019 'Amma la' performance reiterated, with Tibetan participants articulating the same position of in-betweenness, fluidity and liminality, particularly in the performance of Group 6 at LTWA.

### **Acts of citizenship, Indian passport, and citizenship**

The fluid subject position of non-fixed identities can be analytically situated on a 'spectrum of intensity ranging from hospitality to hostility: citizens, strangers, outsiders and aliens. Becoming a subject involves being implicated in this spectrum. The dialogical principle of citizenship always involves otherness.' (Isin, 2008, pg. 19) 234 – 'And this is part of 'acts of citizenship': those acts that transform strategies and modes of being political, these include being citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens, by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens, through creating new sites and scales of struggle (Isin, 2008).

But acts of citizenship have the potential to create new forms of solidarity, not only sites of struggle. I take this argument further stating that the fluid and liminal position of Tibetans living in India, demonstrated in this section by the identity paperwork, could be understood as a form of solidarity with other groups of populations situated at the margins of society in India: those whose daily lives experiences are also marked by access to a set of documents that constitute everyday micro-politics (McConnel, 2013). These populations include, for instance, internal migrants who move across Indian states for labour or family reunification, mostly from rural to urban settings, and who may be lacking for instance proof of permanent address that is crucial for enabling them to vote. The internal migrants constituted 29.9% of the total population in India in 2011 (Indian Census), however these numbers are expected to be much higher than the official data (Sadiq, 2009). Lack of documentation has been demonstrated to be a common cause of problems and of shared



vulnerabilities for both internal migrants and asylum seekers in India in recent research (Vijayaraghavan, 2020).

These examples are discussed at length in Act 2 of this PhD Thesis and reiterated here as important findings of this PhD Thesis. The main point that I highlight here is the common elements and ‘acts of citizenship’ that connect Tibetans, who obtained a voting card to vote in Indian elections, and larger groups of population in India, such as internal migrants, who vote in order to access rights and benefits associated with being a citizen of India. Moreover, since the new CAA and NRC in India (2019), the question of who is an authentic citizen of India emerged as a new threat to a country where a significant portion of the population would be unable to provide the documents to prove their ancestry (Jha, 2019). Sadiq (2009), Subramanian (2020), Jayal (2019) and Dasgupta et al. (2019) highlighted the fluidity of the documentary proof in India, and the practical impossibility to prove every citizen’s ancestry. I argue that this form of ‘questionable identity and citizenship’ to be authenticated in contemporary India constitutes another common experience of Tibetans with marginal populations in India insofar as Tibetans access the paperwork available to them, such as Aadhaar card, voter ID or even Indian passport, for similar reasons: access to social rights and benefits, which in the case of Tibetans, translate into access to better jobs, easier ways of traveling, access to education and fees on parity with Indian students, or buying land in India and having access to bank loans.

This form of citizenship, conceptualized as ‘instrumental citizenship’ (Jayal, 2013), constitutes one of the early findings of this PhD Thesis, presented in Act 4. And this was recurrent in the 2019 ‘Amma la’ performances. Three performances highlighted the instrumentality of the Indian passport, in direct or subtle ways. For instance, Group 4 at LTWA enacted a verbatim performance of the ‘Amma la’ playscript, in which Namgyal could not find work in Dharamshala and goes to Canada to get a passport and to support the Tibet movement. Here the Canadian passport is instrumental for Tibetans who can thus become ‘ambassadors for Tibet’ (Hess, 2009). The second example is Group 6 at TIPA, where a young woman enacts the role of a Tibetan graduate who obtained a job with the IGov, where she earns well. The implication here is that she has an Indian passport since this is the only way for Tibetans living in India to obtain an IGov job. And the third example is the verbatim performance of Group 6 at LTWA, where Tenzin also talks about her friend who has a job as a nurse in New Delhi and ‘earns a salary of 20,000 Indian rupees’. Tenzin wishes to obtain such a job herself, but she wonders how to do that since she only has an RC, and not an Indian passport. ‘The RC cannot get me an IGov job’ she states.

In all these performances the Tibetan participants reinforced the instrumental nature of the Indian passport that, if obtained, could provide an avenue for rights and benefits associated with formal citizenship. It could also be argued that the young Tibetan participants who enacted the 'Amma la' performances in 2019 may not have an Indian passport but are aware of the possibilities it offers.

### **Authenticating identity and language**

The discussion about the Indian passport is intertwined with the concept of Tibetan identity in this PhD Thesis and in the performance of Group 6 at the LTWA. When Tenzin complains about the restrictions of the RC that do now allow her to get an IGov job, the mother responds that New Delhi is a large city and 'we are Tibetans' although living in India and consuming the same food and drinks 'but in our heart, we are pure Tibetans'. Here it is interesting and important to note that, according to the Tibetan translation, the characters in Group 6 at LTWA use different synonyms of certain words and phrases, for instance, when Amma la speaks of being a Tibetan living in India, she says that 'in our heart, we are pure Tibetans' while in the 'Amma la' playscript the same sentence reads: 'we know that our blood is 100% Tibetan'.

When I discussed the translation with the Tibetan interpreter, we touched upon the uses and meanings of 'pure Tibetan' and one example that he gave me was language.<sup>26</sup> He mentioned that Tibetans in India do not use 'pure' Tibetan language anymore, as they have been exposed to English and a variety of Indian languages, depending on the Indian states where they live. Since this is a process that started from their young age, they use mixed words when speaking Tibetan. But this is not something that happens in the Indian context only, Tibetans living abroad, like those in the UK, only have the chance to speak and learn Tibetan during the weekend Tibetan language and culture classes, in Tibetan institutions. Otherwise, they speak the local language, English in this case.

The claim here, developed with the help of my Tibetan interpreter, is that Tibetans born in Tibet are the closest possible to speaking 'pure Tibetan' because they learn Tibetan only at home and at school, up until grade four, then they start learning Chinese, while Tibetans living in exile speak a form of Tibetan influenced by local languages, that they learn in school and speak more often.

This argument resonates closely to similar points raised in the academic literature. Timrobbo (2019) writes about the work of Lhakpa, a Tibetan theatre maker in the exiled community in India, who could not find Tibetan actors to speak good Tibetan language and to enact in some of his plays. This problem originates in the Tibetan education system in India, he explains, where children are no

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<sup>26</sup> Discussion recorded in the post-fieldwork notes, on 16 October 2019, after meeting with T., my Tibetan friend and interpreter in London.

longer exposed to the language at a young age, on the contrary, English and Hindi and other Indian languages are widely spoken amongst the Tibetans exile community in India, while Tibetan is neglected. This happens also because the parents go to work and leave the small children with the grandparents who allow them to spend time in front of the TV, watching Hindi or English cartoons (Timrobbo, 2019). Consequently, Lhakpa started to dub popular foreign language cartoons in Tibetan language and these cartoons were distributed amongst the exile community, increasing children's exposure to Tibetan language. The 'loss' of Tibetan language skills amongst exiled Tibetans seems to be a common feature for those Tibetans and their children who live in other countries too, such as the US. Tibetan artists in Berkeley wrote about their children who do not speak Tibetan very well because they use English more and they use Tibetan mostly when they perform Tibetan music and arts (Marin Theatre Company, 2020).

The question of who is a 'pure Tibetan' is thus, closely related to questions of language, identity, and location. The focal point I am making in this discussion is to highlight the tensions within and the contested nature of the concept of 'pure' or authentic Tibetan, as expressed by the performers in Group 6 at LTWA, in a verbatim performance of the 'Amma la' theatre play. There are many layers of Tibetan diasporic politics and many contestations over what constitutes and get recognized as authentically Tibetan, writes Yeh (2007). Although Tibetans were imagined as authentic and geographically undifferentiated, the process of Tibetan identity formation is heterogeneous and differentiated by national location and transnational movements (Yeh, 2007). A homogenous Tibetan-in-exile identity is a 'rhetorical device and imaginary construct' and 'Tibetanness is an imagined and contested construct' argues Anand (2000, pg. 272). On a theoretical level, any form of identification should be understood as a construction, a process never completed (Anand, 2000). Therefore, the question of Tibetan identity should explore the ontological and epistemological themes involved 'in the deployment of the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming, rather than being a Tibetan' (Anand, 2000, pg. 273).

These arguments substantiate the early findings of this PhD research following the second ethnographic fieldwork in India, in 2016, as discussed in Act 4 of this PhD Thesis. Hall (1996) argued that identity is always constructed in plural and are about how to use the resources from history, language, and culture "in the process of becoming rather than being" (Hall, 1996, p. 4).

The question of authenticity over Tibetan language is contested, as literature and findings suggest. There are many spoken dialects of Tibetan language and large regional variations that are mutually incomprehensible (Yeh, 2007). Tibetans in exile use a version of Lhasa dialect, which is also taught in schools and has become the common, standardized language of the diaspora but for many new

arrivals from the eastern regions of Kham and Amdo, who are fluent in their own Tibetan dialects, the diasporic standard Lhasa dialect is difficult, argued Yeh (2007). Additionally, many of them can speak some Chinese, which is seen as the 'language of the enemy' (Yeh, 2007, pg. 656).

### **Newly arrived Tibetans – hospitality and compassion**

The politics of language use and of authenticity are connected to the topic of the newly arrived Tibetans in India, whose first destination is usually Dharamsala because it is the residence of the XIV Dalai Lama and the seat of CTA. These Tibetans who come directly from Tibet are considered valuable sources of the latest information about the situation in Tibet (Yeh, 2007). This argument is remindful of the early finding of my PhD research, emerging from the interview with officials from Tibet Policy Institute in 2016, as discussed in Act 4 this PhD Thesis. However, the Tibetans living in India for generations consider the new arrivals from Tibet to have unfamiliar, 'Chinese' habits, mannerisms, and clothes, which are different from the image of their fellow Tibetans living in India and are seen 'as less than authentically Tibetan' (Yeh, 2007, pg. 653). This argument resonates with the finding that emerged during my second fieldwork in India, in 2017, about the newly arrived Tibetans who had problems in understanding the local language, could not find jobs easily and landed in alcohol driven conflicts and selling drugs, as discussed in Act 5 of this PhD Thesis. 'For Tibetans in exile, long attuned to their positive public image as compassionate and gentle, nonviolence has become internalized as a marker of authentic Tibetan-ness' writes Yeh (2007, pg. 654). And the behaviour of some new arrivals is seen as giving an undeservedly bad reputation to the entire Tibetan community whom Indians perceive as guests of their nation (Yeh, 2007).

The topic of newly arrived Tibetans in India was reoccurring in my fieldwork in Mundgod, in 2017, where I learnt about a newly arrived Tibetan who found employment as a cook at the Old People's Home, after he tried unsuccessfully to find work and accommodation in larger cities. This example became the character of the cook in the 'Amma la' playscript and was enacted in the 'Amma la' 2019 performances. My PhD findings about the newly arrived Tibetans in India are supported by recent literature that suggests that they were at high risk of being homeless and so Tsering (2018) suggested that all Tibetans who wish to become Indian citizens to do so and the CTA should take back their property associated with their prior refugee status, and re-distribute it to Tibetans who are newly arrived from Tibet, as a gesture of hospitality.

This reading of the literature, coupled with performance approaches to ethnography, inclusive of imagination and creativity (Denzin 1997; Lincoln and Denzin 1994; Atkinson 2004) inspired the

writing of the 'Amma la' playscript, at the end of which Tenzin suggests that the cook who recently arrived from Tibet had no place to stay and the neighbour who is away and whose daughter lives in the US could allow him to stay in her house. I argue that this interpretation, enacted by the Tibetan participants in the 2019 'Amma la' performances in India, can be understood as a symbol of hope, compassion, and reconnection. These are the key themes that Vidali (2020) argues for in her ethnographic theatre making, as ways of knowing and learning together, new modes of collaboration, and dynamic forms of co-participation (Vidali, 2020, pg. 2).

Yeh (2007) writes about how the embodied performances of Tibetanness create a sense of alienation between Tibetans who live in Tibet, Tibetans in India and those in the US and this then 'becomes a lost opportunity to forge connections between exile and homeland' (Yeh, 2007, pg. 666). Taking Yeh's argument to a new direction, in this contextualised PhD research about Tibetans in India, I suggest that by receiving a cook, newly arrived from Tibet, as one's neighbour, or even further, living in one's own house, constitutes a powerful act of hope for Tibetans living in India, the kind of hope that can forge the basis of compassion and build connections between exile and homeland. Compassion or kindness as a central value in Tibetan Buddhism was performed by Tibetan participants in the Theatre workshops in Dharamshala in 2019 in a very powerful way, for instance during the preparatory exercises before the 'Amma la' performance, as presented in Act 3, Scene 2 of this PhD Thesis. During the game about non-verbal mimes, or performing emotions, I wrote several words on a paper for the students to enact, such as 'kind', 'aggressive', 'impatient', 'drunk', and when I went around to see the students' work, a young Tibetan monk told me he had to enact 'kindness' and he showed everyone in his group that he was hungry, by rubbing his stomach, then he picked up an apple, looked at it, but then decided to give it to the person next to him. I found that a fascinating way to enact a complex feeling such as kindness. This embodied form of compassion demonstrated in the Theatre workshops in India in 2019 endorses some of the key concepts that shaped the early methodological framework of this PhD Thesis as discussed in Act 3, Scene 1, where I explain how the epistemological framework of this PhD builds on the intersection of constructivist grounded theory for social justice and an engaged Tibetan Buddhist philosophy (King, 2009) which focuses on compassion as a practice for making oneself an enlightened person and for creating positive change in society (Harris, 2001).

Compassion, kindness, solidarity, and hope are the final emerging key concepts from the 2019 'Amma la' performances in India, and I discuss them in the final theme.

#### IV. Theme 4: Hope for Tibetans in India. The symbolism of the Tibetan suitcase.

##### migration – impermanence – empathy – solidarity – kindness – agency

The focal point of this section is a powerful argument about Hope. Hope here means a plethora of intersecting assertions about agency, transformation, impermanence, empathy, solidarity and kindness and the symbolism of a suitcase. By discussing the theme of hope, I also return to some of the previous arguments from the other themes, the concepts of waiting, time and identity and the analysis of the 2019 'Amma la' performances. The play 'Waiting for Godot' that 'Amma la' is an adaptation of, places the emphasis on the dimension of *time* and on 'how our sense of identity is governed by it' (Bradby, 2001, pg. 26). However, the concept of time can have various meanings and interpretations. In theme 2 I discussed the concept of time in relation to waiting, understood as a lingering space, in anticipation of things to happen, such as opportunities for employment for education, paperwork, or independence and return to one's homeland.

Time can also mean something else. The Buddhist philosophy understands life as a cycle of rebirth, built on a cyclic time concept, where time is relative (Dessein, 2016, pg. 17). And this understanding of time helps relating the fourth theme in this section with the findings of this PhD Thesis, particularly the Tibetan concept of impermanence, presented at the end of Act 4, where I discussed the findings from the first ethnographic fieldwork in India (2016). One of the early answers to my research questions about Tibetans in India in 2016 was illuminated by the Tibetan Buddhist philosophy of life, summarized in the concept of impermanence. Impermanence is the central theme of Buddhism philosophy, an old concept that has various translations in multiple languages, including Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, Thai and Japanese<sup>27</sup>. Buddhism teaches that nothing is permanent in this universe, and everything, without exception, is in a constant state of flux (Dhondup, 2008). Impermanence is an understanding of human and natural life that is in constant flux, forever changing. This interpretation, put simply, argues that nothing is permanent, and we should not cling to the present time, which is anyways relative, instead we should always be prepared for change and adaptation.

At the end of my 2016 ethnographic fieldwork I concluded that, if interpreted through the optic of impermanence, social and political life is impermanent, policies are impermanent, because Governments are changing, such as the case of the Indian elections in 2014 when prior to elections, the Congress Party made promises of Indian citizenship to Tibetans who could vote for the first time. However, when the new BJP Government came into power in 2014, they did not make any changes

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<sup>27</sup> Impermanence (English translation) from languages: Pali: *anicca*; Sanskrit: *anitya*; Tibetan: *mi rtag pa*; Chinese: *wuchang*; Japanese: *mujo*; Thai: *anitchang*, according to Dhondup (2008)

that would have entitled Tibetans to obtain Indian citizenship. This might mean that there is no hope, I argued. But this should not be understood as an emotional response to an impermanent reality, rather as an acceptance of it, a fact. The findings that emerged from interviews with Tibetan participants in 2016 showed that there was also no hope for China under the present communist regime. Therefore, there was no hope for a free Tibet.

However, by using theatre approaches in my PhD research in 2019, these challenged the idea of a single narrative to knowledge and the early findings and interpretation about hope in my PhD Thesis. Therefore, I argue that a new possibility for hope, change and transformation emerged following the 2019 'Amma la' performances in India, as enacted by three different groups: Group 3 at TIPA, Group 3 at LTWA and Group 7 at LTWA, that I discuss below. These interpretations of the 'Amma la' performances relate to broader idea about knowledge, arts and the purpose of performance and theatre and how this could help us 'build our future, instead of just waiting for it' since 'theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society' (Boal, 2002, pg. 16). And they represent a form of political theatre (Lustgarten, 2015), with an emphasis on agency and hope: 'theatre is as a means for reviving hope' (De Michelis, 2017, pg. 11).

For instance, the end of the performance of Group 3 at TIPA contains a powerful element of change, initiated and enacted by the Tibetan participants: Tenzin decides to go and give the suitcase to Namgyal, instead of waiting for Namgyal to come and collect it. This new enactment is opposite to the 'Amma la' playscript where the wait for Namgyal to come and collect the suitcase remains endless. The change in the narrative and the way the student-performers enacted and transformed the play 'Amma la' in Group 3 at TIPA can be interpreted as a symbol of hope, ending the waiting process by being pro-active. And this could symbolize an end of the long wait for the independence of Tibet which would allow Tibetans in exile to return home. This suggests that instead of waiting for Tibetan's independence or autonomy, there is something else that could be done, something different, unifying the different political movements of Tibetans in exile, but this is yet to be translated into action.

Currently, the political leadership of the TGovE continues to follow what is called the Middle Way Approach, initiated by the XIV Dalai Lama, demanding autonomy for Tibet and Tibetan people inside Tibet, not full independence. However, there is another movement for the past 30-40 years, by exiled Tibetans in India that supports full independence of Tibet, with key figures such as Tenzin Tsunde, the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), and other Tibetan activists who protest for Tibetan independence and are sometimes jailed by the Indian Police (Sengupta, 2008). But other Tibetans like Lhakpa came to an understanding that both movements can be supported equally, in a new approach, while Tibetans

must not abandon the idea of independence, this can be achieved gradually, by first winning autonomy, then pushing for freedom (timrobbo, 2019).

Another embodied symbol of hope emerged from the end of the performance of Group 3 at LTWA. In this group's dramatic transformation of the 'Amma la' playscript, Namgyal is a drug addict and alcoholic, but the end of the play projected 'after a few years' brings Namgyal back from his addiction and offers a path to salvation: his friend Tenzin brings him to a monastery to become a Tibetan monk. This suggests that hope, salvation, transformation, and rehabilitation in the Tibetan community can stem from a return to Buddhism. I argue that the enactment and interpretation of the 'Amma la' performance by Group 3 at LTWA helps answering one of the research questions of this PhD Thesis, that aimed to explore individualised narratives of Tibetans' lives in exile in India, as explained in Act 3, Scene 1 of this PhD Thesis. Likewise, in Act 4 I discussed the remaining questions of the PhD research after the first ethnographic fieldwork in India, in 2016. And one of the questions was: *How to search for local, individualised stories of exile and listen to them as they are and write about them for all kinds of audiences, in a language that transgresses culture, nation, borders and belongings?*

While watching the performance of Group 3 at LTWA I realised how this reinterpreted version of the play 'Amma la', offered by two Tibetan young men, a monk and a nun, had enriched and transformed the 'Amma la' play and this PhD research in unforeseen and creative ways. Prior to the Theatre Workshop in India, July 2019, I was slightly worried that I did not include any references to monks and nuns when writing the 'Amma la' playscript, therefore I might have missed a very important element in the Tibetan community, albeit I did mention Amma la's prayers to the Dalai Lama. However, when Group 3 at LTWA enacted their performance they weaved into the picture and into the story aspects of life in the Tibetan community that might have been missed: the issue of drug addiction of young Tibetans in exile, which was not part of the playscript of 'Amma la', and the way they rehabilitated the young addict sending him to the monastery, to salvation, via prayer and Buddhism. These constitute individualised narratives of Tibetans living in exile in India that came to life through theatre approaches employed in the final ethnographic fieldwork, in 2019.

The final performance that offered a symbol of hope was enacted by Group 7 at the LTWA, where the Tibetan participants changed the narrative and decided that the long wait for Namgyal must end. In Group 7 at LTWA Namgyal defies the role prescribed to him in several ways: in the original 'Amma la' playscript Namgyal is a male character, a lay Tibetan young man and the neighbour's son, who never comes to pick his suitcase. But in the performance enacted by the Group 7 at LTWA,



Namgyal 'becomes' a female character, is enacted by a Tibetan nun, and she shows up at the house of Amma la to pick up her suitcase, with a smile on her face, then leaves in a hurry, calling a taxi.

The long wait for Namgyal in the original playscript of 'Amma la' may also be interpreted as a timeless wait for going back to Tibet and for the independence and freedom of Tibet. This 'waiting' is left open in the playscript and there is no resolution to it offered by the playwright (myself) simply because the 'Amma la' playscript is the interpretation of the PhD research findings (2015-2018) that highlighted the current situation of Tibetans in exile in India and no specific resolution.

Nonetheless, the final performance of Group 7 at LTWA offers something else than waiting: it offers Hope. With Namgyal ending the wait and finally arriving it could also be argued that the wait for 'Tibetan problem', concept explained in Act 1, Scene 1, could end soon and there would be an answer showing up and bringing the long-awaited positive change, that will end the exile for Tibetans in India and elsewhere. Hope is therefore a reorientation into a future for Tibetans, a future that offers them the possibility of realisation of something that at present can only be imagined. The shape and form of this future is at the moment unknown, but hope can for instance be translated into mobilisation for international support, as Choedon writes: 'Tibetans should learn to focus on mobilizing the support of and relying on international civil society as this is an era of civil society activism the world over' (Choedon, 2013, no page number).

