Cultural Plurality, National Identity and Consensus in Bhutan

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Contents

Introduction

Introducing Bhutan

The Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan is located between the two large and powerful neighbours India and China, landlocked, and one of the smallest countries in the world. The crucial point for this paper is its "multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual" (Mathou 2000) population – "a variety of ethnic groups and subgroups speaking diverse languages and dialects", as Aris (1994a: 12) states. Although Hutt (2003: 4) calls the division of Bhutan's population into ethnic categories "problematic", most accounts of the population identify three main ethnic categories: the *Ngalong* in the west, the *Sharchop* in the east and the *Lhotshampa*[1] in the south (ibid.). A fourth major group comprises the people of central Bhutan and is distinguished by the use of several local dialects of an ancient language which has its centre in the Bumthang region. The Ngalong, central Bhutanese and Sharchop together are known as *Drukpa* and inhabit the northern regions of the country. The term 'Drukpa' derives from the Mahayana Buddhism school of *Drukpa Kargyü*, which not only is predominant in the west, but also is the one with "statutory representation in the state's recommendatory and consultative institutions" (ibid.), while the *Nyingma* school, i.e. the one predominant in the east, does not have a comparable status. Although most of the Sharchop belong to the Nyingma sect, they nevertheless form part of the Drukpa. In contrast, the Lhotshampa are mostly Hindus, but it has to be added that Hinduism practised by the Lhotshampa has much in common with Bhutanese Buddhism (Ministry of Planning 1996: 5). All the three main groups have their own *lingua franca*, *Dzongkha* for the Ngalong, *Tshangla* or *Sharchop* in the east, and *Nepali* for the Lhotshampa in the south. The Tibetan-derived Dzongkha has been the national language of Bhutan since 1961.

The total population number as well as the distribution of the total population among the several groups and subgroups varies depending on which source one uses. Concerning the total population and according to Hutt (2003: 3), the estimate before 1969 ranged from 300,000 to 800,000. After 1977, all the literature on Bhutan, including that published by the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) itself, proclaimed the presence of a population of just over one million. But in 1990, the king announced that the correct number was actually only 600,000, and this has since become the baseline for official calculation. Today, there are estimates of "approximately 700,000" (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of

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[1]   I shall follow Hutt (2003: 6) in using that term "as shorthand for 'Bhutanese Nepali', while Nepalese of or from Nepal itself are 'Nepalese' termed" or Nepali. However, one should be aware that the term 'Lhotshampa' can also have somewhat different meanings.

State 2004) to 900,000 (Freedom House 2003) and even more. There are also different estimates of the distribution of that total population among the several (sub-)groups. The Royal Government states that the Drukpa comprise 80 % of the population (Planning Commission 2002: 2), which would mean a maximum of 20 % of Lhotshampa living in Bhutan. According to the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Freedom House, there are 35 % Nepali-speaking (25 % Hindus; Freedom House 2003). Hutt (2003: 7) mentions recent estimates of 25 % to *53* % for the Lhotshampa. But as the large majority of sources do not identify an ethno-linguistic group forming more than 50 % of the total population in Bhutan, what really counts in the end is the *fact* of multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual Bhutan. In this examination, I shall refer to this fact using the term *cultural plurality* and speak about a *cultural-pluralistic (culturally pluralistic or plural)* Bhutanese state.

Bhutan is a hereditary monarchy, but has been so only since 1907. The present king, His Majesty the *Druk Gyalpo* Jigme Singye Wangchuck, is the fourth king who has ruled since 1972. According to Mathou (1999: 618), it is appropriate to speak about a "Buddhist monarchy", a system which borrows from many different models. According to Bray (1993: 213), the Bhutanese monarchy actually "is based on a contract with the people and has never held absolute power."

Bhutan has grown through two major transitions. The first took place when the hierarchs of the Drukpa Kargyü, beginning with Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel (1594-?1651) (who came to Bhutan as a political refugee in 1616), founded a central government, imposed a uniform set of institutions in the country and established its present borders. A theocratic system was introduced with a reincarnating lama known as the *Dharma Raja* as its nominal head, who in theory delegated his secular powers to a regent called *Druk Desi* or *Deb Raja*. But this theocracy depended for its success on active support for the central government from the almost independent provincial magnates and was more in the nature of a "galactic polity" (Aris 1994a: 15) than a unitary state. The provincial courts formed "practically autonomous galaxies of authority replicating the structure and purpose of the central government and constantly threatening it to the point of internal collapse" (ibid.). Although the theocracy achieved to bring about a real measure of cultural unity, it was really left to the second major transition "to usher in true political unity and national purpose. This came about after the apparently sudden decision to found a hereditary monarchy in 1907" (ibid.).

Some important political reforms have taken place since this second transition. The third king not only separated the judiciary from the executive by establishing a High Court, but in 1953 he also created the National Assembly *(Tshogdu)*. Today it consists of 105 representatives *(Chimis)*

directly elected by the public (with a tenure of three years), 10 elected representatives of and by the clergy and 35 representatives of the Royal Government of whom 29 are nominated by the king and six are elected cabinet ministers who serve for a term of five years. In 1965, the same king also established the Royal Advisory Council *(Lodey Tshogdey)*, which today consists of six elected representatives of the public, two elected representatives of the clergy and one nominated by the government. This council advises the king on matters of national importance, acts as a bridge between the government and the people, and ensures that the laws and decisions of the National Assembly, the highest legislative body in theory, are implemented. In 1968, what became the first Council of Ministers or Cabinet in Bhutan *(Lhengye Zhungtshog)* was created, today consisting of the ministers and members of the Royal Advisory Council. Under the present king, the administrative decentralisation started in 1981 by the establishment of 20 District Development Committees *(Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung, DYT)*, which were followed by the introduction of 202 Block Development Committees *(Ge(w)og Yargye Tshogchung, GYT)* in 1991, the first comprising a total of 572 elected members, the latter consisting of 2,614 elected representatives (Planning Commission 2002: 3).

In 1998, the present king's reform brought structural changes as well as changes concerning procedures and responsibilities. The most significant change has been the devolution of full executive powers of governance away from the king, who is not the head of government any longer, but still the head of state. Also part of this reform was the restoration of the vote of confidence in the king, which can lead to the king's abdication in favour of his hereditary successor if the National Assembly should vote against him by a two-third majority (Mathou 1999: 624).

Despite these reforms, Freedom House (2003) states that current Bhutan cannot be called a democracy in the western sense. Nevertheless, Freedom House gives improved ratings both concerning political rights and civil liberties and mentions the 39-member committee preparing the draft for a written constitution, which is expected to lead to Bhutan's emergence as a constitutional monarchy with some form of parliamentary democracy.

On the one hand, one can understand this development as part of the *cautious modernisation* process. Having been traditionally isolated both because of its geographical location and its political strategy, Bhutan has been pursuing a policy of cautious modernisation since 1961 (Bray 1993: 213). Today, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck is successfully continuing the process of cautious modernisation initiated by his father. It has been the present king who has propounded the distinctively Bhutanese development concept of the maximisation of 'Gross National Happiness', a single unifying concept which

should be understood as a process that seeks to maximize happiness rather than economic growth. The concept places the individual at the centre of all development efforts and it recognizes that the individual has material, spiritual and emotional needs (Planning Commission 1999b: 10).

On the other hand, the reforms mentioned above must also be seen in relation to what Mathou describes as the 'southern problem'. Although started and handled in a very cautious way, the process of modernisation is perceived as a potential threat to the country and its distinctive Bhutanese identity (Planning Commission 1999a). A strong Bhutanese national identity is the *conditio sine qua non* for successful development, which is necessary to reach the overarching goal of the whole development process:

In our system of priorities for the future there is one priority that stands above all others: it is the need **to ensure the future independence, sovereignty and security of our nation state**. This is a precondition for the fulfillment of all the hopes and aspirations we may hold for the future of our nation and of our children (Planning Commission 1999b: 7).

The strategy to reach this aim can be subsumed under the formula 'one nation, one people':

The emergence of Bhutan as a nation state has been dependent upon the articulation of a distinct Bhutanese identity, founded upon our Buddhist beliefs and values, and the promotion of a common language. These have been defining elements in our history and they have made it possible to unify the country and to achieve national homogeneity and cohesion among the various linguistic and ethnic groups. This identity, manifest in the concept of '*one nation, one people*', has engendered in us the will to survive as a nation state as well as the strength to defend it in the face of threats and dangers (ibid.: 18). [...] Our independence, sovereignty and security will continue to be dependent upon the assertion of our distinctive Bhutanese identity. [...] This requires us to continue to articulate an *unambiguous cultural imperative* in all that we do [...] [italics added] (ibid.: 8).

The major risk which can threaten the overall process to ensure the country's independence, sovereignty and security – and therefore *the fundamental challenge ahead* - according to Mathou (2000) and others, comes from ethnic tensions. Their probability is increased by some measures in the realm of 'one nation, one people', which can be summed up as a *politics of cultural identity*: (1) the sixth Five-Year Plan (1987-92), which seems to be the origin of the strategy, included 'Preservation and Promotion of National Identity' as one of its policy objectives (Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan 1987; Hutt 1996b: 403 and 2003: 172); (2) that plan further introduced the *Driglam Namzha* (Hutt 1996b: 403), according to Karma Ura "the way (*lam*) of conscious (*namzha*) harmony (*drig*)" (1994, quoted in Hutt 2003: 165); (3) the enforcement of this code of traditional Drukpa dress and etiquette among the general public began in January 1989, when a Royal decree (*kasho*) on national dress was issued (Hutt 2003: 170, 172); (4) in the same year, the teaching of Nepali, the *lingua franca* of the Lhotshampa living in the south, was discontinued at the beginning of the school year and all Nepali curricular materials

were removed from Bhutanese schools (Hutt 2003: 183). These measures – in combination with (5) the identification of illegal immigrants through census operations, which took place in the south – have been perceived by the Lhotshampa as "a 'Bhutanisation' process" (ibid.). Their perception has been amplified by their higher degree of political consciousness, resulting from at least "the beginning of the 1950's, when the roots of ethnic dissent in Bhutan can be traced" (ibid.).