Waiting and hope are interlinked, especially for populations that have lived in protracted displacement for a long time, such as the Tibetans in India or Georgians in Abkhazia (Brun, 2015). The dynamics of hope are created in the meeting point between everyday lives and geopolitical realities for such populations (Brun, 2015, pg. 19-20). 'Hong Kong's resistance has raised great hope for Tibet', said the Secretary of the Dalai Lama Bureau in New Delhi recently (Sharma, 2020). This new geopolitical development shows how the dynamics of hope can change depending on geopolitical strategies, like the case of the recent protests in Hong Kong against Chinese rule (2020), which seem to be a new source of hope for Tibetans in India and an opportunity for Tibet to be visible again in the international community which is supportive of Hong Kong resistance.

This argument reiterates the discussion presented in Act 1. Scene 1 of this PhD Thesis, particularly the geopolitics of the 'Tibetan problem' and the findings discussed in Act 4, at the end of the first ethnographic fieldwork in India in 2016. This early finding of the PhD Thesis highlighted how the geopolitical considerations and the relations between India, China and Nepal influence the freedoms that Tibetans may enjoy in India and Nepal. I add to this finding the entanglement of hope with geopolitics, and more recently the protests against China rule in Hong Kong in 2020.

‘Waiting in hope’ is a form of resilience for refugees and displaced populations worldwide that gives meaning to their existence, but active hope is central to all experiences of human living (Msabah, 2018, pg. 7). Hope is ‘a basic quality of what it means to be human’ (Bendixsen and Eriksen, 2018, pg. 97). And hope is closely connected with the notion of active waiting or ‘agency-in-waiting’ and represents visions for the world that create possibilities for change (Brun, 2015, pg. 24).

Hope is directly associated with change when conceptualised as an ethical and political principle linked with mass politics, this is what Appadurai calls ‘politics of hope’ (Appadurai, 2007). ‘The politics of hope emerge in the space between ideologies of social transformation.’ (Appadurai, 2007, pg. 30). Thus, the politics of hope is understood, in a nutshell, as ‘the closing of the gap between the poor and the wealthy in all societies’ (Appadurai, 2007, pg. 31). Politics of hope have been translated into civil society movements that involve alliances between networks, organizations, practices of democracy and a sense of the accountability of rulers to the ruled (Appadurai, 2007). I argue that these forms of mobilisation of hope started to take place in India, as presented in Act 2. Scene 2 of this PhD Thesis, where I discuss spaces for hope in times of crisis. And the examples included policy initiatives and social movements that started in early 2000s, such as the 2005 Right to Information Act (RTI) (Banerjee, 2013) that promoted transparency and accountability.

Another strategy of hope in India was the movement of the social activist Anna Hazare in New Delhi in 2010, to introduce a Citizen’s Ombudsman Bill, which became a national campaign and put pressure on the IGov to establish an anti-corruption body. And the third strategy of hope that I discussed in Act 2 Scene 2 was the Aam Admi Party (AAP) that won the elections in New Delhi in 2016 and in 2020, and whose work enhanced the quality of life, health, and education for many urban poor. The potential for change in India is arguably one that goes beyond political parties and starts at the structure of the society, bringing together those at the margins in political acts of subjectivity, resistance and hope, such as the school children who enacted the citizenship play in India, in 2020, discussed in Act 2 Scene 2. This corresponds to a new democracy as a form of ethics and of politics that will measure its success by adding to its methods the strategies of hope (Appadurai, 2007).

### **Hope for Tibetans in India. The symbolism of the Tibetan suitcase**

Hope for Tibetans living in India might take several forms. One of them, as argued earlier, could be translated into a unified movement for a Free Tibet, between the supporters of the Middle Way Approach for autonomy in Tibet and the supporters of total independence for Tibet. This has been

advocated by the Tibetan theatre maker in Dharamshala, Lhakpa la (timrobbo, 2019). Another strategy of hope could be attained by continuous political mobilisation of Tibetans living in exile in India, in other countries and inside Tibet, that would further impact on the international civil society, gathering support from global actors and inspiration from other protests against Chinese rule, such as the ones in Hong Kong, in 2020 (Choedon, 2013; Sharma, 2020).

And another strategy of hope, I argue, is symbolised by the suitcase that Namgyal borrows in the 'Amma la' performances enacted in India in 2019. The hope that Namgyal brings when s/he finally arrives and takes the suitcase, as enacted in the performance of Group 7 at LTWA, could be interpreted as an end of the waiting process which Tibetans have lived in since they left their homeland, in 1959, and a new possibility for their return to Tibet, where they finally take their 'suitcase'. In this 'suitcase' I argue, they would have collected ideas, belongings, memories, and imaginations from a life in exile and these could then be useful for re-building a new life in an old-but-new home. I state that an important item in this imagined 'suitcase' could be, for instance, the model of participatory democracy that the XIV Dalai Lama institutionalised for Tibetans living in exile since 1991 (McConnell, 2016). The changes to the Tibetan administration in exile started to be implemented since shortly after the arrival of the XIV Dalai Lama and 80,000 Tibetans in India, in 1959 (McConnell, 2009). These changes culminated with the XIV Dalai Lama stepping down as the political leader of Tibetans in exile and making place for the democratic election of a new Prime Minister in 2011.

I argue that this interpretation of hope intertwined with the symbol of the suitcase and the use of imagination is an analytical tool used in other academic work such as 'Refugia' (Cohen and Van Hear, 2017) that combines social science analysis and innovative social theory with imagination and fiction to propose a solution to mass displacement. *Refugia* is the name of a visionary, transnational polity organised by and for refugees and displaced people (Cohen, 2020). *Refugia* is 'the promise of many small initiatives and imaginative new solutions clustered together in a common archipelagic polity' (Cohen and Van Hear, 2017, pg. 502).

Finally, I argue for another interpretation of hope through the optic of the suitcase, interpretation inspired from a recent Tibetan publication: an epistolary novel written by Tsering Namgyal Khortsa and titled *The Tibetan Suitcase* (2019). The novel, written in the form of a series of letters, is made of a bricolage of letters, application letters, journal entries and newspaper articles, and is the first book-length work of fiction published in English by a Tibetan born in India (Tibetan Review, 2020). On a cautionary note, it is important to mention that having the book published in English allows for a wider audience but there are disadvantages as well that come from difficulties of explaining and

translating concepts such as ‘emptiness’ (Rini, 2020). The key themes of *The Tibetan Suitcase* are exile, diaspora, language, identity, and migration (Tibetan Review, 2020). When interviewed, the author explained his work: ‘I believe that we need more stories about present-day Tibetan lives. We can keep calling ourselves “Tibetans” as long as we have Tibetan stories being published’ (Tibetan Review, 2020). Thus, I highlight that hope for Tibetans in India can be materialised in having stories of Tibetans about Tibetans that are made available to various audiences, such as the novel *The Tibetan Suitcase* (2019), published in printed and online version. This argument reiterates the early findings of this PhD Thesis, as discussed in Act 4, following the first ethnographic fieldwork in India, in 2016. These findings were interpreted and presented in the form of a letter titled ‘Letter to India’ which stated that each Tibetan has special stories to tell, individual stories and narratives which can be told in many ways, in drawings, paintings, films, writings, poems, novels, blogs, online articles and songs; Tibetans are a people with a memory and a story.

The findings of the ‘Letter to India’ from this PhD Thesis, presented in Act 4, connect with the act of hope and of writing stories that ‘make a people’, as Tsering wrote in his novel, *The Tibetan Suitcase* (2019), following the example of the 2018 Nobel Literature Laureate Olga Tokarczuk who said that societies without stories cease to exist and, by that logic, societies that have been deterritorialized, like Tibetans, are particularly susceptible to meeting this fate (Tibetan Review, 2020).

Therefore, this PhD Thesis contributes to the contemporary stories with, about, and by Tibetans, collaborative and participative stories enacted as performances, in which Tibetans became political subjects and co-authors of the stories. And their enactments contest the institutionalised and politicised identities marked by papers, identity documents, and categorisations based on divisive terms like nation, citizenship, and ethnicity.

The main character of the epistolary novel *The Tibetan Suitcase* is Dawa, a Tibetan born in India, and a character ‘at the borders of everything, the geographic and physical embodiment of the *bardo*, the uniting Buddhist theme that ties the book together. Dawa belongs nowhere yet can go everywhere’ (Lam, 2020, no page number). In his novel *The Tibetan Suitcase*, the author explores geographic, political, and cultural borderlands, but also psychological and metaphorical *bardo* states of mind (Lam, 2020). *Bardo* is a Tibetan term with connotations of afterlife and of an in-between existence between death and rebirth. And it has been interpreted as a liminal space that allows for enlightenment and knowledge (Rini, 2020). In Tibetan Buddhism, the concept of *bardos*, meaning “between two”, a transitional process, between life and death, illustrates the presence of impermanence in every moment of our existence (Locke, 2020). *Bardos* bears similarities of meaning with the concept of *nepantla*, coined by Gloria Anzaldúa and described as a psychological and

political space of “being in-between” that is associated with people who inhabit zones of marginality produced by oppression (Locke, 2020, pg. 115). *Nepantla* is a space and state of liminality, transition, and transformation, and no fixed categories (Locke, 2020).

In this Final Act of the PhD Thesis I bring these concepts together: the symbolism of Namgyal’s suitcase from the ‘Amma la’ performance with the themes and meanings of the epistolary novel *The Tibetan Suitcase* (2019), to demonstrate how this PhD Thesis comes together as a powerful, embodied and situated research at the intersection of hope, impermanence, *bardos*, *nepantla*, border crossings, shifting identities and disruptions. This final argument builds on the epistemological situatedness of this PhD research as discussed in Act 3 Scene 1 of this PhD Thesis. My search for a methodology that allowed the personal life story to co-exist with the stories from the field found a point of departure in Anzaldúa’s work (1999) *Borderlands* and the concept of *autohistoria-teoria*. The term is infused with the search for personal and cultural meaning informed by reflective self-awareness and the writers who use the concept of *autohistoria-teoria* blend their cultural and personal biographies with memoirs, history, storytelling, myth and other forms of theorizing (Keating, 2009, pg. 9). Using the concept *autohistoria-teoria* and employing auto-ethnography and self-reflection throughout this PhD research I made sense of my experiences, thoughts, feelings, and questions in the field and in relationship to the research while analysing the larger context where the experiences took place (Madison, 2012). And I employed a sense of imagination and creativity in the interpretation of the PhD research data, as discussed and exemplified in Acts 4, 5 and 6 of this PhD Thesis. I interpreted the data that emerged from the first ethnographic fieldwork in India in 2016 in the form of a letter titled ‘Letter to India’. And I made sense of the data from the second ethnographic fieldwork in 2017 in the form of the theatre play titled ‘Amma la’. I then shared the findings of the PhD research written as the ‘Amma la’ play in the form of Theatre Workshops in 2019 where Tibetan participants enacted and transformed the play with creativity, skill, and imagination.

Similarly to the novel *The Tibetan Suitcase* (2019), built on a bricolage of sources of data, mixed with auto-biographical form and imagination, I argue that this PhD Thesis is constructed at several borderlands, on disruptive narratives and methodologies, in-between *auto-historia teoria*, *nepantla* and *bardos*, in a mix of theoretical, methodological and analytical bricolage, and forges a powerful argument about migration research as a rich space of exploration, and of hope, through embodied and collaborative performances. And this is what makes this PhD Thesis a unique and timely contribution to knowledge.

## Summary of Act 7

Act 7 constituted the final discussion or Final Act of this PhD Thesis. In this Final Act I demonstrated how the interpretation of the 2019 'Amma la' performances reiterated and transformed the findings of this PhD Thesis. I showed how Tibetans in India share similar experiences of waiting and unemployment with other groups, such as Indian youth, in a theme that I call 'India as the waiting room'. And these experiences also connect with broader populations who wait for promises of governance, development or asylum and refuge in many parts of the world. Tibetans share experiences of 'authenticating identity' via instrumental paperwork, such as using Indian voter ID, Aadhaar card or Indian passport, with groups such as internal migrants in India and more recently, citizens of India who have to prove their ancestry and their belonging after the CAA and NRC (2019).

The final discussion in Act 7 answered the research questions of this PhD Thesis by demonstrating how the Tibetan participants enacted localised and individualised narratives of exile that enrich the understandings of Tibetan's lives in India and how the current positionalities of Tibetans in India sit at the intersection of fluid dynamics of geopolitics, impermanence, waiting and hope.

And finally, Act 7 connected the shared findings in the 2019 'Amma la' performances with the findings of this PhD Thesis about the liminality, fluidity, and the in-between status of Tibetans in India with the broader methodological, analytical and theoretical framework of this PhD Thesis that is built on fluid, non-fixed categories and disruptions of what constitutes traditional knowledge production by using auto-ethnography, bricolage and theatre approaches.

## **Interval**

This final Interval invites the reader to have a short break and prepare for the Epilogue of the PhD Thesis.

## Epilogue

This PhD Thesis was an exploration of the Politics of waiting and hope and the embodied experiences of Tibetans living in India between exile and citizenship. The aim of the PhD Thesis was to foster an understanding of the meanings and experiences associated with being a Tibetan in India in the period of the PhD research: 2015-2020.

The main research question that I sought to answer during the PhD research was how Tibetans make sense of their current political status, identities and positions while living in India. And directly linked with this question, I examined the current meanings, practices, and possibilities of Indian citizenship for Tibetans. Finally, I sought to identify and understand localised and individualised narratives of Tibetans living in exile in India.

My exploration of the Tibetans' embodied experiences in India as guests and citizens was framed in a non-Eurocentric perspective of 'connected sociologies' that challenges the narratives and traditions that place European knowledge production at the centre. This PhD Thesis was situated transdisciplinary at the intersection of refugee studies, migration and cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, politics, theatre, performance, literature, history, and Buddhism philosophy.

I structured this PhD Thesis in Acts, Scenes and Intervals, terms borrowed from the fields of theatre and performance. I explored the answers to the research questions by employing disruptive methodologies. Disruption and creativity contribute to dismantling the 'western', hegemonic social narratives and ideologies and advocate for alternatives to the way knowledge is produced and represented. Being disruptive in this PhD research signified that I embraced fluid identities, self-reflexivity and I was transparent about how the research emerged from my personal biography, and how this shaped the research questions and methodological perspectives.

I enacted disruptions in writing this PhD Thesis across and in-between genres, at borderlands, and beyond fixed categories. Each chapter of this PhD Thesis is written in a fluid and disruptive way that combined theoretical arguments with methodological positionings and modes of analysis.

I employed disruptive methodologies by interrogating the production and organisation of knowledge, and I sought to find alternative ways of collecting, analysing and interpreting the data, that valued different ways of being in the world and knowing about it, and provided inclusion of perspectives in disseminating the research by engaging co-researchers/co-creators in dialogue.

Writing disruptively signified blurring and contesting the boundaries between sciences and arts and re-joining them with the use of collaborative theatre approaches and self-reflexivity. Applying



theatre approaches for embodied, collaborative research and self-reflexivity disrupted conventional understandings of individual subjectivity, authorship, and ownership.

I situated the PhD research in a methodological bricolage, a mixed set of approaches that included cultural studies, post-colonialism, migration, refugee and diaspora studies, social justice, hybridity, border thinking and self-reflexivity. I collected and co-constructed data during three ethnographic fieldworks in four locations in India: New Delhi, Dharamshala, Shimla and Mundgod, for a period of six months in 2016-2019. The methods employed in this PhD research included multi-sited, interpretive, performative and critical ethnography, participant observation, semi-structured, individual, group, walking, ambulant and informal interviews, walking tours, live methods, auto-ethnography and secondary and online data sources. I analysed the research data employing the principles and techniques of grounded theory and I interpreted the research data using the tools of interpretive and experimental ethnography and writing a 'Letter to India' (2016). I collected the research data in 2017 employing live methods and I used the software MAXQDA to synthesize and analyse the data. I interpreted the research data (2017) in the form of a theatre play titled 'Amma la'. I employed 'mixed theatre approaches' in the third fieldwork in India in 2019 to share the findings with the participants in the form of the theatre play 'Amma la' and to analyse and interpret the performances of the play 'Amma la' by the Tibetan participants. By enacting and performing embodied experiences about their lives in exile in India in the 2019 'Amma la' performances, the Tibetan participants collaboratively produced new and disruptive knowledges about migration, identities, and citizenship in multimodal and visceral ways. This corresponds to a radical knowledge coproduction that disrupts authorship, self, linearity, and established knowledges.

**The Significance of the PhD research** and its contribution to new knowledges can be situated on several levels, between analytical, methodological, and geopolitical, levels which are blurred. I employed several concepts as explanatory tools that helped situate and understand the experiences of Tibetans in India.

First, I employed the concept of 'impermanence', borrowed from Tibetan Buddhism and philosophy, as a framework for interpreting the transient nature of time, of social and political life and the lack of hope for China and for Tibet under the present communist regime. Secondly, I coined the concept 'questionable citizenship' to illustrate how the implementation of the CAA and NRC 2019 demand proof of documentary citizenship and legacy for all living in India. Thirdly, I showed how Tibetans in India share similar experiences of waiting and unemployment with other groups, such as Indian youth, in a concept / theme that I named 'India as the waiting room'. And these experiences also connect with broader populations who wait for promises of governance, development or asylum and

refuge in many parts of the world. Fourthly, I demonstrate how methods like theatre, arts, and performance, which I titled 'mixed theatre approaches' produce rich, innovative, embodied, and collaborative research with migrants, refugees, and exiles, with citizenship quests.

I embraced and employed disruptive and creative methodologies that contest and transform the distinction between categories of data, methods and literature and blur the boundaries between social sciences and the arts. In this respect, I borrowed methods, strategies, and techniques transdisciplinary and used them creatively, applying theatre approaches and embodied, collaborative research and self-reflexivity.

The PhD Thesis demonstrated that migration research using 'mixed theatre approaches' is a rich space of exploration and hope, through embodied and collaborative performances that produce new, situated knowledges about migration, identities, and citizenship in multimodal ways.

The PhD Thesis showed how the possibility of hope and political subjectivity emerges from theatre and performance, which disrupt processes of power and hierarchies based on age, gender, social class, and ethnicity and enables the participants to not only discuss but to perform political actions.

This PhD research demonstrated how the strategies of hope for Tibetans in India can be translated into projects of cross-borders political mobilization in a time when people worldwide protest and resist oppressive policies and regimes, such as the recent movements in Hong Kong and the anti-CAA protests in India.

Further contributions of this PhD Thesis to the sphere of knowledge production and answers to the key questions of the PhD research are summarised below.

This piece of academic work forged non-binary, non-Eurocentric understandings of Tibetans living in exile in India, between guests, migrants, and temporary residents with quests for Indian citizenship. This reinforced the argument that the traditional, West-based binary opposition between citizens/non-citizens is fluid in countries such as India, with porous borders, re-drafted geographical and political boundaries, prevalent informality of documentation and less enforced regimes of governance.

The PhD Thesis demonstrated how contemporary forms of political identities of those populations situated at the margins, such as Tibetans in India, are fluid, constructed, in process, contested, and constantly re-defined through history, language, politics, geopolitics.

The Thesis showed how India has been practising a fluctuating political behaviour or 'politics of impermanence' towards Tibetans, and other groups of displaced populations in India. This form of

politics is situated between generosity, religious affinity, humanitarian concerns and geopolitical considerations, with implications for the relationship with the neighbouring China, in the case of Tibetans, and depending on current political regime in power and on questions of border security.

The Thesis demonstrated how Tibetans authenticate their presence in India with a plethora of identity cards that validate their Tibetan and Indian forms of belonging and residence. Tibetans use some of the identity cards instrumentally, for access to a range of social and political benefits, such as the Indian Aadhaar card, voting card and Indian passport, that entitles them to a range of benefits in daily social life.

The key findings of this PhD research showed how the Identity Paperwork for Tibetans is an act of citizenship and a common experience with other populations in India, such as internal migrants, who often do not have a proof of permanent address and are on the move in between Indian states, and other people who hold documents and those who do not, and how these experiences can be traced to the concept of 'paper citizenship'.

The Thesis discussed the transformations in the concept and practice of citizenship in India since the adoption of the CAA 2019 which favoured certain migrants and ethnic groups over others, and the NRC 2019 which is a grand project of requesting all citizens to prove their ancestry and legacy thus their belonging and identity in India. I demonstrated how these recent political developments make space for new analytical understandings of citizenship in India as 'questionable', 'documentary' and 'doubtful'. And these bear similarities with other examples such as the Windrush generation in the UK who were asked to prove their citizenship and have been treated as 'racialised citizens'.

I evidenced how Tibetans in India share similar experiences of waiting and unemployment with other groups, such as Indian youth. And these experiences also connect with broader populations who wait for promises of governance, of development or of asylum and refuge in other parts of the world.

The key findings highlighted the tensions within and the contested nature of the concept of 'pure' or authentic Tibetan and how a homogenous Tibetan-in-exile identity / Tibetanness is an imaginary and contested construct, about using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming, rather than being a Tibetan.

I evidenced that by receiving a cook, newly arrived from Tibet, as one's neighbour, or even further, living in one's own house, constitutes a powerful act of hope for Tibetans living in India, a kind of hope that can forge the basis of compassion and build connections between exile and homeland.

The Thesis demonstrated that, by using theatre approaches and collaborative enactments of performances, new possibilities for hope, change and transformation emerged, where Hope means a plethora of intersecting assertions about agency, impermanence, geopolitics, empathy, solidarity and kindness and the symbolism of a suitcase.

The PhD Thesis showed that Hope is a reorientation into a future for Tibetans, a future that offers them the possibility of realisation of something that at present can only be imagined. Hope can for instance be translated into mobilisation for international support, in an era of civil society activism. The dynamics of hope can change depending on geopolitical strategies, such as the case of the recent protests in Hong Kong against Chinese rule that seem to bring hope for Tibetans, or China's influence in Nepal, at the border with India, and in the economies and political actions of many countries in the world that make Tibetans less hopeful.

This PhD Thesis contributes to the contemporary stories with, about, and by Tibetans, collaborative and participative stories enacted as performances, in which Tibetans became political subjects and co-authors of the stories. And their enactments contest the institutionalised and politicised identities marked by papers, identity documents, and categorisations based on divisive terms like nation, citizenship, and ethnicity.

Finally, this PhD Thesis about Tibetans living in exile and their quest for Indian citizenship in present times (2015-2020) connects with experiences of other populations, migrants and refugees across the globe, and to personal and human experiences about identity, location, movement, exile, embodiment, waiting and hope in contemporary times. This PhD Thesis makes a unique contribution to stories about hope and the power of writing against narratives of exclusion, silencing, and othering.

### **Implications and directions for future research.**

I highlight the importance of timing in conducting this PhD research and the ethnographic fieldworks in India, in 2016, 2017 and 2019 before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. This research was therefore possible at that particular time, that enabled the use of particular methods, the necessity of traveling and living in another country for extended periods of time, which might not be possible to employ in a research conducted post 2020. One implication is that this PhD research might be one of the last works of ethnographic and performance-based research in social sciences. Post-Covid-19 (2020) the use of face to face, ethnographic and performance methods has been replaced by alternative research methods such as digital ethnographies.

I suggest several future directions for research that this PhD Thesis could lead to. For instance, I recommend a longitudinal and transdisciplinary research project about the long term implications of acquiring Indian citizenship for the Tibetan youth living in India and how this might impact on their decisions about future study, employment or moving abroad, and political activism for the freedom of Tibet, and the impact on the future of the Tibetan settlements in India. Another direction for research could be exploring the hopes, politics, and geopolitical implications of social activism and political mobilization in the world and how this could impact on the movement for returning to Tibet for Tibetans living in Tibet, in India and other parts of the world. Another direction for future research could be an investigation into the implications of Covid-19 disruptions in the migration regime in India and in particular the case of internal migrants who moved back from the cities at the start of the pandemic and the lockdown, and the transformations in the social and economic life of the cities and villages in India. And another direction for future research could be exploring the implications of the new citizenship regime in India, post CAA and NRC 2019 and the impacts on the sense of identity and belonging of Indian citizens.

## **The Future of Hope**

**Encore:** Alternative end of the theatre play 'Amma la':

*It is the year 2030. Amma la takes her suitcase and Tenzin helps her move it out of the house, to the gate of the garden. They packed all their belongings and are ready to go. The dogs have a special traveling box. The birds too. Tenzin packed seeds of mango, papaya, and coconuts.*

**Amma la:** Tenzin, come fast, the convoy of cars is here, waiting for us! All the neighbours are here with their suitcases!

**Tenzin:** I am coming, Amma la, just one minute please ...

*Tenzin locks the door of the house and takes an envelope and a pen. She has a letter in her hand and places her signature at the bottom of the last page of the letter. She then places the letter in the envelope and after few seconds she drops the key of the house in the envelope and the envelope in the mailbox.*

*The letter is titled 'Thank you, India'.*

*Tenzin and Amma la join the convoy of cars, people, and suitcases that leaves the Tibetan settlements and the drivers set up the destination on their car navigation: Tibet.*

*The end of the play.*

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## List of Appendices

### Appendix 1: Map of India, locations of PhD Fieldwork 2016-2019

Dharamshala (blue-circled) and Shimla (red-circled)



New Delhi and Mundgod (Karnataka) (amber-circled)



Source: [google.co.in/maps](https://www.google.co.in/maps) (cropped to the current size)

## **Appendix 2: Summary: Data collection 2016-2017, people involved and relevance for PhD**

### **Part I: New Delhi**

<b>Date / year</b>	<b>Location / city</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Data collection / interview type</b>	<b>People involved</b>	<b>The relevance for my PhD</b>
July 2016 – July 2017	New Delhi	Buddhist Institute - Tibetan colony Bir, Himachal Pradesh	Informal meetings	Mrs R., friend of my parents in law, in India	Gatekeeper: introduced me to many Tibetans she knew personally in New Delhi, Dharamshala and in Karnataka, including a female Tibetan MP. + She introduced me to the Director of the Tibet Cultural Center in New Delhi
July 2016 – Sept. 2017	New Delhi	Tibet Cultural House	Interviews, informal discussions, books consulted + Buddhist Conference, participant observation	the Director, the Museum staff, the Librarian, the conference participants	First interviews conducted here + recommendation to meet the Secretary of the Bureau of Dalai Lama + I consulted books about Tibetans in India + became a member of the Institute + attended the Buddhist conference in 2017 and learnt more about Buddhism while chatting with the participants
Sept. 2016 – Sept. 2017	New Delhi	The Bureau of the Dalai Lama	Interviews + help with PAP application	Secretary	Interviews + advice on applying for a special permit (PAP) to visit the Tibetan settlements in the South of India + recommendation email to the Tibetan Settlement Officer in Mundgod, Karnataka.
Sept. 2016 – Sept. 2017	New Delhi	Majnu ka tilla Tibetan colony: TWA, Monastery, Medical Centre, School, Handicraft shops.	Interviews, walking tour, ambulant and group interviews, participant observation	Presidents of TWA, Nurse, EN teacher, School director, children, shop assistant	Majnu ka tilla was founded in 1962, with an estimated population of 2,500 Tibetans. I learnt that it was a transit place for Tibetans moving internally in India and for those moving abroad. I listened to the sounds of the Yamuna river flowing behind the camp, the noise of the hotel construction work and the chats in the background of the walking tours and interviews.
Sept. 2016- Sept. 2017	New Delhi	JNU – Centre for the Study of Law and Governance (CSLG)	Research Affiliation + PhD seminar about my preliminary research findings	Professor Niraja Gopal Jayal, Professor Amit Prakash + admission staff + Library staff + PhD students	The Research Affiliation with CSLG-JNU allowed me to receive academic guidance from JNU Professors, advice and support with my PhD fieldwork + regular meetings + organised a PhD research seminar in 2017 with 10+ PhD students who offered feedback to my PhD presentation.

## Part II: Shimla

Date / year	Location / city	Institution	Data collection / interview type	People involved	The relevance for my PhD
August 2017	Shimla	Yangchen Gatselling Tibetan colony	Interview + walking tour to the old and new Monastery + lunch.	Settlement Officer, former adviser to the Tibetan PM	I learnt that there were seven Tibetans in Shimla who obtained an Indian passport, in a colony of 1,693 people. The chat during lunch + the walk to the Monastery taught me what constituted data, beyond formal interviews, such as the talks while walking when the participants discussed topics of their interest + I realised that relations between the fieldworker and the participants form an integral part of the ethnographic project and the “data” should not be limited to conventional informational documents such as surveys and observations.
August 2017	Shimla	Tibetan market	Informal interview, chats, walking tour	Shop assistants	I met a young Tibetan who spoke about his parents who had mixed origins: Indian and Tibetan, which was one of the few cases of this kind I encountered. I had chats with ladies selling clothes and I bought some items myself.
August 2017	Shimla	Indian Institute for Advanced Studies (IIAS)	Consulted books, had chats	IIAS Staff, Librarians	I requested access to the IIAS and the Library via a formal letter (Appendix 20) and the resources available here helped me expand the literature review and the conceptual framework of my PhD thesis. + The chats with the staff taught me about the importance of networking, politeness, and cultural codes, e.g. I spoke Hindi to the staff + used my JNU Affiliation + my Indian contacts / family.
August 2017	Shimla	N/A	Emails - gatekeeper	Indian researcher living in Brazil, whose parents live in Shimla	I met S. online, via JNU contacts, she completed her PhD about Tibetan Literature and acted as a virtual gatekeeper for my PhD research, introducing me to her Tibetan contacts and to her parents in Shimla, who gave me one of her poetry books, which made me very happy.

## Part III: McLeod Ganj

Date / year	Location / city	Institution	Data collection / interview type	People involved	The relevance for my PhD
Feb. 2016	McLeod Ganj	CTA Dep. of Information, Tibetan Monastery	Informal chats, collected brochures and books,	Bookshop assistants, CTA staff, Tibetan monks	This was a pre-fieldwork visit, to have a first look at the place where I was planning to spend a longer time in the summer. I bought several books about Tibetans in India and had chats with hotel staff, bookshop staff, Tibetan

			participant observation		monks and had a tour of the Dalai Lama's Temple.
July 2016	McLeod Ganj	Tibet World NGO	Interviews, informal chats, English lessons	Director, English teacher, Staff, students	I became a volunteer at the Tibetan NGO and taught English every day for one month. I had interviews with the staff and chats with Tibetan students. + I spoke openly about my PhD research + I built relationships and kept in contact via social media. + I had lunch with a nun, who introduced me to her friend + I attended public talks by Tibetan political activists, e.g. the 80-year-old Ama Adhe la.
July 2016	McLeod Ganj	Bogdo Café	Interviews	Hotel Owner, Tibetan co-director of Gu-chu-sum Association of former political prisoners of Tibet.	I met and interviewed the first Tibetan who obtained Indian citizenship in 2010 and she spoke about the process of applying for citizenship in detail and about the debates surrounding the topic.+ I had an interview with the owner of the hotel Bogdo Cafe, who was of my age, and she spoke about her life in India as a third-generation Tibetan refugee and as a businesswoman.
August 2017	McLeod Ganj	Dalai Lama's Temple	Participant observation, chats	Teaching participants, Indian police	I took part in the four-day teaching of the Dalai Lama, and sat in the Tibetan Monastery together with 6,000 attendants every day, had chats with some of them + with the Indian police who was friendly and ensured safety and security at the event. + I learnt about Buddhism.
August 2017	McLeod Ganj	Refugee Centre	Interview	Director	The access was a lengthy process + I learnt more about the importance of paperwork + the interview with the Director and his questions placed me in the position of answering questions about my PhD research about Tibetans in India
August 2017	McLeod Ganj	TWA, SFT, Tibetan Music Awards	Interviews, chats, participant observation	TWA Director and staff, SFT, Tibetan Settlement Officer	I had interviews and learnt more about Tibetan contemporary music, about the bureaucracy that Tibetans encounter and about how to become a Friend of Tibet by applying for a Tibetan Solidarity Card.

#### Part IV: Mundgod, Karnataka

Date / year	Location / city	Institution	Data collection / interview type	People involved	The relevance for my PhD
Sept. 2017	Mundgod	Tibetan settlement office	Informal interviews, chats	Settlement Officer	Mr. J acted as a gatekeeper; he was a sociologist who studied at JNU and advised me on how to go about my fieldwork + He recommended a translator/interpreter for me.+



					He said that the older Tibetans are important to meet for offering a glimpse about life in Tibet and this information would be useful for my PhD research but also for a documentary he was hoping to put together, using some of my interviews, data and photos.
Sept. 2017	Mundgod	Library	Informal chats, walking tours	Librarian – my interpreter	N. guided me in the camp, walked with me to the places I visited and the people I interviewed, + we had chats, dinners, and motor bike rides, apart from her assistance with translation.
Sept. 2017	Mundgod	Tibetan camps	Group interviews, informal chats	Camp leader, retired Tibetan army officers, Tibetan old ladies	The interviews and chats in these camps revealed new insights about the Tibetan Army + the approach to life in India and to Indian passport of the older generation of Tibetans. + I learnt about many empty houses of Tibetans who move internally in India + migrate abroad. + Meeting the old Tibetan ladies inspired me to write the data interpretation as the play 'Amma la', with two main female characters.
Sept. 2017	Mundgod	Nunnery	Interview	Head of the Nunnery	I became aware of my own assumptions about gender, what constitutes expected behaviour, and the performance of gender identities.
Sept. 2017	Mundgod	Old People's Home	Interview, informal chats	Caretaker	I learnt about the Tibetan rituals of death + had strong feelings about not wanting to ask questions in an environment that seemed to be dominated by an atmosphere of illness and death + reflected on the loss of lives and of Tibetan stories from older generations.

### **Appendix 3: Fieldwork 2016 – Details of semi-structured and informal interviews**

<b>Inter view no.</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Interviewee place of birth</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
1	New Delhi	12 July 2016	Himachal Pradesh, India	F	26	Museum curator
2	New Delhi	22 July 2016	India	M	55	Cultural Center Gheshe
3	McLeod Ganj	29 July 2016	Tibet	M	34	EN teacher / NGO volunteer
4	McLeod Ganj	02 August 2016	Orissa, India	M	46	Journalist/ Organiser: Music & Film Festival
5	McLeod Ganj	04 August 2016	Tibet	M	34	NGO / Community Center
6	Dharamshala	05 August 2016	Tibet	M	58	Tibet Policy Institute
7	McLeod Ganj	07 August 2016	Bir, Himachal Pradesh, India	F	34	Hotel owner/ Businesswoman
8	McLeod Ganj	09 August 2016	Kangra, India	F	30	Project officer / Tibetan MP (2017)
9	McLeod Ganj	09 August 2016	India	M	46	Tibetan Poet
10	McLeod Ganj	09 August 2016	Tibet	F	87	Former political prisoner
11	McLeod Ganj	15 August 2016	Tibet	F	25	Hotel receptionist
12	New Delhi	24 August 2016	Dharamshala, India	M	51	Secretary of Tibetan Office
13	New Delhi	30 August 2016	Nepal	F	29	JNU student / Miss Tibet 2015
14	New Delhi Majnu katilla	11 Sept. 2016	Ladakh, India	F	26	Shop assistant handicrafts

#### **People whom I met for informal conversations in India: 2016. Extracts from Fieldwork diary 2016**

- **Tibetan Librarian at Tibet House and Cultural Centre, New Delhi.** He told me about other Tibetan institutions and settlements in the city and in Bangalore, South of India.
- **Mrs RR, Indian lady from New Delhi who teaches Buddhism in Bir Tibetan colony,** she introduced me to Tibet Cultural Center (gatekeeper).
- **Indian retired Professor of German, his wife, living in New Delhi and their daughter in law,** who visited from Malaysia. They are friends with my parents in law. We talked over dinner about the situation of Tibetans in India, the affiliation with JNU, about the refugees from Pakistan who moved to New Delhi during Partition (1947), including their parents.

- **Young man born in Afghanistan, his grandparents originally from India, his parents sought refuge in Germany when he was 6 years old and he moved to UK in his 30s.** He spoke about being a German-British citizen of Afghani-Indian origin, a complex story of belongings. I met him over dinner at a cousin's house in New Delhi.
- **Indian Officers at the Foreigner's Registration Office in New Delhi,** where I inquired about the process for an OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) doing research in India.
- **PhD student in Literature at JNU,** whom I met over dinner, we kept in touch via social media. She put me in contact with a PhD student whose research topic is Tibetan literature.
- **The Indian researcher on Tibetan literature, who lives in Brazil,** we exchanged many emails and she sent me a list of Tibetan contacts in Dharamshala (gatekeeper).
- **Leader of Tibetan Association in Sri Lanka,** whom I met in Tibet House and he offered his business card and his help for my future visit to Sri Lanka for my research.
- **Tibetan receptionist at the Community Center in McLeod Ganj,** she informed me about volunteering and the activities of the NGO, the monks and nuns who attend English classes.
- **Tibetan activist, in his 60s, who is critical of the Middle Way Approach,** he came to give a talk at the Community Center, McLeod Ganj. I took notes of his talk and asked questions.
- **Tibetan Officer in the Education section of the NGO,** she applied for studying abroad. We met daily in 2016 and in 2017 we met for tea and we keep in touch via social media.
- **Tibetan student in the English class who told me about her parents living in Tibet** and her moving to India with her uncle, who is a monk in a monastery in South of India.
- **Indian café owner – McLeod Ganj,** who offered me a free chai while I was waiting for an interviewee. He asked about my research and said that Tibetans in India are rich: they have donors abroad, and that is why all the monks have laptops and iPhones.
- **Student in the English class, who is a monk from Myanmar.** He told me about the Buddhist monasteries in Myanmar and we kept in contact via social media after 2016.
- **Performer of Tibetan dance at the Folk Show in McLeod Ganj.** Before the show started he talked about his escape from Tibet when he was a child and I took notes of his story.
- **Nun from Ladakh, also student in the EN class,** who invited me to her nunnery for lunch one day, in McLeod Ganj and we chatted about Tibetan food, about life in Tibet and our families.
- **Her friend, a 16year old Tibetan from Ootty, South of India, born in Tibet.** She came to Dharamshala to study French, Chinese and IT skills; she wants to move to France or China.

- **NGO volunteer from South America, whom I asked for help to translate into Spanish** the Tibetan poems – written in English - by one of my interviewees.
- **Tibetan student in the EN class, who worked as a journalist in Tibet** before escaping to India (McLeod Ganj). I met him briefly in 2016 and 2017.
- **Gheshe (Dr. in Buddhism). Tibetan Library and Archives** – He gave a talk on Compassion & Buddhism at the Community Center. I took notes and asked him questions at the end.
- **Indian taxi driver who chatted about the Tibetans in India and in Dharamshala**, about hotel owners and monks-businessmen and about the many Tibetans moving abroad.
- **Indian couple living in New Delhi**, whom I met over dinner, I had previously met the guy while he worked in banking abroad and his wife worked in the PR of a famous Indian newspaper in New Delhi. We talked about politics, jobs and corruption in India.
- **Tibetan shop assistants in the Tibetan colony Majnu Ka tilla, New Delhi**. We chatted about Tibetans living here and the items made by hand by Tibetan refugees living all over India.
- **Professor at the Center for the Study of Law and Governance at JNU**, who agreed to be my academic guide during my research affiliation with JNU. I met her in September 2016 and then in August and September 2017, we talked about my research and fieldwork.

#### **Appendix 4: 2017 Fieldwork – details of semi-structured, ambulant and group interviews**

<b>Type of interview</b>	<b>No of participants</b>	<b>Place of interview</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Place of birth</b>
Ambulant (5)	2 Presidents of Tibetan Woman Association 1 English Teacher 1 School Director 1 Nurse	New Delhi, Majnu ka tilla	23 August	26-60	4F 1M	India
One to one	Tibetan Settlement Officer	Kasumpti, Shimla	18 August	40	M	Shimla, India
One to one	Students for Free Tibet Media Officer	McLeod Ganj	30 August	25	M	Nepal
One to one	Deputy Speaker of Tibetan Gov. in Exile	Dharamshala	04 September	60	M	Tibet
Ambulant (1)	Secretary of Deputy Speaker	Dharamshala	04 September	27	F	India
One to one	Journalist	McLeod Ganj	05 September	47	M	India
One to one	President of Tibetan Women Assoc.	McLeod Ganj	07 September	60	F	India
One to one	Refugee Reception Center Director	Dharamshala	07 September	50	M	India
One to one	Settlement Officer	Mundgod, Karnataka	18 September	44	M	India
Group (3)	1 Old Tibetan lady 1 Her son – retired colonel, Tibetan army 1 Neighbour – former soldier, Tibetan army	Mundgod, Karnataka	19 September	85 65 62	F M M	Tibet India Tibet
Group (2)	1 Single, old Tibetan lady 1 Neighbour– retired colonel, Tibetan army	Mundgod, Karnataka	19 September	86 65	F M	Tibet India
One to one	Settlement secretary	Mundgod, Karnataka	19 September	42	F	India
One to one	Carer at Old People's Home	Mundgod, Karnataka	20 September	40	F	India
One to one	Nunnery administrator	Mundgod, Karnataka	20 September	47	F	Tibet

#### **People whom I met for informal talks, chats, walks, tea and lunch during Fieldwork 2017 in India. Extracts from Fieldwork Diary 2017**

- **The young Tibetan who works at the Cultural Center, New Delhi**, she was the first person I interviewed in 2016 and we keep in touch weekly via social media. In 2017 she shared her thoughts about the development of the Indian passport case.

- **JNU Professor, who is my academic guide in India.** We met in 2016 and 2017 and discussed my research, teaching and my stay in India.
- **Another Professor at JNU, who helped me renew my Research Affiliation** and whom I met several times during the 2017 fieldwork. We discussed my research as well and he shared some ideas about how India governs its refugees and migrant populations.
- **Indian lady, retired English teacher, who walked her dog every evening** in the same park where I walked in New Delhi. We chatted about my work in India and my family connections.
- **The Admission officers at JNU, the cashier, the registration officer and Librarian** who helped me with the documents required for a Research Affiliate at JNU in 2016-2017.
- **Eight PhD students (six young men and two young women) I met at JNU (08 August 2017)** when I presented my work in progress during a Research Seminar. They offered rich feedback and comments on my PPT and we had lunch together, talking about the Tibetans in India, the political situation in India and JNU and also about CEU – my former University in Budapest.
- **PhD student in Sociology at JNU whom I met for lunch.** She is doing research in Sociology and Literature, using theatre as method and exploring the oppressed groups in India: Dalits, Muslims and women.
- **Her friend, also a PhD student at JNU, who researches gender and economics.** We had lunch and tea together, and kept in contact via email in 2017.
- **A young Indian babysitter who lived in the same house with me in New Delhi.** I chatted with her in Hindi and her story gave me mixed feelings, as I could not cope very well with having a domestic help, a teenage girl who does not go to school (she was 17y old) and was going to get married when she turned 18.
- **Former UNICEF staff in New Delhi,** cousin of my mom in law. He gave me contacts in UNHCR office, whom I emailed and tried to have an interview, which in the end was not granted.
- **Young woman, American-born of Indian origins, who came to visit India for a wedding** with one of my partner's cousins, who lives in US. I met her over dinner and she shared all my anxieties and feelings about not being able to travel alone in India.
- **Indian born of Afghani origin, whose grandparents were refugees in India,** who spoke about her mixed roots and identity. She works in the Spanish Embassy in New Delhi and has a business of her own. I met her one evening during dinner in New Delhi.
- **The Secretary of the Library of the Institute for Advanced Study in Shimla, India.** He approved my request to spend few days studying in the Library of this Post-doctoral Institute and we had a chat about the Tibetans in India, once he knew my PhD topics. He said the Dalai Lama is the last Lama of Tibetans but China wants to have another Lama of their own.
- **Young Tibetan at the Tibetan market in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.** He was the first Tibetan I met whose father was from Tibet and his mother from Spitti, India. We chatted about the Tibetans in Shimla and about my research.