Research Design

This paper deals with Bhutan's cultural plurality, analyses the current situation and tries to sketch an alternative to the current path which Hutt (2003: 160) refers to by the phrases "becoming the same" and "homogenizing nationalism". The starting-point shall be Bhutan itself, its official politics and policies concerning cultural plurality measured by the government's aims of the independence, sovereignty and security of the Bhutanese nation-state. With this foundation, I shall focus on three questions: (1) as one can assume that Bhutan's politics of cultural identity has rather failed (see above), *what is a realistic alternative to this politics of cultural identity, and why should this alternative be preferred?* The theoretical basis will be the social-psychological approach of Bloom (1990), which tries to make identification theory fruitful for phenomena like national identity and nation-building. Put simply, Bloom shows that successful nation-building only happens if the state is perceived as a so-called *identity-securing interpretive system*, i.e. as a benefactor, by all the groups living in it, that groups will only identify with the nation-state if the latter succeeds in forming a *psychological* nation. Bloom is convinced that this kind of nation cannot be created by cultural homogenisation *per se*, but only by political integration, that is by making sure that all the groups become full members of the political community instead of remaining segregated. As Lijphart, the author of the second theoretical approach used for this paper, makes clear in differentiating between a consensus and a majoritarian model of democracy, this condition is fulfilled by *consensus* or *power-sharing*. Lijphart's scientific findings are clear: plural societies can be governed better by consensus then by the majority principle. Thus, I assume that the alternative to a politics of cultural identity is a politics of identity stressing political integration. A political system based largely on political integration, i.e. on consensus and power-sharing, is able to keep a cultural-pluralistic state together and to build a psychological nation, since this system generates benefit for everyone.

(2) Now, if one accepts Lijphart's findings, *what are the chances of a consensus model working in Bhutan?* In 1985, Lijphart examined power-sharing as a possible solution for the then apartheid South Africa, defining nine structure-oriented background conditions favouring power-sharing.

By applying them to the case of Bhutan, I assume that the chances of establishing and maintaining a consensus model in Bhutan are theoretically good or even very good, since the overall constellation of the nine background conditions favours the consensus model. Although Lijphart is writing about consensus and majoritarian democracies, I shall follow the Swiss political scientist Linder:

Vertical and horizontal institutions of power sharing [i.e. the consensus model] must not be limited to democratic systems. Power fusion or power sharing can also be found in imperfect democracies or even in authoritarian systems (Linder 2002: 9; see also Lijphart 1977: 227).

Therefore, I shall primarily refer to the consensus *model or principle* instead of consensus democracy. In adopting this position I want to make clear that I am not primarily interested in a democratic Bhutan, but in thinking about the whole topic in a pragmatic way and on Bhutan as it currently exists. I am aware that this paper deals with a delicate subject and have no intention to blame anyone involved in the fundamental problem - that "despite all efforts for national unity, society is divided" (Linder and Cavin 2003: 17) - discussed here. But as official Bhutan itself writes about democracy as the country's future (see Planning Commission 1999b: 76) and is discussing a written constitution at the moment, I shall conclude this paper by discussing the possible role of democracy in future Bhutan.

(3) *What are the probable consequences eventually to be drawn from linking Lijphart and Bloom for a Bhutanese consensus model in general and a future written constitution of Bhutan?* In linking Lijphart and Bloom, I assume that the consensus model can only work if it is able to make the centralising state an identity-securing interpretive system for all groups. The consensus model is supposed to be the best way to do so and to strengthen national unity in Bhutan.

Despite the fact that others have made the link between Bhutan and the consensus model or democracy (see for example Robertson 2003 and Linder and Cavin 2003), this paper will apply new methods in combining the institutionalist approach of Lijphart with Bloom's social-psychological one. In my opinion, this combination enables me to acknowledge the value of a politics of identity, but to propose an alternative, political one which could bring benefit to Bhutan as a nation-state reaching the aims of future independence, sovereignty and security.

To this end, I adopted an exploratory and interpretative approach mainly based on a qualitative methodological approach and on qualitative methods, i.e. text analysis and interviews. From December 2003 to March 2004 I conducted and analysed four interviews. One was conducted with two persons at the same time (hence the total of five interviewees). In the same period, I got the completed questionnaires from three respondents. Hence, I could base my

analysis on a total of eight respondents. At first I was in contact with 15 potential experts. The interviews were conducted with people living or staying in Switzerland at the time they took place. They (roughly) followed the questionnaire found in the Appendix. The interviewees and respondents are Bhutanese as well as non-Bhutanese, and they have got their status as experts for the case of Bhutan as a result of their professional status and/or personal experience. Their identities are treated with absolute confidentiality. Thus, there is no list of the respondents' names added here. The purpose of the interviews and questionnaires has been to get as close as possible in touch with the subject and to get data material as up-to-date as possible.

The researcher-provoked data sometimes are complemented by naturally occurring data, i.e. personal communication and everyday life observations made during my two visits in Bhutan in March 2001 and in March 2003 when I was visiting some of the western, central and eastern areas of Bhutan for a total of nearly four weeks.

National Identity

(Social-Psychological) National Identity

National identity is a mental design, an imaginary construct made in a certain temporal context, but not something that naturally grows and exists in nature (Marchal and Mattioli 1992: 12). National identity as a mental design refers to the nation as a real object, the latter becoming an historical reality because it is perceived as such (Siegenthaler 1992: 23). National identity is a special case of collective identity. This does not mean an objective, i.e. systemic, connection built by human beings, but its interpretation by the members of that collective – hence, it must be socially shared, the binding knowledge being a key factor (Estel 2002: 108). National identity then means a socially shared and binding knowledge in the form of an officially prevailing conception of itself *(Selbstverständnis)* of a certain nation being imparted through certain institutions (ibid.: 39).

According to Berghoff (1997: 50), identity has to be considered a dynamic process (*prozessual-dynamisch*) that should be better called *identification* instead of identity. What makes national identity substantial and static is the stakeholders' consciousness. Although identity rests on the balance between continuity *and* change, there has to be first of all the feeling of continuity in the stakeholders – without it, there is a large chance for a crisis to have to be overcome (Kremnitz 2000: 133-134). Berghoff's reflections (1997: 50) are based on *(social-)psychological* considerations, which is not a pure accident. There are, of course, many non-social-psychological definitions of and considerations about 'national identity' and 'nation' (see for example Smith 1991 and Hutchinson and Smith 1994). All of them are valuable in some way. But in my opinion and from a social-psychological point of view, they are missing a crucial point: the question of what a nation is should also include *the meaning of the nation for the individual*. The social-psychologists Bornewasser and Wakenhut (1999: 52) point to the link between the nation and an individual's feeling of her or his own worth *(Selbstwertgefühl)*, and they continue: if the social system, i.e. the nation, is not able to generate a positive *Selbstwertgefühl*, there arises the will to get rid of that negative state, which can result in the retreat to a smaller social system (ibid.: 53-54).

Bloom's Approach: Identification Theory – National Identity – Nation-Building

Identification theory is concerned with the deep psychological relationship between the individual and her or his social environment and the internalisation of social attitudes. It includes human sentiment, human attitudes and human loyalty from a psychological point of view without

marginalising or denying socio-economic or political factors (Bloom 1990: 4). According to Bloom,

In order to achieve psychological security, every individual possesses an inherent drive to internalise – to identify with – the behaviour, mores and attitudes of significant figures in her/his social environment; i.e. people actively seek identity. Moreover, every human being has an inherent drive to enhance and to protect the identifications he or she has made; i.e. people actively seek to enhance and protect identity. [*... G*]*iven the same environmental circumstances* there will be a tendency for a group of individuals to make the same identification, to internalise the same identity [...], and to act together to protect and to enhance their shared identity (ibid.: 23).

Through an exegesis of Freud, Mead, Erikson, Parsons and Habermas, Bloom (ibid.: 50) establishes the following propositions: (1) identification, i.e. the mechanism of internalising the attitude, mores and behaviour of significant others, is a psycho-biological imperative based on the earliest infantile need to survive; (2) this imperative works from infancy through adulthood and old age; (3) identity stability, i.e. a satisfactory synthesis of identifications, is crucial for a sense of psychological security and well-being - this means that identity enhancement leads to a greater sense of well-being, whereas identity diffusion leads to anxiety and breakdown (i.e. psychological security is a *conditio sine qua non* of personality stability and emotional well-being (ibid.: 53)); (4) confronted with changing circumstances, individuals may make new and appropriate identification or seek to protect and enhance identifications already made; (5) after some time, the simple identification with the parents is substituted by more diffuse symbolic entities that Habermas calls *identity-securing interpretive systems* and Erikson calls ideologies; (6) identifications can be shared, and in sharing a common identification, there is the potential for a group of individuals to act together to enhance and protect that shared identity. As one of the identity-securing interpretive systems and ideologies "may be the nation which gives the identity of nationality" (ibid.: 52), Bloom can define *national identity* as the

condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols – have internalised the symbols of the nation – so that they may act as one psychological group when there is a threat to, or the possibility of enhancement of, these symbols of national identity. [...] For [it] to exist, the people *en masse* must have gone through the actual psychological process of making that general identification with the nation (ibid.).