- **The “Chinese” owners of a shoe shop in Shimla, India.** They were actually the 5<sup>th</sup> generation born and living in India but everyone knows them as Chinese, selling Chinese shoes.
- **My German-Hungarian friend who was living in Dharamshala for six months per year.** He introduced me to more Tibetan contacts, an old Tibetan lady whom we visited once and she helped me gain entrance to the Refugee Reception Centre, where her sister was working.
- **Indian shop owner in McLeod Ganj, originally from Kashmir.** I met him twice in 2016 and again in 2017. While chatting he spoke about the Dalai Lama’s health issues and his surgery in US (2016), also about the tourists visiting McLeod and how important this was for the businesses in the town to prosper.
- **Tibetan monk from Nepal who was visiting McLeod Ganj to learn about Tibetan medicine** while I was there for the Dalai Lama’s teaching, in August-September 2017. He was chatting about his Nepalese passport which allowed him to come to India and about his trips to Mongolia, Malaysia and Singapore.
- **Two Tibetan young men who came from Tibet recently, learning English in Dharamshala.** We met at the English conversations class at the NGO and they spoke extensively about the life in Tibet, the Chinese oppression, self-immolations, about gender and family structure. One of them wanted to move to New York where his aunt lived, the other wished to return to Tibet.
- **Yoga teacher at the NGO, from Liverpool, who came to Dharamshala for few weeks.** He was also part of the conversation with the two Tibetan young men and a young woman from Russia, who had many questions about the life of a monk.
- **Tibetan monk from Nepal who came to India to learn English three months per year.** I met him during the English conversation classes at the NGO in McLeod Ganj. He spoke about how Tibetans are smuggled via Asian countries, e.g. Thailand, and then apply for asylum in Europe.
- **Young man from Ladakh who spoke about the religious and cultural similarities between Tibetans and Ladakhi,** he himself wanted to become a monk but was learning English. Being a monk was perceived as a spiritual job, more valued than an Indian Government job.
- **Tibetan young woman who was my former student in the English class at the NGO in 2016.** I met her for tea in 2017 and had a friendly chat. She told me her brothers live in USA and her Tibetan friends living in France come to visit Dharamshala every year and they travel together.
- **Assistant of the Tibetan Women Association office in McLeod. A lady in her 50s** whom I asked for an interview and told her about my research, she was unwilling to arrange a meeting for me with the President or another person and gave me brochures instead.
- **Old Tibetan musician, in his 70s who performed at the Tibetan Music Awards.** I had a chat with him on the way back to the hotel and he told me about his music and how he came from Tibet in 1985 when Dharamshala was much smaller and less crowded.
- **Young woman from Russia who was visiting Dharamshala.** We had lunch at Illiterati Café and she told me she has been living and working in India for four years, in a business focused

on technology based learning in private schools. She travelled alone and managed her life well in the city, using public transportation, which I admired her for and wish I could do the same and be less protected by my extended Indian family.

- **Tibetan working in the Medical Center, born in Mundgod, Karnataka**, he came for the English conversational class at the NGO in McLeod and we talked about Buddhism, impermanence, traveling. He said I had a good karma from a previous life and that makes me curious to come and learn about other cultures, he asked me once if I was a reporter.
- **Young Tibetan who worked at the NGO in 2016 and wanted to study in Australia**, where her uncle was teaching Buddhism. She tried for a job with the CTA but she said that current CTA staff recommend their family members for new job openings and not outsiders.
- **Indian taxi driver who drove me to the Refugee Reception Centre in Dharamshala**. We chatted in Hindi about my Indian family and about his children, he was friends with the older Tibetan lady whose sister was the Deputy Director of the Refugee Centre.
- **Indian Police officer who was in the security team of the Dalai Lama** during the four day teaching. He was chatting with me one day about his work, about his degree in Psychology and about his Tibetan friends in Dharamshala, with whom he played football.
- **Young man from South Korea who had lived in Dharamshala for nine years**, owning a second hand shop for clothes and electronics. I went there to drop my radio and had a chat with him about the people who visit his shop and Dharamshala.
- **Indian lady attending the Buddhist conference in New Delhi, in September**. She asked me about my reasons for being there and we talked briefly about my research and Buddhism.
- **Indian writer who attended the Buddhist conference**. We had a long talk during lunch about the Rohingya refugees fleeing violence in Buddhist Myanmar, about non-violence, about India and UK, he studied at Oxford and knew about Canterbury, Kent and Hungary.
- **Young Tibetan Librarian who was my interpreter in Mundgod, Karnataka**. We had long chats every day, in different places we visited. She gave me a tour of one of the Monasteries, the Nunnery, the Old People's Home, she joined for dinner and took me to a place on top of a small hill with many Tibetan prayer flags. We are in contact via social media.
- **The administrator of the Centre for Study of Law and Governance at JNU**, who helped me getting a new Research Affiliation Certificate in one day, in September 2017.



## **Appendix 5: Interview guide**

### **PhD Research**

**Topic: Tibetans in India - Between Politics of Impermanence and Micro-narratives in Exile**

**Name of Researcher: Lidis Garbovan**

#### **Interview guide**

- 1. Please tell me a little bit about yourself (demographic data):**
  - Age,
  - Gender
  - Education level
  - Occupation
  - Marital status
  - nuclear and extended family, children, parents
  - Self-identified religion, if any
- 2. Could you please tell me about your arrival in India?**
  - When did you arrive to Dharamshala / McLeod Ganj / New Delhi / Karnataka?
  - For how long have you been living here?
  - How did you get here?
  - Why did you come to India?
  - What were the circumstances that led to you leaving Tibet?
- 3. Could you tell me about your life in India?**
  - How do you find living in India?
  - How do you feel here? e.g. do you feel at home?
  - Why/why not?
  - Are your parents / children / extended family here with you?
  - If yes, when and how did they get here? If not, where are they?
- 4. Could you describe your life in Tibet, before arriving in India? – IF APPLICABLE**
  - what activities were you involved in? (work, study, at home, political/social/cultural activity, etc.);
- 5. What kind of identity document do you have in India?**
  - e.g. Identity certificate
  - Registration certificate
  - Yellow Card

- Voter's ID
- other card / none

6. How does this document help you in your everyday life?
  - what are the advantages of having this document?
  - what about the disadvantages?
  - could you provide some examples?
7. Have you thought about an Indian passport/ Indian citizenship?
  - Why/why not?
8. Could you please elaborate on how you became an Indian citizen? IF YES
  - e.g. the process, the difficult parts, the good things about it
9. What do you think makes somebody a Tibetan?
10. What do you think makes somebody an Indian?
11. What do you think about the position of the Indian Government towards Tibetans?
  - e.g. about how they dealt with Tibetans in the past?
  - what they are doing for Tibetans in India now?
  - what would you like them to do more/differently?
12. Is there anything more you would like to add?

Thank you for your time.

## **Appendix 6: Data Analysis First ethnographic fieldwork 2016: Stage one of coding**

### **Examples of coding Interview no 1 (total 38 pages)**

Context: Respondent – Female, New Delhi, 26 years old, working in a Tibetan institution, her parents live in the state of Himachal Pradesh, left Tibet when children.

Met her while visiting the Tibet office several times for 3 weeks for borrowing books

Interview conducted in her office, audio-taped.

Issues: maybe leading question: “How do you feel in India? Do you feel at home or not?” – but also necessary to explain the original interview question: “How do you find living in India?”

- Living in India
- freedom (from torture)
- Feeling at home (in India) but not real home
- Feeling bad being a Tibetan
- Being a Tibetan feels happy
- Being a refugee in India feels bad
- Parents born in Tibet, now living in India
- Tibetans going abroad – need/strategy for survival
- Yellow Card – document for traveling abroad
- Not an Indian citizen
- good opportunities abroad (studying)
- interested in going to USA
- RC (Registration Certificate) advantages: 1. generosity of Indian Gov to live in exile in India, 2. Right to vote, 3. Live in a democracy
- RC – renewal every year - Since recently – every 5 years
- Indian passport = “something very critical”
- Indian passport gives opportunities for good jobs, e.g. in the Indian Gov.
- Indian passport = “considered as” exclusion from Tibetan soc.
- (Interviewer meets a third person, friend, exchange info about the city, exposing some knowledge about areas and transportation)
- Question unclear “what makes somebody a Tibetan” - rephrased “what is the identity of a T”
- Main T identity: language, food, culture
- Defining identity makes no sense
- Identity is also about religion – Buddhism - rituals, tradition, culture, dress
- Being a T = having a RC
- Confusion over question of Indian identity
- Similarities between T and I: religion, language, rituals
- Eating animals is a crime (by Indians) that should be corrected
- Afraid of Indians as a child
- Crimes in India done by few bring down the country’s image
- Persistence of caste system and race discrimination in Indian soc
- All Human beings should be equal
- Good experience with an Indian lady for 3 months – changed some perceptions of Indians
- Differences between Tibetans from diff regions (Amdo, Kham)– in language, dialect, tone

- Thankfulness for historical generosity of Indian Gov (57 years of exile)
- India = "second home"
- Tibetans = "treated like old friends"
- Freedom in India
- Support from India for protest against China + demands for land
- Contemporary freedom to live, "to dance", of speech
- Demand for equality in job applications and opportunities – e.g. in the Indian Gov
- Demand for equal opportunities based on human rights, not citizenship rights
- Demand for equal tariffs between citizens and foreigners –e.g. tickets to cultural places (empath expressed by interviewer based on same exp)
- Confusion over open questions, demand for specificity
- Impression that research questions should have a precise, 'correct' answer = "what you want to hear"
- Experience with another researcher she offered to help and accompany – it didn't happen
- Interested to learn smthg new
- Potential disappointment with lack of feedback from previous researcher and lack of contact
- Appreciated similarities in our personalities based on the 30 min chat prior to interview (common interests in research, knowledge, movies, human rights)
- Completion and discussion of the ethical consent form

**49 codes total**

## Appendix 7: Data Analysis 2016: 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of coding

### Example 1 (Total: 8 pages)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Freedom in India</li> <li>- "Home, but not real home"</li> <li>- Mixed feelings as T.</li> <li>- 1<sup>st</sup> generation India-born T</li> <li>- Opportunities abroad</li> <li>- RC = access to freedom and democracy</li> <li>- Indian passport = job opportunities (+)</li> <li>- Indian passport = T. exclusion (-)</li> <li>- Identity = confusing question</li> <li>- Identity = religion &amp; culture &amp; language</li> <li>- Indians – fear, crime, caste, race, discrimination</li> <li>- Aspiring to human equality</li> <li>- India = 2<sup>nd</sup> home</li> <li>- T = "old friends" treatment</li> <li>- Support from India (+)</li> <li>- Demanding equal rights &amp; opportunities (-)</li> <li>- Experience with research abt T</li> <li>- T in numbers</li> <li>- Identity = "feeling T"</li> <li>- Identity = T parents + Language</li> <li>- GB = CTA</li> <li>- RC = Indian Gov</li> <li>- Indian passport = "sensitive issue"</li> <li>- Indian passport = US emigration</li> <li>- Gratefulness to India (+)</li> <li>- T = hope for T in China</li> <li>- Indian democracy – strong</li> <li>- Support for my research</li> <li>- Miss Tibet (2015)</li> <li>- Refusing modelling career</li> <li>- Doing social work</li> <li>- Biography in Buthan, Nepal, Tibet, India</li> <li>- Voter card = Indian citizen</li> <li>- Applied for Indian passport</li> <li>- Conflictual relationships in India (-)</li> <li>- Living conditions in India (-)</li> <li>- Aiming for PhD abroad</li> <li>- Born in Ladakh</li> <li>- TCVS school education</li> <li>- Limited knowledge about Europe</li> <li>- DL picture = T collective identity</li> <li>- "How about India"</li> <li>- Job in handicraft shop</li> <li>- Business owned by Tibetans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom</li> <li>Home</li> <li>Feelings</li> <li>Opportunities</li> <li>Abroad</li> <li>Exclusion</li> <li>Fear</li> <li>Caste</li> <li>Race</li> <li>Discrimination</li> <li>Aspiring</li> <li>Equality</li> <li>Old friends</li> <li>Support</li> <li>Experience</li> <li>Numbers</li> <li>Parents</li> <li>Language</li> <li>Sensitive issue</li> <li>US Emigration</li> <li>Gratefulness</li> <li>Hope</li> <li>Democracy</li> <li>Modelling</li> <li>Social work</li> <li>Multi-sited biography</li> <li>Voting</li> <li>Conflicts</li> <li>Aiming abroad</li> <li>Born in India/Tibet</li> <li>TCVS</li> <li>Collective identity</li> <li>Dalai Lama</li> <li>Business</li> <li>Rain</li> <li>Civil status</li> <li>(Indian/Tibetan)</li> <li>Expensive</li> <li>Difficult</li> <li>Process</li> <li>No traveling</li> <li>OCI</li> <li>PAP</li> <li>ADHAAR card</li> </ul>
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## **Appendix 8: Data Analysis 2016: 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of coding**

### **Key words**

Civil status (Indian/Tibetan), Expensive, Difficult, Process, No traveling, OCI, PAP, ADHAAR card, No awareness, Policy, No guidance, No information, confusion, Being foreigner, Being born in India, Offering help, Receiving help, No refugee law, Different refugees, Different circumstances, Many privileges, Kindness, Individual case, CTA, Chinese passport, Restrictions, Bribes, Nepal border, Militarization, Great laws, Political games, Politicians, Accommodating (China), Non-violence, Justice, Truth, Military Power, Future Oppression, Peace, Generosity (India), Economic issues, Agriculture, Communication, Rent, Returning to China (T), Reception Center (D), Monks and nuns, Equal chances, Remoteness (Tibet), Nature (Tibet), Cultural shock (India), Too big (India), Authenticity (Ladakh), GB=CTA, YC=traveling, Traveling difficult, Being on the move, Feeling no home, I citizenship-secret, Ration cards, Survival, Benefits, Cut identity, Grudges, Land, Natural resources, Flooding, Foreign policy, Buddhism, World peace, Tibetan values, Source of data, Newly arrived Tibetans, Social media, Militarization (Tibet), Urbanization (Tibet), Education policy, Psychological reasons, Giving up, Struggle (independence), Modern influence, Cinema, EN language, Impermanence, Suffering, Hotel job, Lawyer, Living alone (India), No law career (India), Return to China, EN skills, Parents in Tibet, Studying Tibetan (India), Studying Chinese (China), 2nd generation, RC – returned, Indian passport, Stateless, Court case, Visa Denial, Confidence, Karnataka, Public Litigation, Individual check, Passport process, ‘just a paper’, No change, Following system, National security, Businesswoman, 3rd generation, Well-settled (India), Struggle (business), Struggle (corruption), Struggle (being refugee), Struggle (College), Safety (D), Comfort (D), Small (D), Conservative (D), Gender, Hardworking, Sweater selling (grandp), Female MP, I passport=Eye-opening, Right to vote, Congress Party, BJP Party, Protection, Buying land, Doing business, Confidential, Loss (culture), Exile Success, Abroad = Respect, Values, Suffering in jobs (India), Scholarships abroad, ‘Shining abroad’, Interesting in abroad, Help from Ladakh, Police Bribes, Paperless, Discrimination, Strategy, Negotiating (bribes), Feeling ‘oneness’, Made-up identities, Writers, Intellectuals, Born abroad, Contemporary, Asserting, Claiming, Contradictions, Realities, No answer, Associating, Imagining, Danger, Fanaticism, Global effects (China), Political interests, Democracy (T in exile), Old bureaucracy (India), No direction, No information, T expression, Writing, Controlling Narrative, Memory, Special stories, Painting, Film, Drawing, Multi-ethnic (India), Multi-lingual (India), Mono-ethnic (China), Mono-lingual (China), Communism, No hope, Fear (China), Ec development (China), Food – no freedom, Taiwan, Learning Chinese, Cousins, Global living, Fleeing Tibet, Sent for education, No schooling, Feeling lucky, Experiences of new, Homes shifting, Connections, In contact, Uneducated, Collective identity (RC), Humiliating (YC airport), Long process (YC), Loss, Refusing to become I, Remaining T, To become I citiz, To have I passport, Confusing meaning, Cultural identity, Permanent, Paper identity, Respect for life, Compassion, Co-existing religions, Castes, Challenging China, Thank you for exile, Geopolitics, Conflicts (T-I), Benefiting from T, Tourism, Economy, Business, T philosophy, T science, Middle Way, Independence, Political figures, Paying taxes (CTA), International support, Global offices, Refused Visa, Terrorism, Miss Tibet, Film Festival, Slow Internet, Electricity cuts, S India – sweater selling, S India – agriculture, Citizenship for all T, Confident, Winning, Not practicing the law, Naturalization, Citizenship Act (1955), Split T community, Public figure, Trips to EU, Total freedom (India), No restrictions, Traveling restrictions, Modern technology.

## Appendix 9: Data Analysis 2016: Fourth stage

### Colour coding – categories

**Red – identity documents**

**Green = life in India**

**Blue = Indian citizenship and passport**

**Light green = Tibetan identity**

**Purple = personal interests**

**Orange = Tibet - China – Nepal policy**

**Brown = Tibetans abroad (out of India)**

**Grey = demographics**

**Light green = Indian people**

**Dark grey = life in /return to Tibet**

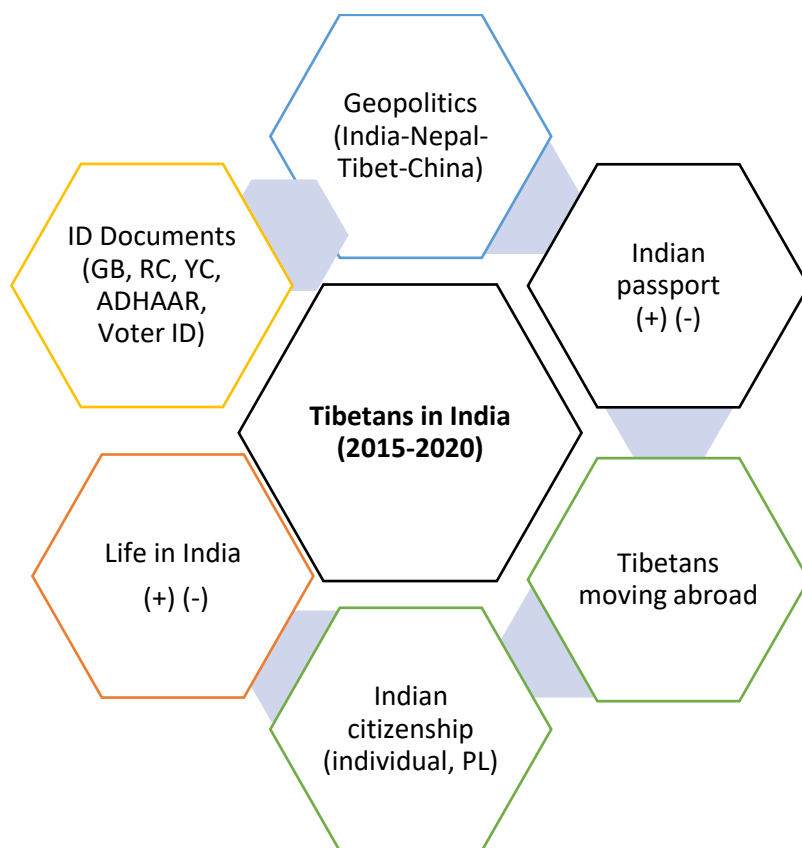
**Dark blue = newly arrived Tibetans**

**Pink = Indian Government policy**

***Light green and Italic = questions/help for the PhD Research***

## Appendix 10: Data Analysis 2016: Fifth stage

### Diagram – Themes.





## **Appendix 11: Tibetan Young Woman Writes Heart Touching Thank You India Letter,**

**24 January 2016**

**by Yeshe Paljor**

“Dear India,

I am a child of this land, yet I don't belong here. I am sorry I feel this way but that is the truth. Long ago, my grandparents left Tibet and came to India. As refugees, they lived in poverty at a road construction site in Manali and as they built new roads, they also built a new life out of broken dreams.

My mother was born in a small jhuggi at that very road construction site and my father was from Tibet. I don't remember if my parents ever told me that I didn't belong to India, but I remember them telling me I was a Tibetan. They never told me as a child that I was a refugee, but I kind of figured that out myself when I was the odd one out at the Sunrise pre-school in Ghaziabad. Or maybe, I was just really smart.

Anyway, I never felt alienated as a child. That dreadful feeling is something which grew bigger in my heart as I grew older. A sense of alienation is not a good feeling to have, especially when you are in a room full of people. And if that 'room full of people' turns out to be a country of 1.252 billion Indians...then you can do the math.”

Growing up, I was taught to be thankful to India and Indians for letting us stay here. When I joined a boarding school for Tibetans in Dharamsala, I was told that eventually we are all going back to Tibet...after we have defeated the Chinese (obviously). It might be difficult for some people to understand why I, like many Tibetans, feel alienated when we lead a remarkably good life in India. Believe me, sometimes, it is difficult even for me explain it, despite feeling it too often and too strongly. But please don't mistake my sense of alienation as a sign of ingratitude.

I don't look Indian at all and I don't follow cricket...so that makes me very un-Indian, I suppose. But the fact that I am torn between feeling 'not at home' when I am 'already home' proves that I am bound to India by blood and soul. I am not trying to patronise you – just like I don't patronise my own parents.

I am opening up to you after two decades of silence, hoping that you'll understand if I feel like a stranger in your home, even after everything that you have done for me. You have not only been a kind host to our people but you are also our godparent. And if I take part in protests, demanding a free Tibet...remember that my country is dying, remember that I am in pain, remember that I really need to go home and it is crucial that you understand.

PS. Next time that a Chinese leader visits India, please don't arrest me when I haven't even started protesting yet. At least, let me tell you my bit of the story!

Dear India, Thank you.

Your goddaughter,  
Tenzin Tsomo”

## **Appendix 12: Games, image theatre and forum theatre sessions – in preparation for the Theatre Workshops in Dharamshala, India, July 2019**

### **Game 1. Name and gesture.**

Group stands in a circle. The leader starts by introducing herself by her first name accompanied by a physical gesture, e.g. clapping hands. The whole group repeats, until everyone said their name and performed a gesture. This process is then repeated just with the gestures, not names.