Hence, national identity requires *nation-building*, that is political integration: since "[p]ower politics create a state, but its endurance is guaranteed only if the psychological nation is built" (ibid.: 56), coercive political power is not a real alternative to political integration. The latter's crucial importance seems to be that it makes it, in the end, possible for the people to "have considerable conflict without destroying the stability of the system" (ibid.) as a whole. Hence the

need for nation-building, that is "the process whereby the inhabitants of a state's territory come to be *loyal* citizens of that state" (ibid.: 55). Thus, nation-building "is concerned, in Toennis' classical terms, with how a *Gesellschaft*, or functional society, may become a *Gemeinschaft*, or homogeneous community" (ibid.). *Successful* nation-building, then, means that (a) internally, the nation-state has the ultimate or transcending claim on its people's loyalty, that potentially still existing regional, religious or ethnic ties and the loyalties based on them may compete within the nation-state, but not be mobilised against it; and (b) internationally, that the state can rely upon the mass support of its citizenry in a situation of competition with external actors including situations where symbols of national identity are perceived to be threatened (ibid.: 58). These symbols have to be internalised by the individual for the nation-state to become an identity-securing interpretive system:

For the individual to internalise the symbols of the nation, the nation – in one representational or symbolic form or another, direct or indirect – must impinge upon the actual experience of the individual. Not only must it directly touch the individual, but the experience of this contact must be such that it actually benefits the individual, in terms of psychological security, to make an identification with the nation (ibid.: 59).

As it is the *actual experience* that counts, it is clear that there is an "ongoing need for nation-building" (ibid.: 71), that this process is not a finite one, that every new generation has to be socialised into the national community. The constellation of socio-economic and political realities is constantly changing during an individual's life, *ergo* - since the identification imperative is always seeking to maximise psychological security - new identifications and loyalties may come about.

The practical relevance of discussing the process of nation-building becomes evident when asking questions about how the government can through state best prevent a political opponent from mobilising local territorial or ethnic support on the basis of parochial (local, limited, narrow) or ethnic identification sentiment, and how it can prevent the opposite of nation-building and political integration, e.g. territorial disintegration (ibid.: 142). Fundamental to the examination of these questions is the premise that "an ethnos, simply because it is an ethnos, does not seek as such political autonomy, equality or advantage" (ibid.). Rather, what happens is that some political individuals or groups decide that there should be special aspirations of and policies for a certain ethnos, and, therefore, try to mobilise mass support from that ethnos. They will be successful in their efforts if the centralising state can be presented as – overtly or covertly – disadvantaging that ethnos, i.e. if they are able to picture a centralising state as not enhancing but devaluing and threatening an ethnic group's identity. Hence, the state, willing to achieve nation-building, must successfully act to block parochial ethnic sentiment from being

appropriated by the peripheral leaders. Bloom discusses this blocking in relation to four issues: standardisation of culture, economic and social welfare, charisma/simplistic ideology and international threat. In the interest of brevity, I focus on the most important factor for Bhutan, the *standardisation of culture*.

According to identification theory, the

manipulated creation of homogeneous culture will not have any immediate effect in terms of evoking identification with, and therefore loyalty to, the nation-state. The direct manipulation of culture, language or religion evokes alienation rather than identification because as a political activity, by its very nature, it *threatens* already made identifications. It devalues peripheral cultures by attempting to impose metropolitan culture upon them. Thus, central government action to homogenise culture, in fact provides a political hook for peripheral agitators to demonstrate the disadvantaging effects of the relationship with the central state and, therefore, to mobilise hostile peripheral mass opinion (ibid.: 143).

Such a scenario can be prevented by "[g]enerous central government policies for peripheral cultures" (ibid.: 144). A programme of homogenisation might be beneficial to nation-building in both the short term and the long term – but only if some crucial points are met. In the short term, if accompanied by the perception of a beneficent experience courtesy of the state, but only if such an experience is more powerful than the sentimental mobilisation resulting from the communication of the threat to local culture by a local leader. In the long term because it facilitates communication about common experiences between fellow citizens, because it removes distinctive cultural features that can be manipulated by peripheral leaders, and, finally, because it facilitates the upward social mobility of ambitious peripheral members to the centre, instead of leaving them as peripheral troublemakers (ibid.: 143-144). To meet these advantages, "[r]espect and support from the centre for the peripheral cultures, rather than denigration and threat, are" necessary and "the key factors for evoking identification" (ibid.: 144). This respect could be demonstrated by a "two-tier system" (ibid.) that considers both local structures and nation-wide needs, the result being social mobility (ibid.), that is identification, that is nation-building. Then, the centralising state can be perceived as a benefactor, a perception which a politics of homogenisation *per se* is not able to bring – on the contrary:

Policies [...] which seek to create linguistic, religious and cultural homogeneity do not, as such, produce nation-building. If these policies are constrained by force, then they will positively alienate. *There is more to be gained by the practical encouragement of subsidiary cultures than by their persecution* (ibid.: 145).

Bringing Bloom and Bhutan Together

Taking Bloom seriously, one can speak about successful nation-building if the state has the ultimate claim on its people's loyalty, despite viable regional, religious or ethnic ties. As long as these peripheral loyalties cannot be mobilised against the nation-state by peripheral leaders and the state can rely upon the mass support of its citizenry, nation-building can be considered successful. Can it be found in Bhutan?

(1) During the late 1940s and early 1950s, a movement of political protest arose in the southern part of Bhutan. Although the accounts of this first political mobilisation are confused and even contradictory (Hutt 2003: 115), it is nevertheless clear that this protest actually happened (and this is indeed the crucial point for my argument here). This civil disobedience action was announced and implemented by the Bhutan State Congress (BSC), a movement which demanded political change in Bhutan as its agenda, an agenda that resulted in the ban of the movement and the exile of its leaders in 1947. Nevertheless, the BSC was able to organise a demonstration that took place in southern Bhutan in March 1954 (ibid.: 122). Further, a petition signed four years later stated the aims of the movement: a democratic government with the king of Bhutan as its chairman based on general election; a transportation system linking Bhutan and India; no sectarian discrimination in the recruitment of soldiers for the national militia; the abandonment of the ban on the Bhutan State Congress and the exile of its members; finally the release of one of their leaders (ibid.: 123). But "[the BSC's] ability to mobilize the Nepali peasantry in the south [...] signally failed" (ibid.: 125). By at least partially fulfilling the movement's demands by the 1960s (see ibid.: 127-46), the RGoB managed to totally marginalise the BSC, and in 1969, its leaders were granted an amnesty and permitted to return to Bhutan (ibid.: 126).

(2) In the mid-1980s, the impetus towards the integration of the Lhotshampa – which indeed could be found and had its origins in the 1950s (see ibid.: 127-46) - began to slow. The Nationality Law of 1958 was first replaced by the one promulgated in 1977, the latter being replaced by the Citizenship Act of 1985, which tightened up the former law. Whereas the Nationality Law of 1958 granted citizenship to all the Lhotshampa who had settled in Bhutan

before 31 December 1958, the census started in 1988 reported many Lhotshampa not being considered genuine Bhutanese citizens any more.[2]

(3) The new policies of culture concerning dress and language (see above) led to resistance and political tension in the south. The census operations began to be used against suspected dissidents and their families, which included the possibility of being downgraded in a subsequent survey (ibid.: 156). The concerns about the census led, in the end, to many Lhotshampa – nationals and others – leaving for Nepal. Outside Bhutan, they established several movements, one of them the Bhutan People's Party (BPP). Some of the activists adopted violent tactics, and the Bhutanese government spoke about 'anti-national terrorists' (ibid.: 203). In autumn 1990, the activists (most of them living outside Bhutan) organised public demonstrations and marches in the south. Each march submitted a list of 13 demands, e.g. the change of absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy, the amendment to the citizenship act, the right to culture, dress, language and script, freedom of religion, press, speech and expression (ibid.: 205). – In 2003, some 111,000 people were living in refugee camps in Nepal and India (UNDP 2003: 306). They all claim(ed) to have come from Bhutan and to be Bhutanese citizens, and that their migration was the consequence of the Citizenship Act and especially of the censuses started in 1988.

These three examples can be taken as an indication that psychological nation-building has not been very successful yet. Following Bloom, the reason for this is the *lack of internalisation* on both sides. Internalisation only happens if there is an experienced psychological security. Concerning the Lhotshampa, Bhutan's ruling élites are composed of the Drukpa, the northern people totally differing in language and religion – in culture – from the Lhotshampa. Thus, policies deriving from Drukpa culture and forced upon them by the state compete with and threaten the actual identity of the Lhotshampa. They cannot experience psychological security from such a politics of identity, but feel devalued and threatened by cultural symbols. Since they clearly associate these symbols with the centralising state, the latter is perceived as devaluing and threatening their identity. Although the Lhotshampa may benefit from the Bhutanese state in receiving free education and health services, employment opportunities, highly subsidised agricultural inputs and generous rural credit schemes (see Thinley 1994), the policies of standardising culture threaten their identity and provoke the psychological reaction of protecting this identity. Therefore, all in all, the benefits mentioned by Thinley are outweighed by the

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[2]   In this census, each individual was categorised from F1 to F7: F1 genuine Bhutanese citizen; F2 returned migrants (having left Bhutan and then returned); F3 drop-out cases (not around at the time of the census); F4 a non-national woman married to a Bhutanese man; F5 a non-national man married to a Bhutanese woman; F6 adoption cases (legally adopted children); F7 non-nationals (migrants and illegal settlers). In the early stages of the census operation, very few Lhotshampa were registered as F7. But as the census teams came around several times between 1988 and 1990, there was the possibility of being re-categorised (Hutt: 2003: 154).

perceived threats of the cultural policies – so, in the end, the state is perceived not as a benefactor, but as its opposite. This circumstance, then, makes it possible for peripheral leaders to remove the nation-state as the reference point of identification and to replace it with their ethnos. Take the example of the removal of the Nepali language from the curriculum:

The emotional and psychological impact this change of policy had on the Lhotshampas can be appreciated only if it is understood that for many [...] the Nepali language represented a citadel from which the malign and corrupting processes of Westernization on the one hand and Drukpaization on the other could be warded off (Hutt 2003: 185).