### **Game 2. The cross and the circle.**

Participants stand up, and form a circle, the facilitator asks them to draw a circle in the air with their right hand – circles can be big or small. Everyone should be able to do so. Then they are asked to stop, and with the left hand, to draw a cross. When everyone is doing that right, they are asked to do both circle and cross at the same time. Almost no one is able to do this. Let the group try for a while.

### **Game 3. Ball game / throwing one ball, then 2, then 3 balls.**

All walking in a room, mingling with each other. One person throws a ball to another one, who was to catch it, then throw it to another one, faster and faster. Make eye contact. Throw 2 balls, then 3 balls at the same time.

### **Game 4. Walking the room in different paces 1 to 10.**

Participants are asked to walk around the room in a normal pace – this pace is called 5. The facilitator then gradually increases the pace up to 10 which is almost running, then slows down to 1 which is slow motion.

Games 1 – 4 are about warming up the body, in preparation for the performance.

### **Game 5. Walk-stop- say hello**

Participants walk around the room/space. When the facilitator says for example: stop and shake hands, participant stops and goes next to the person closest, shakes hands and says her/his name. The facilitator can also say: stop and belly, stop and foot, stop and head...etc. then the nearest persons touch each other with that part of the body.

### **Game 6. Trust game.**

Make pairs and stand in the room facing each other's back. One person has to fall on their back, the other one has to catch her. The person catching first has to hold the other one closer to their shoulders, then lower and lower. Then switch roles.

### **Game 7. Mirror game**

Pair-up. One person is the leader, the other one the follower. The leader does movements with her hands and body, while standing in one place, the follower has to do exactly the same. Then switch roles.

### **Game 8. Two by three Bradford:**

In pairs begin counting 1, 2, 3 – each partner saying one number at a time. Once this is clear, replace the count number 1 with a sound. Then replace count number 2 with a physical action. Then replace count 3 with a sound and a physical action. Then run the exercise with the whole group standing in circle.

### **Game 9. Blind cars:**

Divide into pairs. One person stands in front of the other and closes their eyes. This is the blind car. The person behind is the driver who gives directions by touching the 'car's back with her hand. Touch left shoulder = turn left. Touch right shoulder = turn right, press center of back = move forward. No touch = stop.

**Game 10. Following in a group - background music.**

All stand as a group, walking, with music in the background. One person becomes the lead, all follow her movements, for few seconds, then another person takes the lead, doing her own movements, everyone else follows.

**Game 11. The animal figure<sup>28</sup>.**

Think of an animal. How does he/she behave, move, eat, sit, walk / fly / crawl? Try and become that animal, making the same movements with your body, your face, your arms, your legs. Concentrate on what you are doing, then look at others.

Games 5 – 11 are about getting to know each other and building trust.

**Nonverbal Activity / Guess my feelings**

The facilitator writes down on slips of papers different kind of feelings (happy, sad, jealous, drunk(!), angry, busy, frustrated... etc.). Each of the participants picks up one of the papers and begins to mime the feeling. Others try to guess the feeling.

**Exercise: IMAGE THEATRE**

**Complete the image**

Two people shake hands and freeze. The leader asks the spectators what story they see. One person then comes out of the frozen picture, leaving an incomplete image. A volunteer then comes in and completes the image to make a different story. Also, to work in 2 or 3.

**Individual images**

The group stands in a circle facing outward. The leader says a word or theme and counts down 3 to 1. At which time the participants turn and face into the circle, presenting a frozen image of that word.

**FORUM THEATRE SESSIONS<sup>29</sup>**

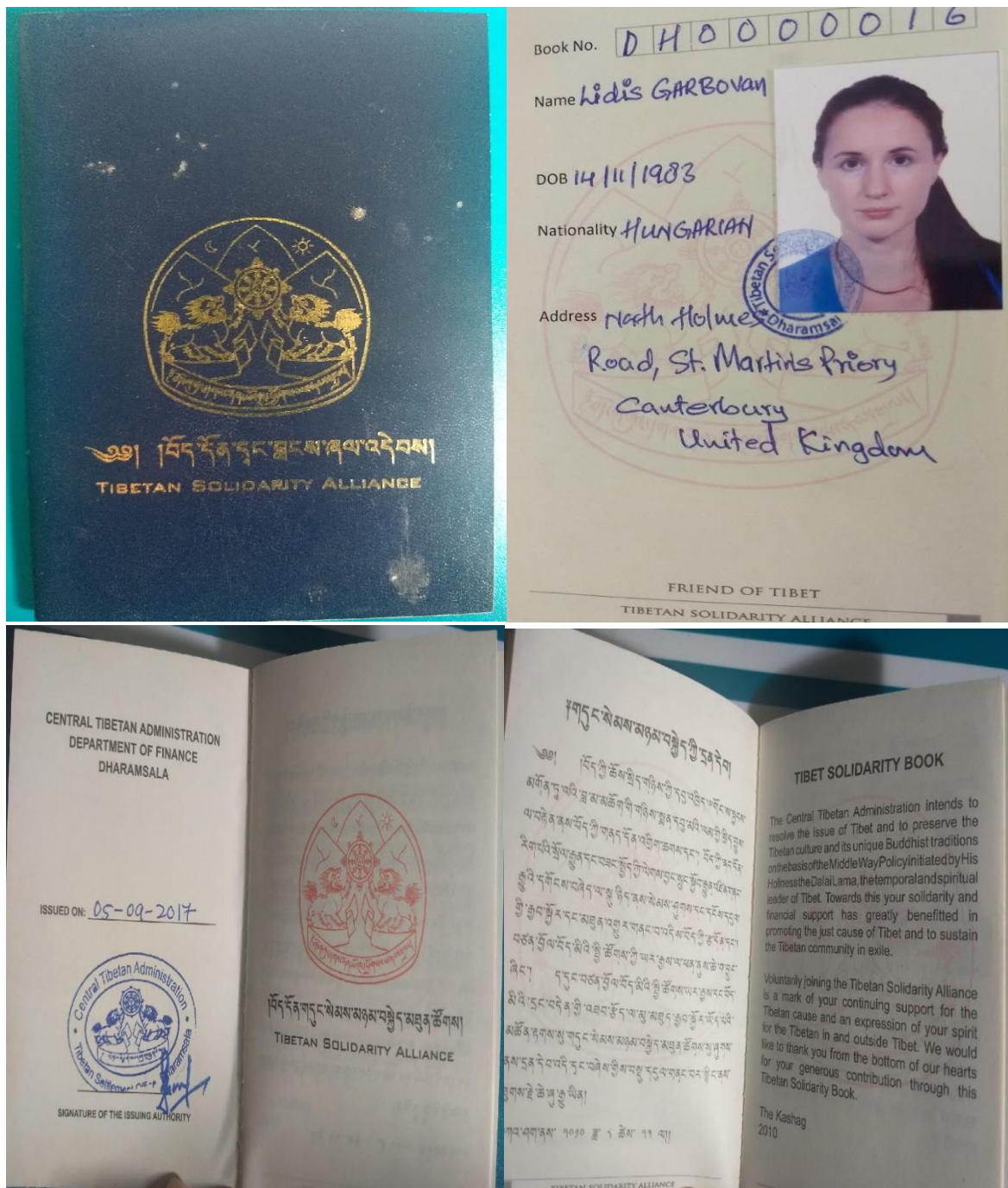
Instructions: After all the games, divide the people in groups. Ask each group to talk about stories and oppressive experiences they had, e.g. being called names, how is living in India as Tibetans, or something else. Each group brainstorms and chooses which story / stories to present, using both words and frozen images. They practice in separate groups. Then each group shows their story to the larger audience. The audience has to interfere and make changes to the story, in order to 'solve' the oppression in different ways.

<sup>28</sup> This exercise was part of the *Performance Ethnography* workshop, also in Boal (2002), *Games for actors and non-actors*

<sup>29</sup> Adapted from: *How to do Forum Theatre*, <http://www.brighterfutureslondon.co.uk/wellbeingtoolkit/forum-theatre/>

## Appendix 13: My Tibet Solidarity Card / Friend of Tibet ID

Card issued by the CTA, Dharamshala, 05 September 2017



#### **Appendix 14. Email exchange with JNU Professor, Dr Niraja Gopal Jayal**

##### **Inquiry about the Research Affiliation process with JNU, 30 August 2016**

*Dear Dr. Niraja Gopal Jayal,*

*I am writing on behalf of the Sociology Department of Canterbury Christ Church University, Kent, United Kingdom.*

*My name is Lidis Garbovan and I am doing a PhD in Sociology (2015-2020) while teaching in the BSc and MSc Programs in Sociology and Politics.*

*My PhD research explores how India governs its Tibetan refugee population and the claims to Indian citizenship.*

*Currently I am in India and last month I was in Dharamsala where I met, amongst others, the first Tibetan who acquired Indian citizenship.*

*Your recent book *Citizenship and its Discontents: An Indian History* (2013) is a brilliant discussion of the concept of citizenship in India and the politics of inclusion and exclusion. I found it very important and inspiring for my own research.*

*Given your expertise on this topic, I would like to kindly ask you if possible to start an academic affiliation with the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance at JNU, under your academic guide.*

*May I please ask you to guide me on the procedure, letting me know if you would like to know more about my PhD topic and if possible to have a face to face meeting while I am in India?*

*I will go back to England on the 12th September. My phone number in India is: +98 83 52 868818.*

*The results of this research will be published in a monograph and a book once the PhD Thesis is completed and I am hopeful we could start a fruitful and long lasting academic collaboration.*

*I am looking forward to hearing from you,*

*With many thanks and kind regards,*

*Lidis*

*Lidis Garbovan*

*PhD Researcher & Sociology Instructor*

*School of Psychology, Politics and Sociology*

*Canterbury Christ Church University*

Dear Lidis,

Thank you for your email and for your kind words about my book.

I would be happy to meet with you before you leave. Would you like to come by on Tuesday September 6 at around 11?

The procedure for affiliation is not very complicated.

Essentially, we need your CV, research proposal and a covering letter addressed to the Chairperson of the Centre, mentioning the name of the faculty member by whom you would like to be advised. The affiliation requires you to specify the time period during which you would be visiting. So we would need to know when next you are planning to visit.

I look forward to hearing more about your research.

Best wishes,

Niraja G. Jayal\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 15. My JNU Research Affiliation letter

pg. 1-2, 29 November 2016

 जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
नई दिल्ली-110067, भारत  
New Delhi-110067, INDIA

---

No. RA/FN/ Admission-II/JNU/ 2560 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016

To  
Ms. Lids Garbovan  
School of Psychology, Politics and Sociology,  
Canterbury Christ Church University  
Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU  
England

Subject: Affiliation of foreign research scholars in an Indian University/  
Institution for undertaking a research project in India

Dear Madam,

Kindly refer to your letter requesting for affiliation of Ms. Lids Garbovan to undertake research project(s) in Centre for the Study of Law & Governance of the University.

We are forwarding herewith required affiliation certificate to the effect that this University has no objection to affiliate you to undertake proposed research project entitled "Tibetans in India: between Politics of Impermanence and Micro-narratives in Exile" for a period of 05 Months i.e. from May, 2017 until September, 2017.

This Affiliation is subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions:-

1. Your affiliation does not involve any financial liability on the part of the University;
2. Your affiliation is subject to the approval of the research project by the Government of India;
3. You will be required to pay incidental charges @ US \$ 100.00 per semester;
4. You will not be entitled to any degree certificate/Marks-sheet/grade-sheet from the University during the period of affiliation; and
5. You will have to produce Research Visa and Medical Fitness Certificate at the time of Admission/ Registration in JNU.

The admissions/registration requirements are to be completed by you in person during working days (Monday to Friday) at Room No. 20, Administrative Block of the University. The other terms & conditions have been indicated in Annexure-I.

Yours faithfully,  
  
(Meenakshi Bhardwaj)  
Section Officer (Admission-II)  
अनुदान विभाग (नियंत्रण-II)  
Section Officer (Admission-II)  
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
नई दिल्ली/New Delhi-110 067

Encl: 1) Certificate of Affiliation  
2) Annexure-I



**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
CERTIFICATE OF AFFILIATION**

This is to certify that Mr./Ms. LIDIS LARBOYAN  
(Name in block letters)

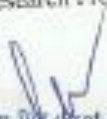
Nationality \_\_\_\_\_ presently studying at (University) CANTERBURY  
CHIRST CHURCH UNIVERSITY shall be affiliated as a  
research scholar in the Centre/ Department of CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF  
LAW AND GOVERNANCE  
of this University for undertaking research on TIBETANS IN INDIA: BETWEEN  
POLITICS OF IMPREMANENCE AND MICRO-NARRATIVES  
IN EXILE.

(Title of the thesis/project)

He / She shall be assisted/ guided by Prof. AMIT PRAKASH  
(Name of Indian Research Guide)

Of the Centre/ Department CSLG- JNU, NEW DELHI

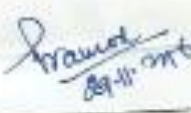
This affiliation certificate does not involve any financial liability on the part of the University and is subject to the approval of the above mentioned research Project by the Government of India.

  
Dr. Anita Singh / Prof. Anita Singh  
SGSRI/Chairperson  
Centre for the Study of Law and Governance  
Jawahar Lal Nehru University

Signature & Official Seal of Chairperson/Dean?

Date 07/11/2016

Place NSU, DELHI


  
Signature & Official Seal of The Registrar

Registrar  
Jawahar Lal Nehru University  
New Delhi-110067

Note: The certificate should be signed and stamped by the Head of the Institution/ Registrar and Head of the Department of the University agreeing to affiliate the Foreign Scholar.

## Appendix 16. My renewed Research Affiliation with JNU

pg. 1-2, 26 September 2017

 जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
नई दिल्ली-110067, भारत  
New Delhi-110067, INDIA

26<sup>th</sup> September, 2017

No. Admission-II/FN/RA/2017/ 408

To  
Ms. Lidis Garbovan  
School of Psychology, Politics and Sociology,  
Canterbury Christ Church University  
Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU  
England

Subject: Affiliation of Indian research scholar in an Indian University/Institution for undertaking a research project in India

Dear Madam,

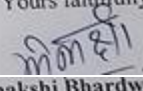
Kindly refer to your letter requesting for affiliation of Ms. Lidis Garbovan to undertake research project(s) in Centre for the Study of Law & Governance of the University.

We are forwarding herewith required affiliation certificate to the effect that this University has no objection to affiliate you to undertake proposed research project entitled "Tibetans in India: between Politics of Impermanence and Micro-narratives in Exile" for a period of 01 Year i.e. from October, 2017 until September, 2018.

This Affiliation is subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions:-

1. Your affiliation does not involve any financial liability on the part of the University;
2. Your affiliation is subject to the approval of the research project by the Government of India;
3. You will be required to pay incidental charges @ US \$ 100.00 per semester;
4. You will not be entitled to any degree certificate/Marks-sheet/grade-sheet from the University during the period of affiliation; and
5. You will have to produce Research Visa and Medical Fitness Certificate at the time of Admission/ Registration in JNU.

The admissions/registration requirements are to be completed by you in person during working days (Monday to Friday) at Room No. 20, Administrative Block of the University. The other terms & conditions have been indicated in Annexure-I.

Yours faithfully,  


(Meenakshi Bhardwaj)  
Section Officer (Admission-II)  
अनुभाग अधिकारी (प्रवेश-II)  
Section Officer (Admission-II)  
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
नई दिल्ली / New Delhi-110 067

Encl: 1) Certificate of Affiliation  
2) Annexure-I

Tel.: 26704022/26704047, Fax: 011-26742692 Website: <http://www.jnu.ac.in>, Gram: JAYENU



2/CSLG  
26/09/17

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
CERTIFICATE OF AFFILIATION

This is to certify that Mr./Ms. LINDA GARGOVAN  
(Name in block letters)

Nationality HUNGARIAN presently studying at (University) CANTERBURY  
CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

shall be affiliated as a  
research scholar in the Centre/ Department of CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF  
LAW AND GOVERNANCE

of this University for undertaking research on TIBETANS IN INDIA : BETWEEN  
POLITICS OF IMPERMANENCE AND MICRO-NARRATIVES  
IN EXILE.

(Title of the thesis/project)

He / She shall be assisted/ guided by PROF. AMIT PRAKASH  
(Name of Indian Research Guide)

Of the Centre/ Department CSLG - JNU, NEW DELHI

This affiliation certificate does not involve any financial liability on the part of the University and is subject to the approval of the above mentioned research Project by the Government of India.

Signature & Official Seal of the Head of the Institution/Dean  
प्रतिष्ठापक/Countersign  
कुलसचिव/Registrar  
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय  
नई दिल्ली, भारत

Date 26/09/2017

Place NEW DELHI

Note: The certificate should be signed and stamped by the Head of the Institution/ Registrar and Head of the Department of the University agreeing to affiliate the Foreign Scholar.

## **Appendix 17: Permission to visit the Refugee Centre, Dharamshala, 06 September 2017**

### **Application via Email to the Security Office of the CTA**

On Wed, Sep 6, 2017 at 12:06 PM, DoS2 DoS2 <[security@tibet.net](mailto:security@tibet.net)> wrote:

Dear Lidis,

Thank you for sending us your required documents. Your application has been approved and you can go to the Reception Center tomorrow. We will inform the Director of Tibetan Reception Center accordingly.

With regards,  
Tenzin Dazei  
Department of Security

---

On Wed, Sep 6, 2017 at 4:15 PM, Lidis Garbovan <[lidis.garbovan@gmail.com](mailto:lidis.garbovan@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Security Office CTA,

Thank you for your email,

Please find enclosed my ID copies from Canterbury University and from Tibet Solidarity. I am a contributor to Tibet Relief Fund, London, I am also sending enclosed my email communication with the Tibet Office London and a summary of my Research Project.

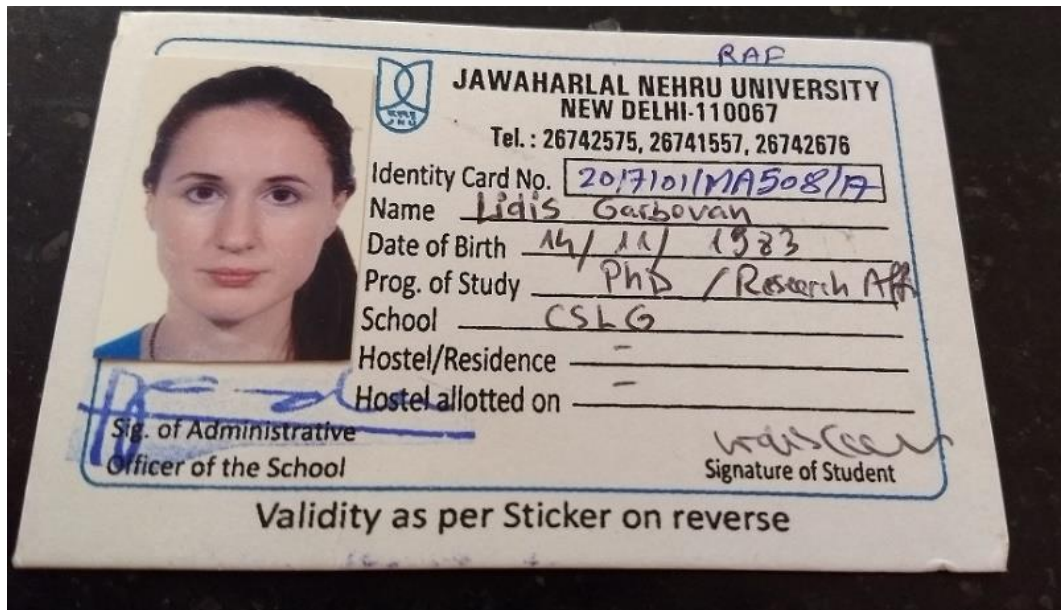
On Monday I met with Hon Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, Mr. Acharya Yeshe Phuntsok. He knows about my work and his Personal Secretary, Ms Sonam Tsonam gave me a tour of the Tibetan Parliament Office.

Please let me know if you require any other information from my side.