Together with the censuses and enforcement of Driglam Namzha, this action has been *perceived* as an attack on collective and personal identity – with the consequence of personality breakdown. As the latter has to be prevented, internalisation of national identity does not occur.

On the Drukpa side, there seems to be the perceived need for affirmative action to form and strengthen the national identity (i.e. the cultural imperative) – thus, they also do not seem to feel that a psychological nation has already arisen. Taking into account the modernisation process, this is not surprising: the resulting, sometimes radical, change in an individual's environment demands a new – or strengthened - identification that will give (again) psychological security. According to Bloom, such a security may be found in the identification with a single person who is in tune with the group culture and who displays the appropriate attitude for dealing with such a transition crisis. The charismatic power coming from the emotional investment made in that person by the people is favourable in the case of Bhutan, whose monarch definitely has the attributes and is in the position to be that single person. According to Mathou, "the king, who has chosen to disengage himself from everyday politics [the 1998 reforms], would continue to be the symbol of national unity" (1999: 626).

Such a role would be particularly important should Bhutan be pressured by the forces of communalism. Since the appearance of what is often called the 'southern problem', the king has resisted the radical solutions advocated in conservative circles. The reform ought to enhance his ability to mitigate divisiveness and be a focal point for reconciliation among all Bhutanese factions. He is well-positioned to be a pillar of national unity and stability should further political changes prove to be challenges to the national consensus (ibid.: 626-27).

Indeed, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck has proven his intention to be an integrative personality for all the Bhutanese. Before issuing the kasho on national dress in 1989, he toured all the southern districts to make sure that the previously conducted nation-wide consultation about national dress had been done correctly (Hutt 2003: 172). He also visited the

south on numerous occasions "to meet groups of Lhotshampas who had 'applied to emigrate' in order to persuade them to stay in Bhutan [...]" (ibid.: 223). Finally, the king emphasised the importance of learning from international experience, not only in relation to the development of Bhutan's future constitution, but in adapting other relevant practices for his country (Robertson 2003: 3).

Summary

Bhutan's politics of identity has to be considered rather unsuccessful so far. But, to conclude that the politics of identity *per se* must be abandoned is a mistake. Social-psychological identification theory impressively demonstrates that identification and identity matter and that the nation-state and the nation are important references of identity for each individual. Identification theory shows what is needed to successfully nation-build and to create a psychological nation: the nation-state as an identity-securing interpretive system and a real benefactor. If the state fails to take this responsibility and only tries to homogenise culture, it risks losing the nation in so far as parts of it re-identify with a smaller social system, this despite possible economic benefit: there will be no successful nation-building since the nation-state threatens the peripheral people's identity, provoking its protection by those people. Hence, Bhutan should think about its national identity. They are *not* wrong in promoting and strengthening national identity. But it should be an inclusive one. Since Bhutan is a culturally pluralistic country, an identity based on one culture cannot be considered national in its true sense. Cases such as the one of cultural-pluralistic Switzerland show that it is possible to generate national identity through political institutions and procedures (see for example Kriesi 1999 and Beck 2004). A political system based on consensus and power-sharing is of high value: according to Bloom, its aim is true political integration, which is the essential way of making the nation-state an identity-securing interpretive system. Hence, it is worth examining the theoretical chances of a successful Bhutanese consensus model.

Consensus

Introduction: Majoritarian-Consensual Distinction

When Lijphart wrote in 1977 about the role of democratic mechanisms in ethnic conflict containment, he was mostly interested in the question of what kinds of democratic institutions managed ethnic strife most effectively – especially in plural societies (Cohen 1997: 607). For Lijphart, the answer to that question was clear:

> This book's message to the political leaders of plural societies is to encourage them to engage in a form of political engineering: if they wish to establish or strengthen democratic institutions in their countries, they must become *consociational* engineers [italics added] (Lijphart 1977: 223).

'Consociationalism', then, was Lijphart's answer to the question of how to achieve and maintain a stable democratic government in a plural society, a society divided by segmental cleavages or conflict lines (ibid.: 3) such as religion, language or ideology. By consociationalism he means the consociational model in which the "centrifugal tendencies inherent in a plural society are counteracted by the cooperative attitudes and behaviour of the leaders of the different segments of the population" (ibid.: 1) as well as the mutual veto rule (an additional protection of vital minority interests), proportionality (the principle standard of political representation, civil service appointments and allocation of public funds) and a high degree of segmental autonomy (ibid.: 25). Even though the term 'consociationalism' changed to 'power-sharing' and later 'consensus' (see Lijphart 1998: 100-01), Lijphart's answer has remained the same over time. In his *Patterns of Democracy* (1999: 302), he concludes that

> the consensus option is the more attractive option for countries designing their first democratic constitutions or contemplating democratic reform. This recommendation is particularly pertinent, and even urgent, for societies that have deep cultural and ethnic cleavages, but it is also relevant for more homogeneous countries.

The alternative to the 'consensus option' is the majoritarian model, and Table 1 shows the essential differences inherent the apparent dichotomy 'majoritarian – consensual'.

Table 1: Majoritarian and Consensus Model

Majoritarian Model	Consensus Model
Concentration of executive power in single party majority cabinets	Executive power-sharing in broad multiparty coalitions (grand coalitions)
Executive–legislative relationship in which the executive is dominant	Executive–legislative balance of power
Two-party systems	Multiparty systems
Majoritarian/Plurality and disproportional electoral systems	Proportional representation
Pluralist interest group systems with free-for-all competition among groups	Co-ordinated and 'corporatist' interest group systems aimed at compromise and concert
Unitary and centralised government	Federal and decentralised government
Concentration of legislative power in a unicameral legislature, or asymmetric bicameralism	Division of legislative power between two equally strong but differently constituted houses, minority representation
Flexible and unwritten constitutions that can be amended by simple majorities	Rigid and written constitutions that can be changed only by extraordinary majorities, minority veto
Systems in which legislatures have the final word on the constitutionality of their own legislation	Systems in which laws are subject to a judicial review of their constitutionality by supreme or constitutional courts
Central banks that are dependent on the executive	Independent central banks

Source: Adapted from Lijphart (1999: 3-4) and Linder (2002: 21).

Table 1 indicates the reasons why the consensus model is the best choice for culturally pluralistic societies. Whereas in the majoritarian model two parties fight to hold political power completely in their hands on the basis of a plurality and disproportional electoral system, the consensus model can be summed up in the formula 'all the groups proportionally represented, with access to the power-structures and thus with influence concerning the decision-making process - in short, political integration to a high degree'. But this political integration, i.e. the successful establishing and maintaining of a consensus model, can differ enormously in its degree of probability. In 1977 (54), Lijphart identified six favourable conditions for consociational democracy, which later on (1985 and 1996) were somewhat modified and became the nine structural background conditions that follow and shall be rated according to Lijphart (see 3. Summary and Appendix) below.

Regardless of the concrete conditions one deals with, one has to be aware that these background conditions are "neither necessary nor sufficient conditions" (Lijphart 1977: 165) for a consensus model, that they are "simply not decisive" (Lijphart 1985: 127) and no guarantee for the successful establishment and maintenance of a consensus model. Despite their non-binding character, the background conditions are nevertheless "helpful factors" (ibid.: 165): if they can be found, the chances of a workable consensus model increase – also for the case of Bhutan.

Structural Background Conditions and Bhutan

(1) No Majority Segment

As a majority segment will always be tempted to act as a majority (see ibid.: 119), there will be no balance or approximate equilibrium among the segments in case of a majority segment.

Discussing Bhutan, the first difficulty concerns the probable segments and among which conflict line(s) they might be divided. Concerning religion, at first sight one recognises a twofold division between Buddhists and Hindus. Buddhists form an absolute majority and comprise the western Ngalong, the central Bhutanese (both Tibetan-Mongoloid) and the eastern Sharchop (Indo-Burmese), collectively known as the Drukpa and differentiated from the Hindus who are (Indo-Aryan) Lhotshampa. But the reality is somewhat more complex, and one might be wrong in assuming a religious conflict line. First, the number of Lhotshampa and Hindus do not correspond, i.e. many Lhotshampa in fact are Buddhists. Second, as the king has emphasised, Buddhism practised in Bhutan and Hinduism are very closely related, and the central gods and goddesses in fact are the same and only named differently (Bonn 1991: 25-26). And third, the Buddhist majority is not as homogeneous as it is supposed to be. Despite the fact that the sect of Drukpa Kargyü represents the official state religion, this sect is mainly dominant in western and central Bhutan, i.e. among the Ngalong and central Bhutanese. The eastern Sharchop, however, in their large majority belong to the Nyingma school. Although this religious difference is not recognised when talking to the people (respondent), it nevertheless forms part of the claims of the Druk National Congress initiated by a Sharchop dissident in Kathmandu exile, which further blames structural discrimination by the Ngalong and seems to have gained some localised sympathy (Priesner 1998: 159-60). Thus, it means reducing the complexity of reality when one sees the northern population as homogeneous.