Thank you,

Kind regards,  
Lidis Garbovan

**Appendix 18: My JNU Student ID card and Library ID card, as Research Affiliate with CSLG**



**My JNU ID Library access card, as Research Affiliate with CSLG - JNU, New Delhi, September 2017**



Appendix 19. My Admission card to the teaching of the XIV Dalai Lama

Issued by the Department of Security of CTA, McLeod Ganj, 29 August 2017

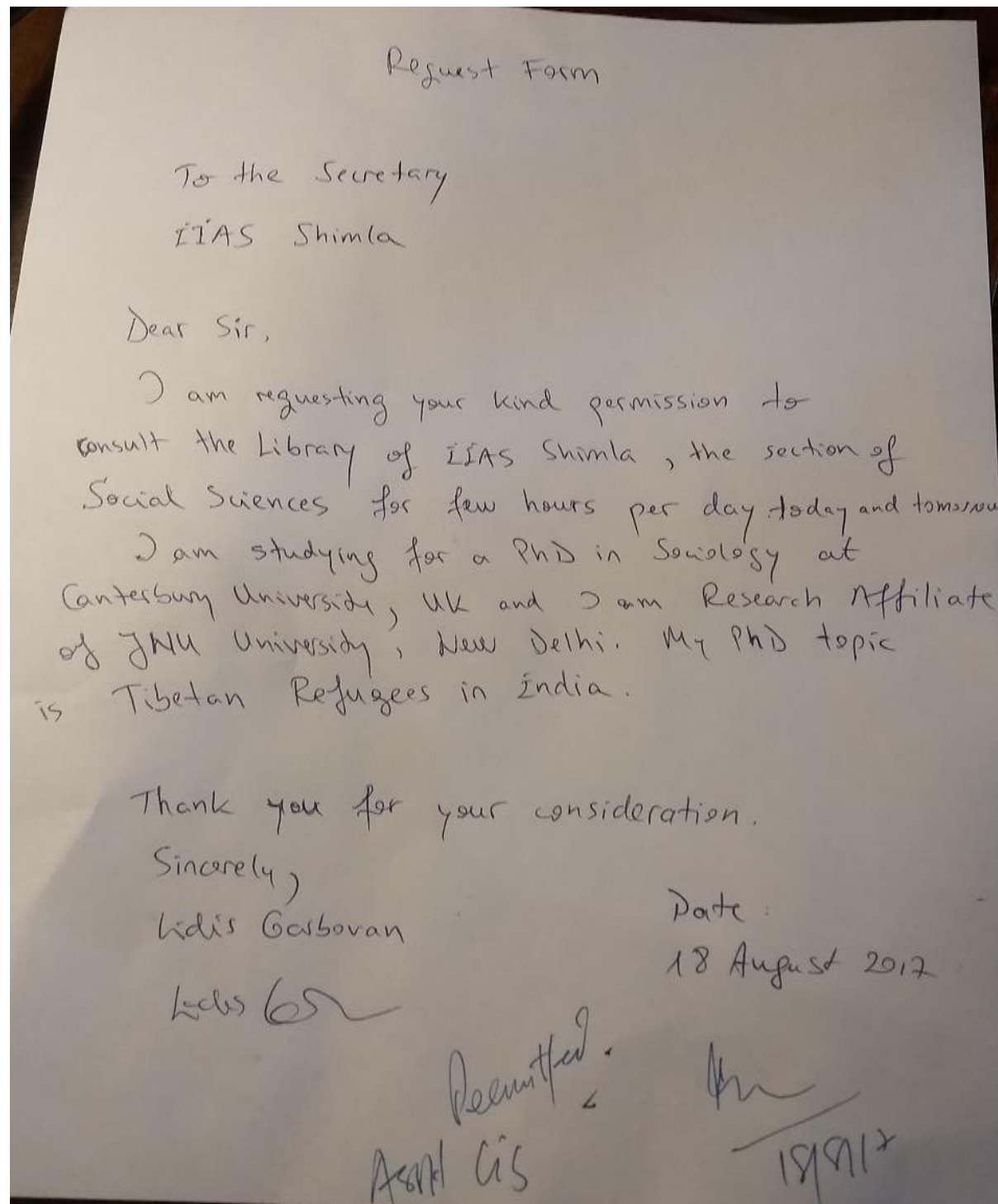




Appendix 20: My request letter to consult the Library of the IAS

Post-Doctoral Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla

18 August 2017



## **Appendix 21: Scanned copy of my application for a Protected Area Permit (PAP)**

**The Bureau of the Dalai Lama, New Delhi – July 2017**

### **APPLICATION FORM FOR PROTECTED AREA PERMIT**

- |                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Name of the Applicant:<br>(in capital letters with Surname underlined)                                                                                                   | Lidis Garbovan                                                                                                                      |
| 2. Father's Name:                                                                                                                                                           | Vasile Garbovan                                                                                                                     |
| 3. Honorific: Mr./Miss./Mrs.<br>(score out those not applicable)                                                                                                            | Ms.                                                                                                                                 |
| 4. Surname at birth, if different:                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                     |
| 5. Birth Place (town and country)                                                                                                                                           | Arad, Romania                                                                                                                       |
| 6. Date of Birth:                                                                                                                                                           | 14 November 1983                                                                                                                    |
| 7. Nationality (a) Present<br>(b) Past, if different and till which date<br>(c) Reasons for change                                                                          | Hungarian<br>Romanian – from birth until present                                                                                    |
| 8. Occupation:<br>(give address of place of work, if employed)                                                                                                              | Sociology Instructor<br>Canterbury Christ Church University.<br>Canterbury, CT1 1QU, Kent, United Kingdom                           |
| 9. Email ID:                                                                                                                                                                | Lidis.garbovan@gmail.com                                                                                                            |
| 10. Permanent Address                                                                                                                                                       | 7 Viking Court, St Stephens Close,<br>Canterbury, CT2 7HZ                                                                           |
| 11. Mailing address in India if any                                                                                                                                         | B8 - 6044 Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, 110070                                                                                            |
| 12. Reference (a) in country of applicant<br>(b) in India                                                                                                                   | Sarah Cant<br>Manish Chawla                                                                                                         |
| 13. Passport No:<br>Issued by:<br>Valid up to                                                                                                                               | BD8653879<br>Hungary, Budapest<br>25 November 2023                                                                                  |
| 14. Details of Visa for India, if any obtained<br>Issued by:<br>Valid upto                                                                                                  | Life Long Visa (OCI)<br>Embassy of India, Budapest, Hungary<br>Lifelong                                                             |
| 15. Places proposed to be visited                                                                                                                                           | Bylakuppe, Mundgod Tibetan settlements                                                                                              |
| 16. Route intended to be followed                                                                                                                                           | Delhi – Bylakuppe – Mundgod (train, bus)                                                                                            |
| 17. Purpose of visit                                                                                                                                                        | Tibetan monasteries, Tibetan culture                                                                                                |
| 18. Likely date of visit                                                                                                                                                    | Sept-October-Dec 2017, July- August 2018                                                                                            |
| 19. Likely duration of visit                                                                                                                                                | 1 year                                                                                                                              |
| 20. Is any one accompanying the Applicant? If so,<br>please give detail                                                                                                     | Yes, Manish Chawla (husband), Indian citizen                                                                                        |
| 21. Arrangements for travel and accommodation<br>that may have been made                                                                                                    | Flight London – New Delhi: 27 July 2017<br>Train tickets to Karnataka to be purchased<br>Yearly, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 |
| 22. Details of previous visits to India                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                     |
| 23. Has/Have he/she/they, previously visited any<br>restricted protected area in India or Bhutan?<br>If so, please give details of the places visited<br>and date of visit. | No.<br>No visits have ever been made to these places.                                                                               |
| 24. Has any earlier request for permit been refused?<br>If so, please furnish details                                                                                       | No.<br>No application for permit has ever been made.                                                                                |

The information given above is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Place. Canterbury, United Kingdom,

Date. 13 July 2017

Signature of the Applicant.

**Appendix 22: PAP Supporting Letter from the Secretary of the Bureau of Dalai Lama, ND**

**allowing me to visit the Tibetan settlement in Mundgod, 11 September 2017**

Bureau of H.H the Dalai Lama  
10 B, Ring Road Lajpat Nagar IV, New Delhi-110024  
Telephone: 26474798/26443600/26218546  
Email: [rehab@tibetbureau.in](mailto:rehab@tibetbureau.in)

*Ref: BDL/REHAB/2017-18( 16 )*

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

This is to certify that Lidis Garbovan, Hungarian passport holder has applied for the Protected Area Permit from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India through this Bureau to visit Tibetan settlement in South of India, Karnataka State from 01.09.2017- 30.08.2018.

Her application has been submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and it is under process.

**The details are as under:**

S. No.	Name	Passport No.	Nationality	Place to visit
1	Lidis Garbovan	BD8653879	Hungarian	Mundgod and Bylakuppee

She is visiting Tibetan Settlement in Mundgod for her PhD research study. Any assistance and necessary consideration rendered to her by all the concerned local authorities including the Foreigner's Regional Registration Office, Police Department as well as other competent authorities will be highly appreciated.



Date: September 11th, 2017  
Place: New Delhi

Tsewang Gyalpo Arya (Mr.)  
**SECRETARY**

## **Appendix 23: Email from the Secretary of the Bureau of the Dalai Lama, New Delhi**

**To the Tibetan Office in Mundgod, introducing me, the PAP letter and my PhD research, Sept 2017**

Sep 11,  
2017

**Secretary BDL**

to TSO, me

Tibetan Settlement Officer  
Doeguling Tibetan Settlement  
Munggod, Karamataka State

Dear Mr. Jigme la,

Tashi Delek! This is to inform you that Ms Lidis Garbovan of Hungarian National is doing PhD research in Tibetan studies. She has just come back from Dharamshala. She has applied for PAP through us to visit Mungod Tibetan settlement. But the PAP permit is still under process.

As usual, we have issued her a letter stating that she has applied for PAP and it is under process. With this she may visit the Settlement but may not be able stay over night. I told her to visit your office and see you. She may need help and guidance, I request you to kindly provide the same.

Thank you and with best regards

**Tsewang Gyalpo Arya (Mr.)**

**Secretary**

**Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama**

[10-B Ring Road, Lajpat Nagar-IV](#)

[New Delhi 110024, INDIA](#)

Telephone:26218548 / 26474798 Fax:26461914

[www.tibetbureau.in](http://www.tibetbureau.in)

[www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

from: **Secretary**  
**BDL** <secretary@tibetbureau.in>

to: TSO Mundgod [doegul@tibet.net](mailto:doegul@tibet.net)



## Appendix 24: Data Analysis 2<sup>nd</sup> second ethnographic fieldwork 2017. MAXQDA Report

### Coded interviews with segments, MAXQDA 2017 (e.g. page 270 and 275)

MAXQDA 2018

22-10-2018

	<p>I: They do?</p> <p>Director RRC: There is lot of Intelligence section, you know, the IB, Intelligence Bureau...</p> <p>Interviews\McLeod Ganj_Refugee Center Director_Transcription: 67 - 70 (0)</p>
Chat about weather	<p>Director RRC: So most probably they chose to stay in Dharamshala.</p> <p>I: (coughing, sorry), I hope I didn't catch a cold...</p> <p>Director RRC: Yeah, yeah, I got a cold last Wednesday, still it's with me</p> <p>Interviews\McLeod Ganj_Refugee Center Director_Transcription: 64 - 66 (0)</p>
choosing to stay in Dharamshala	<p>Director RRC: And few of them they have relative in Dehradun, and few may have friends and relatives in Dharamshala and they come to settle in Dharamshala.</p> <p>I: Ok...</p> <p>Director RRC: Most probably they wanted to stay in Dharamshala because of the weather condition, it depends on the weather condition. Because they came down from very hard weather and they cannot stay in Karnataka, in Orissa, very scorching sun heat....</p> <p>I: Yeah, it's very hot...</p> <p>Director RRC: So most probably they chose to stay in Dharamshala.</p> <p>Interviews\McLeod Ganj_Refugee Center Director_Transcription: 60 - 64 (0)</p>
40 Tibetan settlements in India	<p>Director RRC: You know, CTA as of now, we have more than 40 settlements in India and it's scattered in 10 states in India and few of them have relatives in the Tibetan settlements in Karnataka....</p> <p>Interviews\McLeod Ganj_Refugee Center Director_Transcription: 58 - 58 (0)</p>
Getting a job if merit-based	<p>Director RRC: And there are so many people who came out of this school and studying in cities...</p> <p>I: And can they get a job after they study?</p>

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MAXQDA 2018

22-10-2018

	<p>observation, it goes fact, and then of course, they are careful (?) Nepal reception center, 'til the document is completed, there are some procedures, Special Entry Permit and No Objection to travel from Nepalese Government, Nepalese Home Ministry. So after completing all this (sic!) document, they are sent to Delhi, we have branch there, with one staff member</p> <p>Interviews\McLeod Ganj_Refugee Center Director_Transcription: 13 - 13 (0)</p>
Security check in Nepal	<p>And then they will look after them, whether he or she is true Tibetan, came from Tibet and what reason he or she came from Tibet. So the story and the, the observation, it goes fact, and then of course, they are careful (?) Nepal reception center, 'til the document is completed, there are some procedures, Special Entry Permit and No Objection to travel from Nepalese Government, Nepalese Home Ministry. So after completing all this (sic!) document, they are sent to Delhi, we have branch there, with one staff member</p> <p>Interviews\McLeod Ganj_Refugee Center Director_Transcription: 13 - 13 (0)</p>
Fleeing China via Nepal	<p>No, you know, there is some kind of procedure, while they are crossing Tibet from Nepal, we have a reception there, we have a reception center in Nepal, a branch of this office...</p> <p>Interviews\McLeod Ganj_Refugee Center Director_Transcription: 11 - 11 (0)</p>
Purpose for refuge, education, Tibetan, English, monasteries	<p>They wanted to join education institutions, they wanted to learn Tibetan language and they wanted to learn English. And most of them are in monasteries and wanted to learn Buddhist philosophies</p> <p>Interviews\McLeod Ganj_Refugee Center Director_Transcription: 9 - 9 (0)</p>
Tibetan refugees arrivals 2017	<p>Director RRC: This year actually we received 15 people from Tibet and all went to schools and monastic institutions. And one family, he wanted to settle with his wife and daughter in Dharamshala. So three of them.</p> <p>Interviews\McLeod Ganj_Refugee Center Director_Transcription: 5 - 5 (0)</p>
No of Tibetan refugees 2016	<p>Ahem... so actually I took this last year, June 2016, so 2016 to 2017 only 27 people came from Tibet, and most of them are young people</p> <p>Interviews\McLeod Ganj_Refugee Center Director_Transcription: 9 - 9 (0)</p>

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## **Appendix 25: All categories from all interviews coded 2017**

- 1 Number of arrivals 2016-7-8
- 2 New refugees coming for education, health, Monasteries
- 3 Majority Tibetan arrivals choosing Dharamshala
- 4 Tibetan arrivals posing security threats to India
- 5 Crimes by Tibetans-Chinese in India
- 6 Special Entry Permit (2003 India-Nepal)
- 7 New refugee arrivals getting more help
- 8 Tibetans losing hope – moving abroad, getting Indian passport
- 9 Refugee status – no Gov jobs
- 10 Tibet issue= Tibetan emotions, not foreign passport
- 11 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Tibetans and born abroad = politically active
- 12 CTA-China no dialogue since 2011
- 13 China fight for economic, military and political supremacy
- 14 Tibetan Music Awards and international musician
- 15 Tibetans in NY and France on holiday in Dharamshala
- 16 Ladakhi Buddhists aspiring to be monk
- 17 Smuggling of T refugees via Thailand to EU
- 18 Monks with tablet and iphones
- 19 Self-immolations heroes protesting
- 20 Mixed Chinese-Tibetan children – T purity lost
- 21 Future plans returning Tibet/moving to NY
- 22 Newly arrived Tibetans learning EN, T Buddhism
- 23 Tibetan born Nepalese passport internal travel
- 24 Landless Tribal, castes and women oppression
- 25 'Unholy alliance' BJP-media-market
- 26 4th generation ethnic Chinese in Shimla
- 27 Tibetans living outside settlements Shimla
- 28 Being a researcher or reporter with good karma
- 29 No progress in India bcs of old mentality
- 30 Meeting young interpreter and camp officer Mundgod
- 31 Death and questions at Old people Home Mundgod
- 32 Supportive Tibetan parents
- 33 College – identity crisis for Tibetans
- 34 ADHAAR card – scam of Indian Gov
- 35 Tibetans from Nepal moving abroad
- 36 Hostility of Nepalese Gov to Tibetans > Solidarity of Buddhist Nepalese with T
- 37 Better life and education for T in India

- 38 Eviction of Tibetans from settlements if Indian Passport
- 39 CTA not supportive of Indian citizenship
- 40 Tibetans with Indian passport – still loyal to CTA
- 41 Tibetans going to Court to get Indian passport
- 42 Tibetan MPs = 'double standards', foreign passports
- 43 Miss Tibet in NY 2018
- 44 Indians lie, are careless, irresponsible
- 45 Homeless Tibetans –article in Washington Post, Japanese media, maybe BBC
- 46 Court ordered Indian passport for Tibetans born in India
- 47 Police verification – negative bcs no permanent address
- 48 'Indian citizenship changes nothing about me'
- 49 Indian system = unchangeable, hopeless, overbureacratic, overpopulated
- 50 Gender underrepresentation in T Parliament, decision making, same worldwide – men bias to power
- 51 Tibetans evicted from settlements – choice 'Be a Tibetan refugee OR Indian citizen'
- 52 TWA focus: Tibetan struggle, 2nd: T identity, culture, education, 3rd women employment, leadership
- 53 Recently arrived T refugees women – training into tailor business
- 54 TWA – patching up domestic violence, last resort Indian Police, Courts
- 55 TWA – leadership workshops for T female graduates
- 56 Relying solely on Foreign funds - hard to receive via banks- illegal in BJP Gov
- 57 Tibetan Association abroad – important for political support for Tibet
- 58 Tibetan settlement in Shimla – basic info, livelihood, Handicraft industry
- 59 Ramzen Alliance – no hope to return to Tibet
- 60 T with Indian passport (7 in Shimla) – to abandon RC, settlem, ec. subsidies
- 61 Personal history – book written on Tibet history
- 62 'Modi wave' to win in HP – strategic place for Tibetans
- 63 India-Tibet links historically, culture, religion, language, environment, borders
- 64 Tibetans = not refugees, not diaspora; 'in exile', self-governed
- 65 International resolutions 'to solve Tibet issue', not 'anti-China'
- 66 International support – political and financial
- 67 Indian Gov supporting Tibetans
- 68 T living abroad (except India) 'no option' but getting citizenship
- 69 Tibetans (in India) to be 'attached to CTA', 'responsible for T movement'
- 70 Tibetan Gov – 'not supporting, not objecting' to other passports – 'individual choice'
- 71 Tibetans can vote if dual citizens – unlike OCI holders
- 72 Blue Book Solidarity with Tibetans
- 73 First Tibetan PM elected in 2001, Dalai Lama stepped down from politics 2011
- 74 Tibetan Parliament – 45 members representing global Tibetans
- 75 Seat reservation for women (25%)
- 76 Tibetan MPs can be dual citizens, holding Green Book

- 77 Tibetan Parliament – open, transparent, non-violent, digital
- 78 Tibetans = ‘guests of India’ until ‘Tibet issue solved’
- 79 Tibetan identity in crisis’ in Tibet – China demographic policy
- 80 Post2008 China policy to control Tibetans’ movement
- 81 Personal history – father escaped Tibet
- 82 Tibetan TVC schools, Colleges, Vocational training
- 83 Tibetan settlements in remote areas – no jobs, but in cities (expensive life)
- 84 Young Tibetans – less job opportunities in India, moving to Western countries
- 85 Indian Gov jobs better paid than private jobs
- 86 Structure of Tibetan settlement Mundgod 9 camps, 9 monasteries
- 87 Main industries: farming and sweater business
- 88 Planning visits to camp 1 and 4 in the rain
- 89 Sharing experiences of work as translator/interpreter
- 90 Instructions / suggestions from Settlement Officer
- 91 Tibetan family moving to Canada
- 92 Tibetans’ house and land – allotted by IGov, not owned
- 93 Mother died in India, after arrival, travel in group with other Tibetans
- 94 Arrival in India at 37y, no marriage, children
- 95 Life in Tibet was hard, making clothes and shoes at home
- 96 Memory loss and eyesight loss
- 97 Mixing Indian and Tibetan dress code
- 98 Nuns becoming Ghesema (PhD) and teaching Buddhism
- 99 Majority of nuns from Tibet also Taiwan, China, Korea
- 100 Codes for becoming and living life of a nun
- 101 CTA funding and private donors – in exchange for prayer
- 102 Capacity of Old People Home
- 103 Few visits from families, or no families at all
- 104 Tibetans moving abroad leaving elders in Home
- 105 Leaving elders in Home if unable to care for them
- 106 Home for terminally ill and in-bed patients, monks, nuns, widows/ers
- 107 Death rites, prayers and candle lighting
- 108 In-house carers = helpers (not trained nurses)
- 109 Old People Home funded by CTA
- 110 Life in Tibet, farming, being nomads, no schooling
- 111 Living in tents, construction work upon arrival in India/ Making huts, receiving US aid by flights
- 112 Multiple crossings and migrations, since 30y old/ Multiple crossings of borders and states: Tibet – Nepal  
– India – Canada/ US (e.g.)
- 113 Family fleeing to India, children educated in India / Memories of fleeing Tibet
- 114 Having facilities and privileges in India, thanks to DL

- 115 Being in Tibetan army for 19 years, 2nd generation
- 116 Not wanting to have Indian passport and give back IC, RC
- 117 Hoping to return to Tibet still alive
- 118 Retired Tibetan officer – no pension bcs not Indian citizen
- 119 Current Tibetan regiment 22 defending India border
- 120 Tibetan regiment in Indian Army defending India border, trained to fight 1959
- 121 Having '100% Tibetan blood', 'being 90% Indian', living in India for 60+years
- 122 Being 'very happy' with the IGov work for Tibetans
- 123 Tibetan youth studying and working in Indian cities
- 124 Settlement officer planning and helping with my fieldwork, organising interviews
- 125 Sharing common experiences as sociologists studying at JNU
- 126 Potential documentary film making about old generation Tibetans
- 127 On gender, impermanence, me getting lost in Mundgod fields
- 128 My role as a 'window to the world' about Tibetans today
- 129 Settlement officer arranging my meetings, Interpreter's help, my partner driving hired car in the camps
- 130 "Feeling for" people suffering, meditating, being content, finding happiness within
- 131 Settlement officer visiting all religious places, sharing good wishes, peaceful living
- 132 Different religious communities living together, political mileage, communal clashes
- 133 My learning experience in Mundgod
- 134 TWA active on social media, Indian Gov rel, officials, offices abroad
- 135 Visiting 2 T monasteries, 2 traditional sects
- 136 The camp - transit point – T going abroad, selling sweaters India
- 137 Visiting T health center, T dr and nurses, lang issue
- 138 Tibetan day school visit, 100 kids, tour by EN teacher
- 139 Tibetan boarding schools in India after 5th grade
- 140 'Thank you India' drawings in EN
- 141 US and UK school funding
- 142 Meeting Tibetan children, greetings in EN
- 143 Meeting School Master, Tibetan who came from Tibet
- 144 School books published in T and EN by CTA
- 145 Wearing Tibetan dress and school uniform