Choosing the view that sees the Drukpa as a heterogeneous group points to another conflict line that can be called the ethno-linguistic one. Indeed, most of the respondents stick to the ethno-linguistic view when defining the major segments. According to this view, the Bhutanese society can be divided along the three main ethnic groups Ngalong, Sharchop and Lhotshampa speaking the three different languages Dzongkha, Tshangla and Nepali. As we have seen before, such a constellation means the absence of a majority and the presence of three segments of more or less the same size - a fact that is considered very positive from the perspective of the consensus model. However, Bhutanese reality looks less ideal. Despite the ethno-linguistic situation and the possibility of a "growing [Sharchop] [c]onsciousness" (Priesner 1998: 159), the latter does not seem to be deeply rooted in the eastern part of Bhutan. There

might be two main reasons for this. First, if the ethno-linguistic dimension is crucial, the Sharchop do not have to feel discriminated against like the Lhotshampa since their mother tongue, Tshangla, is only an oral, but not a written language (respondent). Thus, their identity is less affected by the strengthening of Dzongkha as the national language in school and elsewhere. And second, integration between western (and central) and eastern populations seems to have succeeded in creating a rather strong Drukpa identity, an identity at least strong enough to exercise the degree of "power-sharing" (respondent) needed to form a majority. The Ministry of Health and Education is a strong example of that since it is totally dominated by Sharchop (respondent). Thus, although one cannot speak of a majority in ethno-linguistic terms, one has to speak of a majority (i.e. the Drukpa) and a minority (i.e. the Lhotshampa) in a sociological sense. Although the ethnic and linguistic facts do not support the forming of a single northern block, this northern block seems to act and behave like a single force (respondent) in regard to the Lhotshampa, the latter becoming a sociological minority. Hence, this first background condition has to be considered as a negative, unfavourable variation. There might be some potential for improvement since the objective segments seem to be aware that they all are a minority if standing alone (respondent). However the factual constellation of the segments, the behavioural constellation leads to my pessimistic view of this condition (for all the ratings see 3. Summary). As Sinha (1994: 182) puts it,

Pronounced divisions exist between the Drukpas and the Lhotshampas [...]. There is complete unanimity among the Drukpas that the Lhotshampas have to be assimilated within the Drukpa mainstream, with no compromise on this point.

I should mention one respondent's statement that the Drukpa identity exists only in theory, but that in day to day life everyone is seen not as Drukpa or Lhotshampa, but as Ngalong, central Bhutanese, Sharchop or Lhotshampa – and, in the end, as the same, i.e. Bhutanese. The argument is that the tensions (mentioned above) resulted from some Nepali's (Lhotshampa's) intention to take over political power in the kingdom. However, this explanation is neither supported by the other respondents nor by the large majority of literature.

(2) Segments of Equal Size

The balance among the segments not only depends on the lack of a majority segment, but also on their size (ibid.: 123). Equally spread power makes the segmental negotiations more moderate and, hence, facilitates negotiations among segmental leaders.

Depending on how one defines the Bhutanese segments, their size varies enormously. If one considers the *factual*, though not exactly known sizes of the segments (see above), they are supposed to be of roughly the same size. According to one respondent, the Sharchop are supposed to be the largest segment, whereas the Ngalong and Lhotshampa may be smaller in size than the Sharchop, but roughly equal to each other. But, as demonstrated in the introductory chapter, there remains a strong uncertainty concerning the accuracy of the numbers. However, what is clear at the moment is that one has to mention a clear asymmetry when taking into consideration the *behavioural* aspect of the segments: again, this means that there are the Drukpa and the Lhotshampa, which means two segments of clearly unequal size and thus receives a negative rating.

(3) Small Number of Segments

As an increased number of segments involved in negotiations complicates them, the optimal number of segments seems to be two. But "a twofold division entails both a majority-minority split and the inflexibility of a direct confrontation" (ibid.): a gain for one can be easily perceived as a loss for the other. This is a very unfavourable situation, as the very sense of the consensus model is *not* to create pure winners and losers, but "win-win solutions" in which "nobody gets everything, but everybody something" (Linder n. d., forthcoming). Therefore, the optimal number of segments appears to be between three and five (Lijphart 1985: 123).

Again how to define the Bhutanese segments is crucial. Ethno-linguistically, there could be at least three relevant segments. But as one respondent stressed, since the Sharchop's language is not challenged by the national language Dzongkha, there could be only two relevant segments concerning a pure linguistic dimension. Then, a pure ethnic dimension would need to have three relevant segments again, i.e. the Tibetan-Mongoloid, the Indo-Burmese and the Indo-Aryan. But such a pure ethnic conflict line cannot be found, it seems. As the respondents counted three to five *relevant* segments, they spoke about a (very) favourable situation in Bhutan. Of course, more segments could be found – according to one respondent, ten to fifteen. But since 'as many as possible' includes the balance between a consensus that is as broad as possible and a workable consensus model, one should primarily consider the relevant groups, i.e. the Ngalong, central Bhutanese, Sharchop and Lhotshampa. But, here again, if one considers the *behavioural* aspect of segmental constellation, the latter does not look very favourable.

(4) Small Population Size

According to Lijphart, small population size "has both *direct* and *indirect* effects" on the possible success of the consensus model, and these direct and indirect effects of smallness "derive both from the *internal* characteristics of small countries and from their *external* position vis-à-vis other and especially larger and more powerful countries" (Lijphart 1977: 65). The *direct internal* effect of small population size is that the élites are more likely to know each other personally, a circumstance which makes them meet each other more often and increases the probability of a compromise (ibid.). However, this direct internal effect is non-linear as the reservoir of political talent is supposed to be quite small in a very small country. Since the consensus model "requires an exceptionally able and prudent leadership, smallness is a favorable factor only to a certain limit" (ibid.: 66). The *indirect internal* effect contains the aspects that a small country is easier to govern and of less complex decision-making processes since "the number and variety of groups and individuals whose interests and attitudes have to be taken into consideration are fewer" (ibid.). Finally[3], the *indirect external* effect concerns a small state's limited power on the international scene, "its tendency to abstain from an active foreign policy, and, as a result, its greater chance of avoiding difficult choices in this realm" (ibid.: 69).

Most of the respondents consider the Bhutanese situation very favourable in this regard. It seems that the problem of lack of political talent (the *direct internal* effect) is not found in Bhutan: the Bhutanese government and bureaucracy are said to be very professional and efficient (Hutt 2003: 4). Bhutan's situation is also favourable concerning the *indirect internal* effect of less complex decision-making processes: as a monarchy with a relatively small ruling élite, those processes are not too complex. However, one respondent was sceptical about the *indirect external* effect: he did not see the mentioned tendency to abstain from an active foreign policy, but instead quite the contrary. Despite Article 2 of the friendship treaty between India and Bhutan that *de facto* gives India the right to conduct Bhutan's foreign policy, one indication for a more independent and active Bhutanese foreign policy might be the regular contacts with the People's Republic of China (PRC). These regular meetings have been taking place for years to discuss the situation about the common Sino-Bhutanese border. Although Parmanand stresses "the fact that India does not feel to have been marginalized or sidelined" (1992: 173) because of Sino-Bhutanese negotiations, one respondent emphasised that these regular meetings are a substitution for the non-existing official relations between Bhutan and China – a view supported by Dhakal and Strawn (see 1994: 515),

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[3] The *direct external* dimension of population size is so important that Lijphart decided to examine it as an extra background condition ('external threats') when discussing apartheid South Africa and India.

but challenged by Parmanand (1992: 174). However, the indication of an independent Bhutanese foreign policy is challenged by facts such as that Bhutan sided with India in the vote in the United Nations on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, "thus becoming one of only three countries (India, Libya, Bhutan) to oppose the Treaty" (Hutt 1997: 156). - All in all, Bhutan's smallness can be interpreted as a (very) favourable condition.

(5) External Threats

"[E]xternal danger may increase internal unity" (Lijphart 1985: 123). Especially smaller countries are more likely to be and feel threatened by other powers, so that it is understandable that such a feeling of vulnerability and insecurity provides strong incentives to maintain internal solidarity and unity (Lijphart 1977: 66). Hence, inter-segmental co-operation is more likely to exist – *if* external threats are perceived as common threats by all the segments. Otherwise, it can even happen that the international lines of conflict parallel the internal division of the segments (ibid.: 67). Generally speaking, I would assume that the potential threats to a state derive either from the international power-constellation in its region or from a state's internal constellations which have a regional, inter-state impact in the end. More concretely, a country can face potential external threats because of its location between other states. It can be either a strategic location for the whole region or a dangerous one because of the regional power-constellation as a whole. Further, economic considerations of neighbouring countries can be an additional factor or even a powerful source for external threat on its own.

Possible claims of one state for the territory of another one usually justified by an historical context can have geo-political or economic reasons too, but sometimes arise from the fact that state territories and ethnic groups do not totally correspond. This fact is considered by Brubaker in his book *Nationalism Reframed* (1996), where he discusses the triadic nexus formed by a nationalising state, a national minority living in that nationalising state and the external national 'homeland' of this national minority. The *nationalising state* is a heterogeneous nation-state, whose dominant élites promote the language, culture, demographic position, economic health or political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation (ibid.: 57). *National minority* contains three elements: the public claim to membership of an ethno-cultural nation different from the numerically or politically dominant ethno-cultural nation, i.e. the dominant group of the nationalising state; the demand for state recognition of this distinct ethno-cultural nationality; the assertion of certain collective cultural and political rights (ibid.: 60). Finally, *external national 'homeland'* is the state which claims a national minority in a nationalising state belonging, in some sense, to the original state and "actually does take action in the name of monitoring, promoting,

or protecting the interests of its ethnonational kin abroad" (ibid.: 58). Together, these actors (or, more precisely, dynamic and competitive political stances) form a dynamic, triadic nexus with a deeply conflictual potential. One dimension of this potential refers to Lijphart's background condition 'external threats': a nationalising state with a national minority protected by its co-ethnics in the external national 'homeland' is threatened by the latter.