**Total: 145 categories**

## **Appendix 26: All themes from all coded interviews 2017. Total: 75 themes**

1. New Tibetan refugees decreasing in numbers
2. Newly arrived Tibetans aiming at Tibetan and EN education and Monasteries
3. China posing security threats for India
4. Tibetans losing hope of return/independence
5. Tibet political issue being about emotions, not type of citizenship
6. 'Tibetanness' being eternal
7. Refugee status – no Indian Government jobs
8. Tibetans living abroad (Europe)
9. Tibetans with Nepalese passport
10. Tibetans living outside settlements (Shimla)
11. Old People's Home (Mundgod)
12. Tibetan Musicians (Dharamshala)
13. Chinese-Indians for 4 generations in Shimla
14. 'Old Indian mentality' - no progress
15. 'Unholy alliance: Gov.-media-market'
16. Indian College life – identity crisis for Tibetans
17. Better life and education for T in India
18. Hostility of Nepalese Gov to Tibetans <-> Solidarity of Buddhist Nepalese with T
19. Tibetans from Nepal moving abroad
20. Eviction of Tibetans with Indian Passport from settlements
21. CTA not supportive of Indian citizenship
22. Tibetans with Indian passport – still loyal to CTA
23. Tibetans going to Court to get Indian passport
24. Tibetan MPs = 'double standards', foreign passports
25. Police verification – negative bcs no permanent address
26. Indian system = unchangeable, hopeless, overbureacratic, overpopulated
27. Focus of TWA on Tibetan identity, culture in exile and women leadership
28. TWA funding issues, donors abroad
29. Tibetans evicted from settlements – 'Be a Tibetan refugee OR Indian citizen' ('you can't enjoy two facilities')
30. Ramzen Alliance – no hope to return to Tibet
31. T with Indian passport (7 in Shimla) – to abandon RC, settlements, ec. subsidies
32. 'Modi wave' to win in HP – strategic place for Tibetans
33. India – Tibet historically tied
34. Tibetans = not refugees, not diaspora; 'in exile', self-governed by CTA
35. International resolutions 'to solve Tibet issue'
36. Tibetans living abroad (except India) 'no option' but getting citizenship

37. Tibetans (in India) to be 'attached to CTA', 'responsible for Tibetan movement'
38. Tibetan Parliament – 45 members representing global Tibetans
39. Tibetan Parliament – open, transparent, non-violent, digital
40. Tibetans = 'guests of India' until 'Tibet issue solved'
41. Tibetan identity in crisis' in Tibet – Post 2008 China demographic policy
42. Young Tibetans – less job opportunities in India – moving to Western countries
43. Structure of Tibetan settlement Mundgod 9 camps, 9 monasteries
44. Main industries: farming and sweater business
45. Sharing experiences of work as translator/interpreter
46. Tibetans moving abroad (from Mundgod)
47. Tibetans not owning land or property in India
48. Hard life and little education in Tibet
49. Becoming and being a nun and Gheshema (PhD in Buddhism)
50. Majority of nuns new arrivals from Tibet
51. CTA funding and private donors
52. Old People Home funded by CTA
53. Death rites, cremation
54. Tibetans moving abroad, leaving elders in Old People Home
55. Home for terminally ill and in-bed patients, monks, nuns, widows/ers
56. Life in Tibet as nomads, farmers, no schooling
57. Life in India upon arrival: living in huts, making roads and dams
58. Life in India currently: facilities, privileges, education, close to Dalai Lama
59. Tibetan regiment 22 defending Indian borders: past and present
60. Hope to return to Tibet
61. Not wanting Indian passport, but no pension without it
62. "Being 90% Indian" – 'Having 100% Tibetan blood"
63. Multiple crossings and migrations in past: Tibet – Pitorgar – Dehradun – Hubli – Mundgod (in 1966)
64. Multiple crossings, migrations now - Tibetan youth: Mundgod – Bangalore - New Delhi – West (Canada)
66. The kind help of an army of people (settlement officer, interpreter, partner)
67. "Feeling for" suffering around while being content within
68. Different religious communities living together, with "political mileage"
69. Me (researcher) being a 'window to the world' about Tibetans today
70. TWA led camp tour in Majnu ka tilla (New Delhi)
71. TWA active in Tibetan social life, events, Indian officials meetings, on Facebook
72. Visiting Tibetan monasteries, health center and day school
73. Tibetan camp ND as transit point between India and Abroad
74. Tibetan school taught in Tibetan and EN up to 5th grade
75. 'Thank you, India' drawings in EN by 7y old kids

## **Appendix 27: Themes 2<sup>nd</sup> round of coding 2017**

1. Newly arrived Tibetans in India: education, Tibetan language, religion, EN lang, nuns, monks
2. Tibetan emotions – ‘Tibetanness’ is not about passport/citizenship
3. Tibetans living abroad (Western countries)
4. Tibetans in Nepal: Chinese pressure, Nepalese Gov hostility towards Tibetans, Buddhist Nepalese celebrating Dalai Lama birthday
5. Eviction of Tibetans with Indian Passport from settlements: ‘Be a Tibetan refugee OR Indian citizen’ (‘you can’t enjoy two facilities’)
6. CTA not supportive of Indian citizenship
7. Tibetans with Indian passport – still loyal to CTA
8. Tibetans going to Court to get Indian passport
9. Tibetan MPs - ‘double standards’, foreign passports
10. Tibetan Women Association: New Delhi, Dharamshala, Mundgod, abroad
11. Tibetans in Shimla: 7 with Indian passport, sweater industry, Tibetan market, mixed families
12. International resolutions ‘to solve Tibet issue’
13. Tibetans = ‘guests of India’ until ‘Tibet issue solved’
14. Tibetans = not refugees, not diaspora; ‘in exile’, self-governed by CTA
15. Tibetans (in India) to be ‘attached to CTA’, ‘responsible for Tibetan movement’
16. Tibetan identity in crisis’ in Tibet – Post 2008 China demographic policy
17. Young Tibetans – less job opportunities in India – moving to Western countries
18. Tibetan settlement Mundgod (9 camps, 9 monasteries, 1 school, 1 old people home, 1 hospital)
19. Life in Tibet: no schooling, farming, nomadic life
20. Monasteries and nunneries: being a nun, arriving from Tibet, also Korea, China, Singapore
21. Life in India: facilities, privileges, education, close to Dalai Lama
22. “Being 90% Indian” but ‘Having 100% Tibetan blood’
23. Fighting in Tibetan Regiment 22, Indian Army for 30 y – no pension bcs no Indian passport
24. Multiple crossings and migrations in past: Tibet – Pitorgar – Dehradun – Hubli – Mundgod (in 1966)
25. Multiple crossings, now Tibetan youth: Mundgod – Bangalore - New Delhi – Canada
26. Research process: the kind help of an army of people (settlement offic, interpreter, partner)
27. Tibetan camp Majnu ka tilla in New Delhi as transit point between India and Abroad
28. Tibetans not owning land or property in India
29. ‘Thank you, India’ starts when you are 7y old



## **Appendix 28: Themes 3<sup>rd</sup> round of coding 2017**

### **1 Newly arrived Tibetans in India: security checks, education, monks and nuns**

- decreasing numbers, visit to camp, for education, Tibetan + EN language, nuns, monks
- lack of job opportunities in India: some chose to go back to Tibet and be tourist guides, some chose to migrate again, e.g. to US if family networks.

### **2 Tibetan emotions, 'Tibetanness'- 'Being 90% Indian', 'Having 100% Tibetan blood'**

- is not about passport/citizenship, one can have any other passport, Indian, American, British
- it is about emotions, feeling Tibetan, being loyal to Tibetan cause
- 'Thank you, India' starts when you are 7y old
- Tibetan day schools and boarding schools – preserving culture and language, learning Tibetan, then English, then Hindi

### **3 Tibetans with Indian passport - Individual choice, eviction, homelessness, loyalties**

- Eviction of Tibetans with Indian Passport from settlements: 'Be a Tibetan refugee OR Indian citizen' ('you cannot enjoy two facilities')
- Tibetans with Indian passport – still loyal to CTA (says journalist who got I. passport – see the process) and expected to be responsible for Tibetan movement (says CTA representative)
- Tibetans going to Court to get Indian passport, despite Court ruling all should get passport
- Seven Tibetans in Shimla got Indian passport, but they reside outside the settlement
- Tibetans in Shimla: capital of Himachal Pradesh, the state when CTA resides – important for political and strategic purpose
- The current Tibetan settlement officers was the secretary of the Tibetan Prime Minister

### **4 Nomads in Tibet and life of 'privileges' in India for the older generation of Tibetans (Mundgod)**

- Older generation hoping for return, talking about hardship in Tibet (no schooling, farming, nomadic life) – life in India: education, housing, jobs in cities, close to Dalai Lama
- Former Tibetan army personnel: have fought in Tibetan regiments of Indian Army for 30y, "Being 90% Indian" but 'Having 100% Tibetan blood'
- Old People home: for parents left behind by children moving abroad, widows, widowers, terminally ill patients, death rites.
- Monasteries and nunneries: being a nun, arriving from Tibet, also Korea, China, Singapore

### **5 Tibetans moving abroad: jobs, education, political pressure, multiple migrations**

- Lack of jobs for educated youth
- No access to Indian Gov jobs unless Indian citizens, not owning land or property in India
- Tibetans in Nepal: Chinese pressure, Nepalese Gov hostility towards Tibetans,
- Buddhist Nepalese celebrating Dalai Lama birthday
- Multiple crossings and migrations: Tibet – Pitorgar – Dehradun – Hubli – Mundgod (in 1966)
- Multiple crossings, migrations now T. youth: Mundgod – Bangalore - New Delhi – Canada

## **Appendix 29. Organising the data from PhD Theatre Workshops 2019**

### **1. Video recording of the Theatre Workshop at TIPA, 19 July 2019**

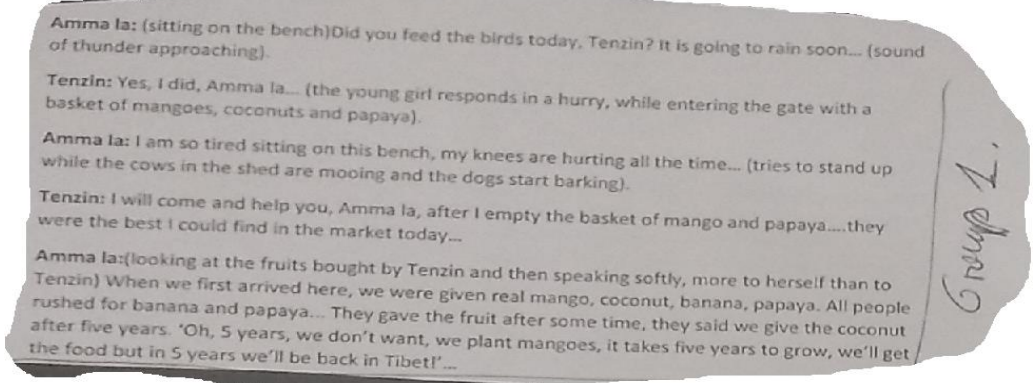

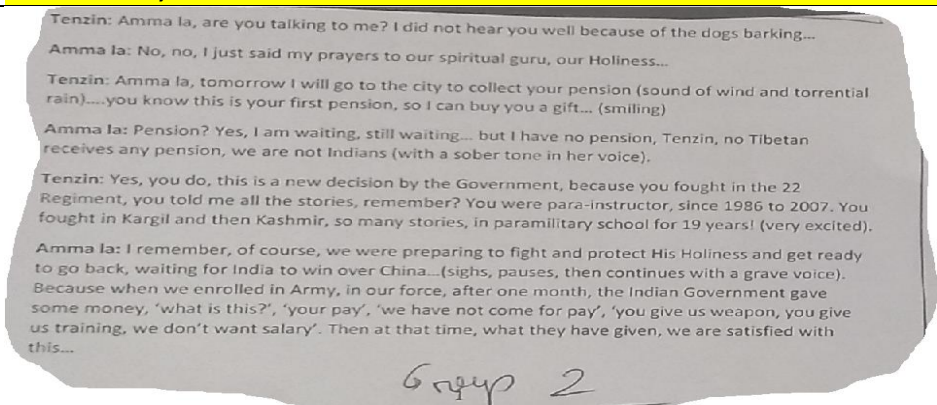
<b>Place of workshop</b>	<b>Video no.</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Plot key summary</b>
TIPA	1	Tibetan	49 seconds	Intro + animals + Amma la and Tenzin
TIPA	2	Tibetan	58 seconds	Pension + army talk
TIPA	3	Tibetan	2.31 min (4 short videos)	Couple at an office EUR/\$ exchange + animals in barn + rain + audience laughs
TIPA	5	Tibetan	3.58 min	Narrator + mobiles + tea mugs + gender
TIPA	6	Tibetan	2.14 min	Cook + veggies + karma la + clothes hanging
TIPA	7	Tibetan	2 min	Karma la + snake + dialogue
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Tibetan</b>	<b>13 min</b>	


### **2. Video recording of the Theatre Workshop at Tibetan Library, 20 July 2019**

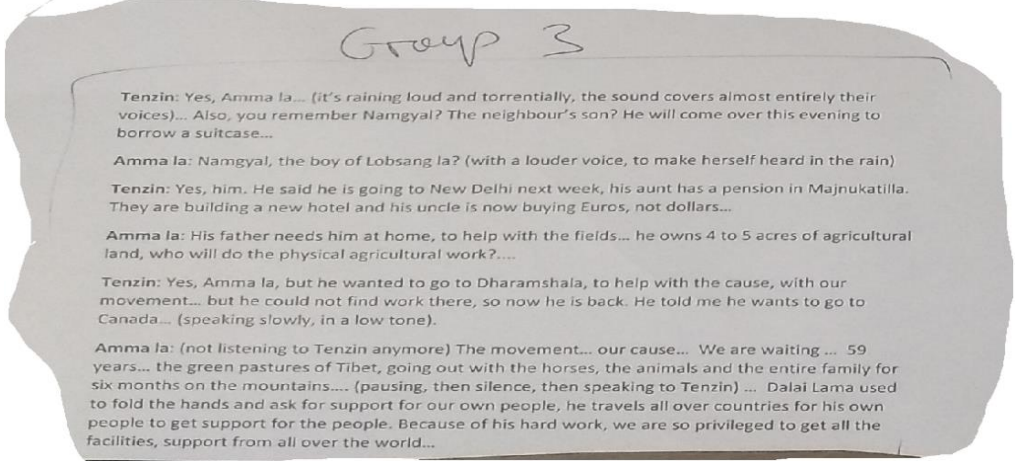

<b>Place of workshop</b>	<b>Video no.</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Plot key summary</b>
Tibetan Library	1	English	2.34 min	Intro + Amma la is monk + pain in her / his feet + audience laughs
Tibetan Library	2	Tibetan	1.45 min	Narrator + dog barking + pension talk
Tibetan Library	3	English	2.41 min	Nun + narrator and Amma la + Namgyal is drunk + Monk = his father + end – monastery, praying
Tibetan Library	4	English	3.29 min	Narrator + reading the plot + two trees + funny
Tibetan Library	5	English	3.25 min	Family + reinterpretation of the story
Tibetan Library	6	EN + Tibetan	2.34 min	A tree (teenage boy) + 2 teenage girls as Amma la and Tenzin
Tibetan Library	7	Tibetan	2.32 min	Mobile phone use + taxi in the end
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>11.29 min</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Tibetan</b>	<b>6.11 min</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>EN+Tibetan</b>	<b>17.4 min</b>	

## Appendix 30. Tables with visual structure and presentation of 'Amma la' data

### Summary of the Theatre workshop 'Amma la' at TIPA, Dharamshala, 19.07.2019


Group 1	Place: TIPA, Dharamshala	Date: 19.07.2019
Section 1 playscript 'Amma la'		
Performance summary group 1	<p><b>Characters:</b> seven: five teenage girls and two teenage boys. Amma la and Tenzin are both teenage girls-actors. A teenage boy enacts a tree, standing behind them, with his arms lifted horizontally. Two teenage girls and one teenage boy enact cows sitting on all four in a barn, with grass in front of them and mooing. A teenage girl plays the role of a dog, wandering around Amma la who pets the dog when barks.</p> <p><b>Props:</b> real fruits, bag, real grass, in front of 'animals', the sounds of cows mooing, dog barking, rain and thunder, boy-actor as tree standing, chairs, table.</p> <p><b>The dialogue</b> between Amma la and Tenzin summarizes almost verbatim section one of the playscript, but leaves out the last paragraph of Amma la's story about growing fruits.</p>	
Screenshots: Video recording, group 1		
Group 2	Place: TIPA, Dharamshala	Date: 19.07.2019
Section 2 playscript 'Amma la'		
Performance summary group 2	<p><b>Characters:</b> six: five teenage boys and one teenage girl. Amma la is enacted by a teenage girl, Tenzin by a teenage boy. In the corner of the room there are four other characters: three teenage boys lifting weights and doing exercises, enacting the role of soldiers, and a fourth one is their leader/ instructor.</p>	

	<p><b>Props:</b> weights, sounds of running and exercising, instructor giving verbal orders, chairs.</p> <p><b>The dialogue</b> between Amma la and Tenzin summarizes almost verbatim section two of the playscript, about the right to pension for Tibetans who fought in the Indian army.</p>
Screenshots: Video recording, group 2	


Group 3	Place: TIPA, Dharamshala	Date: 19.07.2019
Section 2 playscript 'Amma la'		
Performance summary group 3	<p><b>Characters:</b> five: two teenage girls and three teenage boys. A couple (a teenage girl and teenage boy called Dhondup), a receptionist role is enacted by a teenage girl. A staff worker at a foreign exchange office. Amma la's role is played by the young woman who was looking for a hotel room and Tenzin's role is the teenage boy who exchanged EUR in the previous scene.</p> <p><b>Props:</b> banknotes of EUR and \$, business cards as ID proof and ADHAAR card, desk of the exchange office and reception at the hotel, chairs, table, plates, sounds of mooing cows.</p> <p><b>The dialogues:</b> this group improvised their performance and added new characters and dialogues. In the first scene the young couple has a romantic dialogue, holding hands and going to hire a hotel room for one night but need to exchange foreign currency (EUR) to local currency (Indian rupees). In the following scene the exchange of money is taking place between a staff and two teenage boys. In the final scene between Amma la and Tenzin, Amma la is preparing an imaginary meal and having a dialogue with Tenzin, her son, following closely the playscript but in the end Tenzin decides to go and give the suitcase to Namgyal, the neighbour's son, instead of waiting for Namgyal to come and collect it, and so he leaves the room to do this task.</p>	
Screenshots: Video recording, group 3		


Group 4 did not perform section 4 of the theatre playscript 'Amma la', which was left out and the group members were re-allocated to other existing groups



Group 5	Place: TIPA, Dharamshala	Date: 19.07.2019
Section 5 playscript 'Amma la'	<p>Act II</p> <p><i>A bench. The tree is sprouting leaves.</i></p> <p><i>Morning</i></p> <p>Amma la: Namgyal did not come last night, did he? I was waiting, then fell asleep...a boy came in my dream and said something,... I don't remember.... (takes a deep breath)</p> <p>Tenzin: Amma la, he said he would be coming today. We will be waiting... I fed the birds this morning. Did you see the tree is sprouting? (with a joyful voice)? We will have coconuts soon! But I saw a snake trail in the garden. Do you think the cobras are here again? (worried)</p> <p>Amma la: Maybe, but cobras never harmed any of us, since we first came here, we always lived in harmony with the nature... (speaking with a calm voice). Karma la is soon going to Manali with the sweater business. I will be going to stay in her house and look after it....</p> <p>Tenzin: Oh, again you have to stay in their house, you were there last year, too... (slightly unhappy)</p> <p>Amma la: I will wait for her to come and let me know when she needs me... Is Namgyal here?</p>	
Performance summary group 5	<p><b>Characters:</b> five: four teenage girls and one teenage boy. A teenage girl enacts a snake, entering the scene by hissing in undulatory locomotion, another teenage girl is impersonating the dream and the morning whisper in the ears of Amma la, waking her up. A third one sitting at the table enacts the neighbour, Karma la. Amma la is played by the fourth one and her son, Tenzin is a teenage boy in this play.</p> <p><b>Props:</b> table and chairs, real fruits (apples) in a bowl, hissing sound of a snake, notebook and pen, sounds of chirping birds.</p> <p><b>The dialogue:</b> follows the content of the 'Amma la' playscript. Tenzin adds a note of poetry and of creativity when he describes the natural environment in their backyard and the sounds of birds. The neighbour's role, Karma la, is passive and static but visual.</p>	
Screenshots: Video recording, group 5		


Group 6	Place: TIPA, Dharamshala	Date: 19.07.2019
Section 6 playscript 'Amma la'	<p>Tenzin: No, he is not here yet, Amma la. We can wait a little... You know, my friend from College, she said she is getting a job as a nurse in a Hospital in New Delhi. She will have a good salary... (with excitement in her voice). Maybe I should also go there with her and find a better job? But only Government jobs are safe and well paid... (disappointed)... How can I get a Government job if I have my RC, and not an Indian passport?... (sighs deeply and then stops talking).</p> <p>Amma la: New Delhi is a big city, it's overpopulated, over 14 million ... and we are Tibetans. We live in India, eat the food and drink this water, speak the local language, so maybe we are 90% Indians this way, but we know that our blood is 100% Tibetan.</p> <p>Tenzin: Yes Amma la... I have never been to Tibet, you know, I only heard your stories... and how will I go there? When would we get our freedom back? ...The Middle Way approach had no dialogue with China since 2011... I don't know, Amma la... (confused)... I will ask Namgyal when he comes ...</p>	
Performance summary group 6	<p><b>Characters:</b> five: four teenage girls and one teenage boy. One teenage girl plays the role of the narrator, the second one plays the role of Amma la (mother), the third one is the neighbour, while the fourth one enacts the role of the schoolmate and the teenage boy plays the role of Namgyal, who bring a gas cylinder.</p>	

	<p><b>Props:</b> chairs, mobile phones, sound of door knocking, teacups, imaginary gas cylinder.</p> <p><b>The dialogue:</b> this group created a completely different story as compared to the content of the playscript 'Amma la': in their story there is a mother, a father and a boy, called Tenzin who does not pick up his mother's phone call. In their performance, this group kept the names of the characters, but they assigned them different roles and dialogues.</p> <p>Amma la goes to look for her son at her neighbour's house, they both call him on the mobile, he does not pick up. The neighbour's husband is jobless, wandering around with friends and not responsive. The two women discuss the bad luck they had with such husband / son. The teenage girl who brings them tea is the neighbour's schoolmate who finished her studies and got a good job in New Delhi. The teenage boy who brings the gas cylinder is called Namgyal. The narrator ends the story with a morale about children taking care of their parents as they took care of the children.</p>
Screenshots: Video recording, group 6	