Geo-Politics and Economics: Bhutan is "a bridgehead between [the] two economic, demographic and geo-political giants" China and India (Ura 2001: 113). They are the world's most populated countries and economic and military powers with an arsenal of nuclear weapons; they both are able and willing to conduct an aggressive foreign policy if necessary; their relationship is a complex, sometimes even tense one, which already resulted in a war (1962); both face some troubles resulting from the fact of their cultural plurality; finally, both states have strategic interests concerning the small buffer state Bhutan.

A certain Bhutanese fear about its northern neighbour *China* has roots in relatively recent history. Bhutan not only witnessed Tibet's occupation by Chinese troops in 1950/51, but also an influx of Tibetan refugees after 1959 (Mathou 1994: 53). Furthermore, China's occupation of the Bhutanese enclaves in 1958 resulted in disputes and the closure of Bhutan's northern border in 1959 (Ura 2001: 139 and Mathou 1994: 53). Finally, Bhutan surely remembers Mao Zedong's claim of Bhutan as one of China's "lost territories" (Mathou 1994: 53). For *India*, controlling Bhutan is doubly important since it does not only mean control of the buffer to China, but also of "its Achilles heel", i.e. "the narrow Siliguri corridor connecting the country's vast and resource-rich northeast to the Indian heartland" (Priesner 1998: 160), which faces some troubles created by separatist movements. Today, Bhutan's meaning for India goes even beyond a purely strategic one. The decades-long Indo-Bhutanese deep partnership in developmental issues has created an economic relationship that may have the potential of a threat for Bhutan: India's increasing – and for some Indian states even "critical" (Ura 2001: 128) - dependence on Bhutanese electricity exports (respondent). But the main threat posed to Bhutan by India seems to be India's enormous dominance concerning the modernisation process in Bhutan. The possibility of being "absorbed by India" (respondent) indeed seems to be the largest threat for Bhutan. Hutt (1997: 158) calls the increasing Indian support and protection "a dependence some observers fear might have a negative impact in the longer term upon Bhutan's traditional self-reliance." Despite having entered international relations when joining the United Nations in 1971 and gaining other bilateral and multilateral donors, Bhutan is heavily dependent on India both economically as well as strategically. According to one respondent, this threat of being absorbed by India could unite the Drukpa and Lhotshampa since both seem to have rather ambivalent

feelings towards the Indian domination. A second respondent is convinced that the two sources of threat, India and China, are perceived in the same way by both segments, a view which is slightly differentiated by another respondent. The response of another respondent points in the opposite direction: the only common danger perceived by all the segments is the one from each other.

Brubaker's Reframed Nationalism: The dynamic triadic nexus 'nationalising state – national minority – external national homeland' seems to perfectly match the Bhutanese case: there is the nationalising state Bhutan, there is further the national minority of the Lhotshampa or ethnic Nepali living in Bhutan, and there is their external national 'homeland' Nepal. However, having a closer look at the latter raises some doubts about Brubaker's application here. Nepal, of course, is involved since it hosts about 111,000 probable refugees of Nepali origin from Bhutan. But it does not seem that Nepal closely monitors the situation of its co-ethnics *abroad*, i.e. in Bhutan. Rather, it seems that currently Nepal is dealing with the big troubles that come with "class, caste, regionalism and ethnic assertion" (Dixit 1994) and as a result of a failed democratisation and Maoist insurgency.

As there does not seem to be a national minority protected by its co-ethnics in the external national 'homeland', there is no strictly 'Brubakerean' constellation either. Hence, the Nepali state does not qualify as a fundamental and dangerous actor concerning the possibility of a 'Greater Nepal', that idea sometimes discussed by South Asian politicians and in the South Asian literature and media. This 'Greater Nepal' idea may cause some Drukpa fear about their identity and state, but it does not seem that the Bhutanese state identifies the state of Nepal as the source of this threat. Nepal's troubles put it far from looking "outwards for adventures that would amount to a direct challenge to the Indian state" (ibid.) – and a 'Greater Nepal' definitely would threaten the Indian Union with its many inhabitants of Nepali origin not only in Sikkim and Darjeeling. The case of Sikkim has somewhat traumatised Bhutan's élites, since it is the case of a former Buddhist kingdom that was closely linked to the Bhutanese monarchy, overrun by Nepali-speakers and finally incorporated in the Indian Union in the 1970s. When Nepali-led activism took place in Darjeeling between 1986 and 1988, this event too became perceived as a "major threat to the future of the Drukpa state" (Hutt 1996a: 208). For Sinha too, the two immediate neighbours Sikkim and Darjeeling "are viewed as serious potential threats", but, as he formulates, "[t]he argument that the [Lhotshampa] problem is an external conspiracy against the [Drukpa] state does not carry universal conviction" (Sinha 1994: 183-184). When Dixit (1994) was "[l]ooking for Greater Nepal" in 1994, he found neither the concrete project of a 'Greater Nepal' of the Nepali or Sikkimese state nor of the Lhotshampa. Despite the existence of some kind of a "Cultural

Greater Nepal" as a product of the "Demographic Greater Nepal" formed by the "very weak thread" of Nepali language (ibid.), he could not find a *pan*-Nepali identity on the Lhotshampa side until the refugee crisis. But the result of this crisis was that the people in the refugee camps have switched from a 'Bhutanese first' feeling to the one of 'now Nepali first' in some cases. All in all, Dixit concludes,

The question of whether there is a movement to create a Greater Nepal has to be answered in the negative. [...A]s far as the Lhotshampas are concerned, their sense of being 'Nepali' might have been strengthened as never before, but they are without the inclination or ability to extend this sentiment into a movement for a Greater Nepal (ibid.).

One reason for this might be that "there is so much that sets apart 'Nepali-speakers' from one another – tribe, caste, class, language [for many Nepali, the Nepali language is only a second language], region, and so on" (ibid.). Thus, there seems no threat of a 'Greater Nepal' posed to the Bhutanese state – or as one respondent puts it: "India would never allow a 'Greater Nepal'." Nevertheless, this same respondent also talked about a feeling of insecurity among the Drukpa since they feel threatened by the regional ethnic constellation.[4]

(6) Overarching Loyalties

According to Lijphart, "It is obviously helpful for [the consensus model] if the divisions among the segments are counterbalanced to some extent by an overarching sense of belonging together" (1985: 124), since this provides cohesion for the society as a whole and thus moderates the intensities of all cleavages found in it (ibid.: 1977: 82). For Lijphart, overarching loyalty means "a shared national feeling" (1985: 124), "national sentiment" and "national identity" (1977: 82). Schneckener's definition includes that "the majority on each side is somehow affiliated to the same symbols, institutions, ideals and values" (2002: 212), and that there can be found "a common sense of belonging to one nation or one region" (ibid.: 213). Under these circumstances, "no group claims to be the titular nation and the 'owner' of the state, which would obviously exclude others" (ibid.).

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[4]   According to Dhakal and Strawn, a "Sikkimization" of Bhutan could be possible, but they nevertheless point to numerous differences between the two cases (see 1994: 413). Concerning 'Greater Nepal', they state that most analysts dismiss 'Greater Nepal' as a "bogey", a serious discussion of such an option being political suicide and thus only raised to blame political adversaries. They seriously doubt whether the Nepali outside Nepal would like to join Nepal since they identify differently, and the authors mention the Nepali in the Indian Union looking for their own state *as part of the Indian Union* (ibid.: 432-37).

In the case of Bhutan, the background condition of overarching loyalty is seen as (very) favourable by all the respondents. They all agree that the Lhotshampa in their large majority are as loyal – or even "*absolutely* loyal" - as the rest of the Bhutanese population towards the state. This loyalty seems primarily to focus on the personality and position of the king, who is "much admired and undisputed" (respondent) throughout the whole country.[5] The Hindu Lhotshampa even consider the king the "rebirth of their God" (respondent). An important reason for this loyalty seems to be that the Lhotshampa too - but to a lesser degree – benefit from the Bhutanese state, especially when comparing their situation with the one of the Nepali in Nepal and also India - "loyalty *qua* economic incentives", as one respondent puts it.

I principally agree: according to Schneckener, Belgium is a good example to show that the Crown can be a prominent symbol for the overarching loyalty (2002: 213). Nevertheless, one cannot ignore that the Drukpa form what Schneckener calls the "core nation" (ibid.) of Bhutan and that a considerable part of the Lhotshampa seem to feel discriminated against. Finally, one cannot ignore the people in the refugee camps: at least some of them must have left Bhutan because they doubted that the Bhutanese state could and would resolve their problems. Hence, I would not rate the situation *very* favourable, but nevertheless favourable because of the integrative personality of the king and institution of the monarchy as well as the economic incentives the Bhutanese state is able to give.

(7) Socio-Economic Equality

The background condition of socio-economic equality points to the problem of coinciding cleavages: large socio-economic differences among the segments may give rise to grave tensions, since the poorer segments will likely feel discriminated against, whereas the more prosperous ones may feel threatened by the poorer segments and their demands (Lijphart 1985: 124). Conversely, socio-economic equality between the segments means crosscutting cleavages, which moderate the main segmental conflict line and strengthen overarching loyalties. Schneckener (2002: 211) and Linder (n. d., forthcoming) are right: the former states that no segment should be severely disadvantaged in terms of economic and human resources and that all segments should have a similar profile with regard to the standard of living, average income, the number of employees or the level of education; Linder stresses the importance of crosscutting and

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[5]   However, as one respondent said, there can be found "a quite strong movement against the 'tyrannical' kingdom *system*" in the refugee camps.

coinciding cleavages when distinguishing lower and higher risk potentials of multicultural conflicts.

Although one might – as most of the respondents do - point to a more or less given socio-economic equality found in Bhutan, one nevertheless comes across some negative aspects. First of all, one has to recognise that the development of modern Bhutan has produced unequal effects: until the present, it has been the north-western valleys that especially profited from the modernisation process. Thus, this process is responsible for the growing inequality between the southern and the northern segment accumulating political and economic power (respondent). Second, most of the – weak and small (see Linder and Cavin 2003) - private business sector seems to be in the hands of the northern (or even Ngalong) population today. Therefore, the way in which this sector will be developed and strengthened seems to be decisive concerning Bhutan's future socio-economic situation. An unevenly developing private sector would mean growing socio-economic inequalities, i.e. a higher potential of internal unrest. According to one respondent, it will be crucial how the king – "who holds the economics in his hands" - behaves, whether he will (re-)distribute the economic advantages. And, third, the king's future decisions are of even more importance with regard to the fact that the Lhotshampa have lost a lot of property, land, posts and opportunities during the last fifteen years, and that they are facing certain hindrances when working (or planing to work) as entrepreneurs (respondent). Thus, although the situation would not be unfavourable, the tendency towards an increasing socio-economic gap between the two segments bears the realistic potential of decreasing overarching loyalty.

(8) Geographical Concentration of Segments

The probable geographical or territorial concentration has two main advantages. First, it makes "territorial arrangements in order to allow more regional self-rule" (Schneckener 2002: 212) for each segment and vertical power-sharing, that is federalism or decentralisation, a valuable option. Second, since the segments are concentrated in clearly separated areas and hence rather isolated from each other, they will be prevented from turning latent hostilities into conflicts (Lijphart 1985: 126).

At first sight, Bhutan's situation seems very favourable here: Ngalong in the west, central Bhutanese in central Bhutan, Sharchop in the east (together: in the north) and Lhotshampa in the south. Hence, decentralisation and federalism would be valuable options. Moreover, if Bhutan's situation concerning cultural plurality has to be described as 'mutual distrust' between Drukpa

and Lhotshampa (a view highly challenged by one respondent stressing the mixed population in the towns living together without any problems), it has to be considered favourable or even very favourable that these two segments are geographically isolated from each other to a large degree. However, as a result of social mobilisation in Bhutan too to a certain degree, at least the commercial areas like the capital Thimphu have more and more an inter-segmental population. Further, an increasing 'diffusion' seems to be taking place in the southern rural areas too, this "partly due to the Royal Government's policy which settles northern farmers in the south" (respondent). Thus, although given at the moment, the situation of geographical concentration and isolation of the segments seems to decrease.

(9) Traditions of Elite Accommodation

Finally, it is helpful if a future consensus model implementation is supported by "long-standing traditions of settling disagreements by consensus and compromise" (Lijphart 1985: 126). The reason for asking about the tradition of accommodation of the *élites* is that the consensus model will have to be introduced by the élites if it "is to be accepted [...]. It is useless and probably counterproductive to appeal over their heads to the mass public" (ibid. 1977: 170).

Discussing traditions of accommodation and compromise among the Bhutanese élites, one first of all can compare two views of the respondents: that these traditions exist, but that the readiness for compromises has dwindled; and that, resulting from a "recent quasi-feudalistic system, it is less a question of compromise than undoubted submission" (respondent) under the superiors' will. However, all the respondents point, in one way or another, to the influence of Buddhism. As Aris demonstrates impressively, the Tantric[6] teachings found in Bhutan not only stress the ethos and mechanisms of peace-making and harmony; they too make use of

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[6] Tantric Buddhism is also known as *Vajrayana* Buddhism or '*Vajra* Vehicle' ('Diamond Vehicle') and is part of Mahayana Buddhism also known as 'Great Vehicle'. The name 'Great Vehicle' indicates that Mahayana is a vehicle with enough space for all people (Gäng 2002: 153) and not just for religious élites trying to reach their own enlightenment (Thurman 1996: 101). Mahayana stresses the social responsibility of each human being and especially of those on the way to their own enlightenment: they (known as *Bodhisattvas*) help other people on their way to enlightenment. The Vajrayana or 'Diamond Vehicle' can be seen as part of the Mahayana trying to harmonise the Mahayana with its precedent Theravada (see Gäng 2002). Vajrayana teaches that every sentient being *is* Buddha (the enlightened) and has its Buddha nature or diamond inside (ibid.: 209). It is one's own responsibility to discover his or her own diamond or Buddha nature, but one gets help from the Bodhisattvas and the *Tantras*, Buddha's own words (ibid.: 205).

violent ritual means of a symbolic and magical nature. [...] The distinctive Tantric idea implicit in the theory of government which accords due place to violence derives from the notion that the negative emotions can be used to spiritual profit if they are observed, tamed and turned (Aris 1994b).

This Tantric basis is still the source of the Bhutanese state's legitimacy and authority, and just as the theocracy was their protector in the past, so is the monarchy today. But however prominent the position of violence in Bhutanese Buddhism, for Aris "[t]here can be few world religions where the option for peace lies closer to hand", so that it is legitimate for him to "take the Buddhist attitude toward peace and the sanctity of life as axiomatic" (ibid.). These axioms seemed to have played an important role when empowering the first Druk Gyalpo, Ugyen Wangchuck, in 1907. Aris speaks of the empowerment document as a 'contract' intending above all else the achievement of a lasting peace (ibid.). This view of "mediation as a means of political conciliation" (ibid.) is supported by the fieldwork of Pain and Deki (2000: 212).

Summary

The respondents' answers have shown one very essential aspect of dealing with Lijphart's background conditions: the distinction between what I would like to call the subjective perception and behaviour and the objective or factual prerequisites. *Subjective perception and behaviour* refers to the fact that there is "an incredibly huge gap between Drukpa and Lhotshampa" (respondent), which might be the consequence of the fact that northern Bhutan has shared a common history for a rather long time that enabled its heterogeneous communities to create a common cultural identity independent from a common language. *Objective or factual prerequisites*, on the other hand, refer to the fact that the main groups of Bhutanese society can be distinguished along ethnic, linguistic and religious lines. To distinguish these two dimensions seems necessary to be able to make clear Bhutan's situation and to think about the chances for the consensus model.

In the following, I consider only the *first* dimension since it is the one that gives shape to Bhutan's present reality; further, it is nonsense and even dangerous to base a political solution on cleavages which are minimal or even non-existent at this time. After having analysed the respondents' answers and statements as well as the literature and documents, I conclude that Bhutan's segmental constellation is formed by the two segments 'Drukpa' and 'Lhotshampa'. I further think that what we find in present Bhutan is neither a purely ethnic nor a purely linguistic nor a purely religious conflict line, but a somewhat mysteriously mingled one – drawn by cultural identity and, finally, by the will to "political and economic power-sharing" (respondent).

Table 2 shows the complete ratings given by all the respondents. The values *in line 1 to 7* represent the respondents' ratings of the statements found in the questionnaire (see Appendix), which is based on Lijphart's (1985) scheme. He has defined the categories for the respective conditions as follows: (+2) "very favourable", (+1) "favourable", (0) "neither favourable nor unfavourable", (-1) "unfavourable" and (-2) "very unfavourable". *Line 8* presents the raw average over the respondents' ratings for each background condition. *Line 9* shows the final results of this chapter. It corresponds to a weighted average of the respondents' ratings and answers. The criteria that led to this final rating – i.e. to the weighing - are (1) the consistency of the respondent's argument for each rating (hence, I checked for intra- as well as inter-respondent consistency and compared with the available text material) and (2) the experience of the respondents as well as her or his sources (here, I checked how long (s)he has been living/staying in Bhutan and which function (s)he has been fulfilling there). The final considerations of this chapter following Table 2 are based on the ratings in line 9. As the criteria indicate, the respondents and their answers should not be treated identically. Hence, it makes more sense to base further considerations on the weighted ratings. However, as line 8 and the average calculations indicate, there sometimes exist different perspectives and opinions, a fact which should be kept in mind. Finally, *line 10*, based on the ratings in line 9 and comparing the total scores of Bhutan with the comparable total score of Switzerland (which got the by far most favourable rating in Lijphart's examination of 1985 (see 120, Table 5.1)), somewhat sums up and underlines the result of this chapter.

Table 2: Ratings

	No Majority Segment	Equal Size	Small Number	Small Popula-tion Size	External Threats	Over-arching Loyalties	Socio-economic Equality	Geogr. Concen-tration	Tradition of Accom modation
1	-2	0	+1	+2	+1	+2	0	+2	+1
2	+1	+1	0	+1	+1	+2	-1	+2	+2
3	+2	+1	+2	+2	-2	+1	-1	-2[7]	0
4	-1	-1	+2	+2	+1	+1	-1	+1	-1
5	+2	0	+1	+2	-2	+1	+1	+1	+1
6	+2	+1	+1	+2	+1	+2	+1	+2	+2
7	-1	-1	+2	+2	+1	+1	-1	+1	-1
8	0	0	+1	+2	0	+1	0	+2	+1
9	**-1**	**-1**	**0**	**+2**	**-1**	**+1**	**0**	**+2**	**+2**
10	Total	Score	<u>Bhutan</u>:	+4		Total	Score	<u>Switzer-land</u>:	+8

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[7] The argument for this rating was that the Lhotshampa, although forming a majority in the southern districts, suffer from limited political participation. However, this is not a problem of geography first, but of citizenship laws. Thus, this rating is not considered in line 8.