Group 7	Place: TIPA, Dharamshala	Date: 19.07.2019
Section 7 playscript 'Amma la'	<p>Amma la: Yes, Namgyal should be coming... We have been waiting... Did you prepare the suitcase? (sitting on the bench for one minute, then getting up and walking)</p> <p>Tenzin: (not listening to the last question) Even the daughter of Karma la moved to US and said that Tibetans there are very active for the Tibet cause... (pauses then stops, changes the topic). Do you know the cook at the Old People's Home? He just came from Tibet last year. He said that he could not find a place to stay in India, rents are high in the cities, so he came here, to our village. Maybe Karma la can give him her house to stay and look after it? Since it will be empty? (with hopeful tone).</p> <p>Amma la: You can ask Karma la when she is gonna be here.... (tired, sitting on the bench again).</p> <p>Tenzin: When is she coming?</p> <p>Amma la: She said today... And Namgyal? Has he come?</p> <p>Tenzin: Waiting....</p> <p><i>End of the play.</i></p> <p>Group 7</p>	
Performance summary group 7	<p><b>Characters:</b> three: two teenage girls and one teenage boy.</p> <p><b>Props:</b> blanket, chairs, wooden stick, table, apples and grass, knife, bowl, imaginary knock on the door, imaginary washing of hands and of the vegetables.</p> <p><b>The dialogue:</b> summary of the playscript 'Amma la', without major changes to the narrative. They decide, however, to bring to life the character of the cook, role played by a teenage girl, who comes to the house to cook. The group left out of the story the line about the daughter of Karma la who moved to the US and is active in the Tibetan movement.</p>	
Screenshots: Video recording, group 7		

### Summary of the Theatre workshop 'Amma la' at Tibetan Library, Dharamshala, 20.07.2019

**Table 1. Tibetan Library Theatre workshop: Group 1 – section 1 of the play 'Amma la'**

<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Place: Tibetan Library</b>	<b>Date: 20.07.2019</b>
Section 1: Summary of playscript 'Amma la'	Introduction of characters, Amma la, 60 years old born in Tibet, talks of pain in her feet while Tenzin, 25 years old employed in an Indian city, carries a basket of fruits. Amma la speaks of the time of her arrival in India, when they received fruits to grow, but hoped to return to Tibet in less than five years. Background sound of rain and thunder and dogs barking,	
Performance summary group 1	<b>Characters:</b> five: two young women and three monks. One young woman plays the role of the narrator, one monk plays the role of Amma la, the second young woman plays the role of Tenzin, and the other two monks enact sounds of rain and thunder and of barking dogs. <b>Language:</b> English <b>Props:</b> plastic bottles crushed to enact rain, sound of thunder and barking dogs, imaginary walking stick, bowl with tennis balls representing fruits. <b>The dialogue:</b> follows very closely the playscript of 'Amma la' but adds the role of the narrator and contains a gender-religious switch: monk enacting an old mother.	
Screenshots: Video recording, group 1		


**Table 2. Tibetan Library Theatre workshop: Group 2 – section 2 of the play 'Amma la'**

<b>Group 2</b>	<b>Place: Tibetan Library</b>	<b>Date: 20.07.2019</b>
Section 2: Summary of playscript 'Amma la'	Amma la and Tenzin talk about the pension that the Indian Government decided to grant to all retired Tibetans who fought in the Tibetan Regiment 22, including Amma la. But Amma la does not believe that Tibetans can have pension in India, since they are not Indians. There is torrential rain outside.	
Performance summary group 2	<b>Characters:</b> five: two young women and three young men, one of them is a monk. One young woman enacts the narrator, the second one plays the role of Amma la, one young man plays Tenzin and the second one enacts a barking dog while the monk enacts the role of a tree. <b>Language:</b> Tibetan <b>Props:</b> chairs, shawl, enacting tree, sound of dog barking. <b>The dialogue:</b> follows the content of the playscript but adds the role of narrator. The monk plays the role of a passive tree.	




Screenshots: Video recording, group 2		
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**Table 3. TL Theatre workshop: Group 3 – section 3 of the play ‘Amma la’**

<b>Group 3</b>	<b>Place: Tibetan Library</b>	<b>Date: 20.07.2019</b>
Section 3: Summary of playscript ‘Amma la’	Amma la and Tenzin speak about Namgyal, their neighbour’s son, who wants to go to New Delhi, where his aunt has a pension. He tried to work in Dharamshala, for the Tibetan cause, and now wants to migrate to Canada. Amma la remembers the nomadic life in Tibet and Dalai Lama’s work for Tibetan people in India. The rain covers their voices at times.	
Performance summary group 3	<p><b>Characters:</b> five: one nun, one monk, two other young men. The nun plays double role: the narrator and Amma la. The monk plays the role of the neighbour and the monk at the end of the play, the two young men enact the roles of Tenzin and of Lobsang’s son, Namgyal.</p> <p><b>Language:</b> English</p> <p><b>Props:</b> chairs, robe, sound of rain and thunder, imaginary alcohol drinking and injecting drugs, imaginary prayer beads.</p> <p><b>The dialogue:</b> does not follow the plot written in the play ‘Amma la’, but retains its main characters, the nun enacts both the narrator and the role of Amma la, and to mark out the transformation of one character to another, she uses her robe, so whenever she puts the nun robe on her head, she became Amma la, when she took it off she was the narrator. They decide against having Namgyal, their neighbour’s son, as a character who wants to migrate to Canada via New Delhi, and to leave his father Lobsang alone in the village. Namgyal is impersonating a young Tibetan who is a drug addict and an alcoholic, to the great dismay of his father. The end of the play brings Namgyal back from his addiction and offers a path to salvation: his friend Tenzin brings him to a monastery to become a Tibetan monk.</p>	
Screenshots: Video recording, group 3		


<b>Group 4</b>	<b>Place: Tibetan Library</b>	<b>Date: 20.07.2019</b>
Section 4: Summary of playscript ‘Amma la’	Tenzin talks about the young Tibetans wanting to move abroad, including Namgyal, the neighbour’s son who wants to go to Canada. Settling abroad means getting another passport which enables one to visit Tibet. Amma la speaks about her parents who did not send her to school and how they moved to India to do agriculture, even if they had no knowledge of it and were expecting to go back to Tibet very soon. Tenzin is worried that the Tibetan solution is not coming up, the youth are losing hope and that citizenship is nothing but a piece of paper. The wind and rain stopped. Amma la asks when Namgyal is	



	coming to collect the suitcase and Tenzin replies they should be waiting, to which Amma la responds that they have been waiting for 59 years.
Performance summary group 4	<p><b>Characters:</b> five: three young women, one young man and one monk. One young woman is the narrator, another one plays the role of Amma la, the third one plays the role of one of the two trees. One young man plays the role of Tenzin and the other one is a monk enacts the 2nd tree.</p> <p><b>Language:</b> English</p> <p><b>Props:</b> chairs, two characters acting as trees, the monk uses his robe and lifted hands to enact the moving branches of the tree.</p> <p><b>The dialogue:</b> the narrator and two main characters read the dialogue from the script without making any changes to the text. But the novel elements in this groups' play are the (over)active role of the tree, who is moving around all the time, provoking laughter. And the tone of voice and gestures of the young man playing Tenzin's role produce reactions of amusement and laughter in the audience.</p>
Screenshots: Video recording, group 4	

<b>Group 5</b>	<b>Place: Tibetan Library</b>	<b>Date: 20.07.2019</b>
Section 5: Summary of playscript 'Amma la'	This is the second act of the play and Amma la asks Tenzin if Namgyal came last evening, Tenzin replies they are still waiting, and she saw a cobra trail in the garden. Amma la reassures her that cobras never harmed anyone living in harmony with the nature. And then Amma la informs Tenzin that Karma la is going to Manali to sell sweaters, so she would be moving to her house temporarily, which makes Tenzin slightly unhappy.	
Performance summary group 5	<p><b>Characters:</b> five: two young women, two young men and one monk. One young woman enacts Amma la, the other one the neighbour, Karma. The monk is the narrator and other two young men are Amma la's children.</p> <p><b>Language:</b> English</p> <p><b>Props:</b> chair, walking stick, imaginary knock on a door.</p> <p><b>The dialogue:</b> there is a mix of dialogue following the playscript and new elements in this play. There is a narrator who introduces a Tibetan family with one mother and two sons. The younger son is described as naughty and careless and is often late at home in the evening. The second part maintains the story of the playscript 'Amma la' but brings the character of the neighbour, Karma la, alive, she comes to visit, and requests Amma la to look after her house. In this play Nagmyal becomes the character of the younger son.</p>	
Screenshots: Video recording, group 5		

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Group 6	Place: Tibetan Library	Date: 20.07.2019
Section 6: Summary of playscript 'Amma la'	Tenzin speaks about her friend who got a job as a nurse in New Delhi and complains about not having access to Indian Gov jobs with an RC and not an Indian passport. Amma ta talks about New Delhi being overpopulated and Tibetans who maintain their identity in India. Tenzin wonders about going to Tibet, which she has never seen, and about how to get the freedom back.	
Performance summary group 6	<b>Characters:</b> four: two young women and two young men. One young man is the narrator and the other one enacts the role of the tree. The two young women play the role of Amma la and her daughter, Tenzin. <b>Language:</b> English + Tibetan <b>Props:</b> chairs, character enacting a tree, imaginary microphone <b>The dialogue:</b> a narrator introduces the story and the characters in half English, half Tibetan. The dialogue continues in Tibetan between the two young women enacting the roles of Amma la and her daughter Tenzin. They follow very closely the playscript of 'Amma la'.	
Screenshots: Video recording, group 6		

Group 7	Place: Tibetan Library	Date: 20.07.2019
Section 7: Summary of playscript 'Amma la'	Amma la asks Tenzin if she prepared the suitcase for Namgyal, but Tenzin speaks about the daughter of Karma la who moved to the US and is active in the Tibetan cause there. Tenzin then mentions the cook in the Old People's Home who came from Tibet and has no accommodation, asking if the empty house of the neighbour who went to Manali could be offered to him. The play ends with Amma la asking if Namgyal came and Tenzin replies 'waiting'.	
Performance summary group 7	<b>Characters:</b> five: two young women, one young man, one nun and one monk. The two young women play the role of Amma la and Sonam, who is the daughter of the neighbour Karma la. One young man plays the role of Tenzin, the son of Amma la. The monk enacts the sounds of rain and thunder, and the nun plays the role of Namgyal, who arrives to collect his suitcase. <b>Language:</b> English+ Tibetan <b>Props:</b> one real mobile phone and one virtual phone, chairs, sound of thunder, imaginary suitcase, imaginary taxi. <b>The dialogue:</b> there is a mix between following the playscript and new elements in this group's play. The first part brings the character of Karma's daughter alive and names her Sonam, showing a phone call between Tenzin and Sonam, who is active in the Students for Free Tibet movement in the USA while Tenzin sits idle in a Tibetan settlement in India. The second part follows the playscript to some extent, but it includes novel elements. Amma la asks Tenzin about his studies, he talks about Sonam and then about the new cook, whom they name Lhakpa. He suggests that Lhakpa could stay in their neighbour's house, whose new name in this group's play is Lhadon. In the end Amma la asks Tenzin if he prepared Namgyal's suitcase. And Namgyal, role played by the nun, arrives to collect it and calls a taxi.	



### **Appendix 31. Technique of 2019 PhD data analysis: 'Amma la performances.**

Coding and categorising the data emerging from the 2019 'Amma la' performances and identifying key concepts and themes

**Version 1: Manual coding and selecting key words / categories after describing and analysing all the theatre performances using literature on performance**

**Version 2: Key words / categories: adding all key words together**

Waiting – Performance - Ethnography – Possibilities - Shared meanings – Process - Creating (a scene) - Enacting (a scene) – Witnessing - Self-reflexive - Intersecting – Self-questioning – Personal and Human experiences – Identity – Location – Embodiment – Loss - Militant Hope – Migration – Movement – Geopolitics - Political theatre – Agency – Empathy – Solidarity – Kindness – Imagination - 'the other is me' – Storytelling - Trained actors - Facilitator (for theatre performance) - Volunteer-participants - Testimonial theatre - Pah-la (father) - Amma la (mother) - Tibetan Theatre - Honesty in representation - Democratically sharing research - Theatrical techniques – Restlessness - Scene-setting - Overpowering of words/voice through sounds – Listening - Losing life at sea - Street theatre - Devising (a play) - Moving an audience - Dramatizing narrative - Conveying (impressions of fieldwork) - Life, death and migration - Theatrical representation - Fabricated reality - Embodied and creative enactments - Mind/body dichotomy - Sounds and gestures - Volunteers-turned-actors - Time/timely/timeless/ timing - Process of becoming - [amla@theatre.gmail.com](mailto:amla@theatre.gmail.com) - Asking for permission (to post a flyer) - Drama workshop - Invitation (to do 2 theatre workshops) - Games and exercises - Relationship to the body – Practising – Mechanisation (of character) - Experimenting emotions - Preparing the body - Recognizing the world through the body - Forgetting (pre-condition for learning) - State of unknowing - Space of discovery – Consent - Interpreter – Translating – Laughing – Enjoying - Being happy - Learning – managing time - Unfinished workshop – Incompleteness - Institute of Performing Arts – Expectations - Self-doubt – Confidence - Enacting a story - The question of language - Non-human elements - Animals and sounds (wind, rain) - Enacting sounds - Talent, creativity and imagination - Alternative performative ways of knowing - Co-creating (dialogue and performance) - Spontaneous, intuitive, experiential, affective responses - Enacting a tree/cow/dog/cobra - Feeding birds – Praying - Props/ theatrical staging/decorative elements - Immersing in the story - Enlivening the story - Displaying romance - Audience Applauding – Laughing - Receiving money from abroad / remittances - Out-of-marriage relationship - Living abroad – Determination - Changing narrative - Re-interpreting - Ending the waiting process - Beyond waiting – Sleeping – Whispering – Poetry – Chirping – Hissing - Imaginary knock on door - Karmic destiny - Taking care (of parents) - Hiding behind a curtain - Washing vegetables - Senior artists - Wearing costumes, wigs and masks - Nice stage - Embodied knowledge - Shared learning - Collaboration and

reflection (on the human condition) - Introducing new meanings – Singing – Dancing - Co-production - Human condition - Temporality (of knowledge) – Hopeful – Confident – Captivating - Non-verbal - Enacting kindness – Expectations – Reflecting – Soundscapes – Empathy – Amusement - Miming (back pain) – Confused – Uncertainty - Intentions – Nostalgic – Emotional – Entertaining - Laughter (easing up tensions) - Making sense - Adopting/ rejecting – Citizen – Escaping - Aiming - Protecting (Dalai Lama) – Independence - Non-human position (tree) – Dramatically - Leading role - Transformation (of character) - Role play - Drug addiction – Alcoholic - Devoted father – Enjoying - Injecting - Becoming a monk – Salvation – Enriching – Transforming – Rehabilitation – Oppression - Moving abroad - Waiting (for 59 years) – Passport - Tone of voice – Gestures - Body-method-thesis-exile - Physical theatre – Theatricality - Viscerality (of exile experience) - Actor-as-creator – Worrying - Being responsible – Protesting - Ethical responsibility - Experiential drama - Language-identity-culture-hybridity - Dislocation (of traditional identity) – Alienation – Inequality – Hegemony – Suitcase - Defiance – Resolution - Waiting versus hope - Ending the wait - Agency and hope - Ending hopeless future - Art practices – Interrupting - New knowledges – Limitations – Implications – Honesty – Transparency – Planning – Constraints – Rehearsing – Decolonizing – Accepting - Embracing failures - Performing without performers – Contradictions – Languages – Struggling – Playscript - Non-rehearsed performances - Authenticity - Cooperation – Detachment – Attraction – Adaptation – Transformation – Preserving - Fictional representation – Questioning - Social identities - Political identities – Network - Buddhism, English and Chinese – Limbo - Political activism – Leadership – Ambition - Refusing to migrate - Serving the community - Performing duty - Navigating pathways - Exploring resources – Smoking – Literature - Transnational lives - Connecting (place of birth with exile) – Belonging - Cross-generational lives - Seeking blessings - Owning hotels-restaurants-BMW – Wealthy – Intersectional - Painting a vivid picture

### **Version 3: Key words / categories**

#### **Delineating nouns from verbs (ending in -ing)**

<b>Nouns</b>	<b>Verbs (-ing)</b>
<p>– Performance - Ethnography – Possibilities - Shared meanings – Process - Self-reflexive -Personal and Human experiences – Identity – Location – Embodiment – Loss - Militant Hope – Migration – Movement – Geopolitics - Political theatre – Agency – Empathy – Solidarity – Kindness – Imagination - Trained actors - Facilitator (for theatre performance) - Volunteer-participants - Testimonial theatre - Pah-la (father) - Amma la (mother) - Tibetan Theatre - Theatrical techniques – Restlessness - Street theatre - Sounds and gestures - <a href="mailto:amla@theatre.gmail.com">amla@theatre.gmail.com</a> - Drama workshop - Invitation (to do 2 theatre workshops) - Games and exercises - Relationship to the body -Mechanisation (of character) - Consent – Interpreter - Incompleteness - Institute of Performing Arts – Expectations - Self-doubt – Confidence - - Non-human elements - Animals and sounds - Wind, rain - Out-of-marriage relationship – pension – army – government - Determination – Poetry - Karmic destiny - - Senior artists - - Nice stage - Embodied knowledge - Shared learning - Co-production - Human condition - Temporality (of knowledge) – Hopeful – Confident - Non-verbal - Expectations - Soundscapes – Empathy – Amusement -</p>	<p>Waiting - Creating (a scene) - Enacting (a scene) – Witnessing - Intersecting – Self-questioning - Storytelling - Democratically sharing research - Scene-setting - Overpowering of words/voice through sounds – Listening - Losing life at sea - Devising (a play) - Moving an audience - Dramatizing narrative - Conveying (impressions of fieldwork) - Asking for permission – – Practising - Experimenting emotions - Preparing the body - Recognizing the world through the body - Forgetting (pre-condition for learning) – — Translating – Laughing – Enjoying - Being happy - Learning – managing time - Enacting a story - Enacting sounds - Co-creating (dialogue and performance) - - Enacting a tree/cow/dog/cobra - Feeding birds – Praying - Immersing in the story - Enlivening the story - Displaying romance - Audience Applauding – Laughing - Receiving money from abroad - Living</p>

<p>Confused – Uncertainty - Intentions – Nostalgic – Emotional - Citizen - Independence - Non-human position (tree) – Dramatically - Leading role - Transformation (of character) - Role play - Drug addiction – Alcoholic - Devoted father – Salvation – Oppression - Passport - Tone of voice – Gestures - Physical theatre – Theatricality - Ethical responsibility - Experiential drama – Alienation – Inequality – Hegemony – Suitcase - Defiance – Resolution - Agency and hope - Art practices - New knowledges – Limitations – Implications – Honesty – Transparency – Constraints - Contradictions – Languages — Playscript - Non-rehearsed performances - Authenticity - Cooperation – Detachment – Attraction – Adaptation – Transformation – Fictional representation – Social identities - Political identities – Network - Buddhism, English and Chinese - Limbo - Political activism – Leadership – Ambition - Literature - Transnational lives - Cross-generational lives - Wealthy – Intersectional - ‘the other is me’ – Honesty in representation – Life, death and migration - Theatrical representation - Fabricated reality - Embodied and creative enactments - Mind/body dichotomy - Volunteers-turned-actors - Time/timely/timeless/ timing - Space of discovery - Unfinished workshop - The question of language - Talent, creativity and imagination - Alternative performative ways of knowing - Spontaneous, intuitive, experiential, affective responses - Props/ theatrical staging/decorative elements - Beyond waiting - Imaginary knock on door - Collaboration and reflection (on the human condition) - Body-method-thesis-exile - Viscerality (of exile experience) - Actor-as-creator - Language-identity-culture-hybridity - Dislocation (of traditional identity) -</p>	<p>abroad - - Changing narrative - Re-interpreting - Ending the waiting process - Sleeping – Whispering – – Chirping – Hissing - Taking care (of parents) - Hiding behind a curtain - Washing vegetables – Wearing costumes, wigs and masks - Introducing new meanings – Singing – Dancing - – Captivating - Enacting kindness – Reflecting - Miming (back pain) – Entertaining - Laughter : easing up tensions - Making sense - Adopting/ rejecting - Escaping - Aiming - Protecting (Dalai Lama) - – Enjoying - Injecting - Becoming a monk - Enriching – Transforming – Rehabilitating - - Moving abroad - Waiting (for 59 years) – Worrying - Being responsible – Protesting - - Waiting versus hope - Ending the wait - Ending hopeless future – Interrupting – Planning – Rehearsing – Decolonizing – Accepting - Embracing failures - Performing without performers – Struggling – Preserving - Questioning - Refusing to migrate - Serving the community - Performing duty - Navigating pathways - Exploring resources – Smoking – Connecting (place of birth with exile) – Belonging - Seeking blessings - Owning hotels-restaurants-BMW - Painting a vivid picture - - Process of becoming - - State of unknowing</p>
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#### **Version 4: Key words/ categories– Synthesizing all categories in concepts**

Waiting /ending wait/ beyond waiting  
Possibilities / shared meanings – Process – Creating – Enacting – Witnessing  
Embodiment/embodied knowledge/viscerality  
Listening - Militant hope - Mind/body dichotomy – Empathy – solidarity - kindness  
Sounds and animals / soundscapes / Sleeping / Whispering  
Time/timely/timeless/ timing/temporality (of knowledge)  
Laughing / enjoying / clapping  
Learning – Incompleteness - Confidence / self-doubt - Co-creating - Re-interpreting  
Role play - Actor-as-creator - Performing without performers  
Suitcase - Agency / Hope  
Language – identity – culture – passport / ID docs  
Migrating / refusing to migrate – Performing duty

#### **Version 5: Key words/categories - Synthetizing key themes**

**Theme 1: Enacting disruptions** – performing – embodiment – viscosity - soundscapes as 'Live Methods' – sounds and animals – whispering - laughing – emotions

**Theme 2: Waiting, non-migration, remittances** - time process – unemployment – India as 'the waiting room'

**Theme 3: Authenticating identity: language and identity documents:** RC, Adhaar card, voting card, Indian passport.

**Theme 4: Hoping, agency and the suitcase** - migration – impermanence - empathy – solidarity - kindness