As the Drukpa cultural identity of the country's northern population is strongly perceived as well as actually existing, one finds the essential segmental cleavage 'Drukpa – Lhotshampa'; thus the negative rating concerning the absence of a majority segment and the equality of their size. The number of segments I consider neither favourable nor unfavourable since one can find two segments and thus a small number, but not the ideal number of three to five. The population size clearly can be rated very favourable due to the fact that a population of about 600,000 to over 2 million is definitely small. The background condition 'external threats' has to be rated unfavourable since the external threats are not perceived in the same way by the two segments: the main threat perceived by the Drukpa, i.e. their identity endangered by the demographic constellation of the whole region, is not perceived as such by the Lhotshampa. However, I do not rate it *very* unfavourable since this threat is linked with a modernisation process that has the potential to be perceived as a threat by both the Drukpa and Lhotshampa. The situation concerning overarching loyalties I would judge favourable because of the integrative personality of the king and institution of the monarchy as well as the economic incentives the Bhutanese state is able to give. Finally, there are the Lhotshampa themselves who in there large majority definitely would like to be a fully integral part of the Bhutanese state and who do not seem to strongly identify with the Nepali living in India and Nepal. The socio-economic situation I consider neither favourable nor unfavourable since Bhutan seems to be at a turning point where it will be decided whether it will have to handle increasing socio-economic inequality or whether it manages to increase its possibly slightly favourable situation. The background conditions concerning geographical concentration and tradition of accommodation can be rated very favourable: the segments are more or less isolated from each other, and Bhutanese history, customs and religious traditions have been consensus oriented until today.

The result of this chapter can be summed up and underlined by the comparison between Bhutan and Switzerland. In Lijphart's examination of 1985, Switzerland got the by far most favourable rating: a total score of +8 on a scale from –18 to +18. Bhutan's total score of +4 makes clear that its chances of establishing and maintaining a consensus model would be theoretically (very) good.

Synthesis and Conclusion

The last chapter made clear that the chances of establishing and maintaining a successful consensus model in Bhutan can be considered favourable with reference to the overall constellation of Lijphart's nine background conditions. In Chapter II, I argued from the social-psychological perspective that successful nation-building requires a state that is perceived as an identity-securing interpretive system by all the segmental groups and that a consensus model would heighten the state's ability to be perceived as such a benefactor. In this last chapter, I shall try to make a synthesis of Lijphart's institutionalist and Bloom's social-psychological approach and ask Lijphart's (1999: xii) 'so what?' question, that is to ask about the probable consequences to be drawn.

Consensus Model

Although I think that two principal dimensions of a consensus model can be identified, I shall not discuss the third research question on the basis of Lijphart: since Bhutan has no political parties, interest groups or a constitution, a discussion on the basis of Lijphart (see Table 1) would not be that useful. Instead, I refer to 'horizontal consensus' and 'vertical consensus' (see Linder's "horizontal power-sharing" and "vertical power-sharing" (2002: 9-10)). These two dimensions are also part of Lijphart's nine background conditions.

Horizontal consensus shall have the same significance as Linder's 'horizontal power-sharing': the three elements of horizontal power-sharing – and, hence, horizontal consensus - are "[s]eparation of powers", "[p]roportional representation" and "[m]inority statutes and group rights" (2002: 9). In the interest of brevity, I shall only focus on *representation* as directly linked to the central topic of this paper. Since there is not only the possibility of representation by proportion, but also by a threshold number (see Kymlicka 1995: 146-47) and by over-representation (see Schneckener 2002: 220), I shall speak of *special representation* following either the proportionality principle, the principle of over-representation or the threshold principle. *Vertical consensus* (power-sharing), on the other hand, can mean de-concentration, decentralisation or federalism. All these variations are based on the principle of territoriality (see ibid.: 222). We have *de-concentration* if "[d]ecentralised units of the central administration carry out government functions" without the participation of the local population in local decision-making and defining of policies by sub-national authorities (Linder 2002: 8). *Decentralisation* means the

transfer of government functions, responsibilities, and political power [...] combined with self-government at the local level authorities. To a certain extent, we find all attributes of democracy and rule of law: such as local or regional elections of authorities, the division of powers or the right to levy taxes. Within a certain legal framework, sub-national units are granted some political autonomy (ibid.).

Finally, *federalism* "can be seen as the strongest form of decentralisation", the fundamental difference with regard to pure decentralisation being found "in the fact that the sub-national units are participating in the decision-making processes on the national level" (ibid.: 9). An additional form of vertical power-sharing is based on the principle of personality instead of territoriality (Schneckener 2002: 222). But as the Lhotshampa are by and large territorially concentrated and the principle of personality is concerned with non-territorial communities, I shall not further discuss it. Moreover, as current Bhutan follows the principle of decentralisation (see Linder and Cavin 2003), de-concentration would mean a retrograde move and hence neither shall be discussed. However, what must be discussed is the possible advantage of federalism for the Bhutanese case.

Finally, both horizontal and vertical consensus rely on the basic mechanism of veto points, i.e. "formal or informal rules which hinder a single authority from making decisions without taking into account [...] another actor" (Linder 2002: 10). Therefore, I shall discuss veto variations as well as the distinction between formal and informal rules.

Horizontal Consensus: Special Representation

According to Kymlicka (1995: 144-49), discussing the issue of special representation includes three questions: (1) which groups should be represented, (2) how many seats should a group get and (3) how should the group representatives be held accountable? These are indeed crucial questions. However, I would like to add a fourth one: (4) in which institutions and bodies should the principle of special representation be implemented?

(1) The answer to the question about which groups should be given the possibility of special representation seems rather clear in the case of Bhutan. As we have two (main) segments in Bhutan, we see that the several northern ethno-linguistic (sub-)groups have integrated themselves well into common Drukpa society, which means that they do not need to be specially represented. If special representation is limited to the Lhotshampa segment, the problem of an unlimited escalation of demands (ibid.: 144) should not emerge. However, one must not forget two crucial points when talking about groups in general and the Lhotshampa in particular. First, every group has sub-groups (ibid.: 145), and no group is totally homogeneous. Second, a group

member must have the possibility to move outside her or his group, to temporarily or permanently leave the group (an individual's behaviour should not automatically be determined by her or his membership in a certain group). These two points shall be kept in mind when discussing the other three questions.

(2) The second crucial question is the one about which principle to use for the implementation of special representation. Whereas, according to Lijphart and Linder (see above), a consensus model demands *proportional* representation, Kymlicka gives us an additional option for special representation: *a threshold number* (1995: 146), i.e. a negotiated number of representatives that does not have to base on proportionality, but must not be fallen short of. Finally, Schneckener's (2002: 220) alternative to proportional representation is the one of *over-representation*: the higher the positions and ranks, the more likely that smaller groups are over-represented. Although over-representation sometimes is necessary, Schneckener is right to state that this option should be restricted to some areas (ibid.).

The first two options both have their problems too: whereas proportional representation requires knowing about the sizes of the segments, a threshold number should be the result of inter-segmental negotiations. Bhutan's situation is rather unfavourable concerning both problems. On the one side, the exact size of the Lhotshampa seems unknown and even a matter of dispute. On the other side, negotiations on a threshold number not only are a problem because of the first problem, but also since one seems to find an atmosphere of mutual distrust between Drukpa and Lhotshampa élites and, hence, an unfavourable atmosphere for negotiations. However, a cautious beginning of general talks can increase mutual trust and form the foundation of deepened negotiations.

Since the exact sizes seem currently unknown, I would suggest the option of a threshold number for a Bhutanese special representation system. In my opinion, this option has three main advantages. First, as it is not based on an objective fact (the real sizes), but on negotiations, claims about a potential under-representation are less probable to occur. Should they nevertheless do so, they would be definitely less legitimate than claims based on a complaint about wrong proportionality. Second, this threshold number, if properly negotiated, would not have to be changed immediately in the case of the return of persons from the refugee camps in Nepal and India – which means that a system based on a threshold number would be more stable and hence better to deal with the home-comings. Finally, I think that special representation does not have to be equal concerning all the state's institutions and bodies, but that one has to be flexible with viewing the importance of a certain institution or body. However, this last advantage can also be found in a system of proportional representation: proportional rigidity can be somewhat

decreased by the flexible solution of 'asymmetric' appointment, i.e. an *overall* proportional representation (Schneckener 2002: 220-21). The main disadvantage of a threshold number system concerns the necessary negotiations. Whereas proportionality is rather clear when reserving some seats for a group, threshold number requires the agreement about that number or, in other words, the formula on which the threshold number shall be based. But despite this disadvantage, I consider a threshold number system more favourable for the Bhutanese case. In my opinion, a threshold number should be based on a compromise both sides can live well with. The Lhotshampa side should be very careful and modest in its demands (because of the existence of the Drukpa fear of being overrun as well as the possibility that the Lhotshampa could be considered an immigrant minority in an already consolidated state). Finally, both sides should see the negotiated result as a temporary one, which has the aim of building a basis for further negotiations and to increase mutual trust. Regardless of the option one chooses, each representative should be a legitimate one for the group (s)he represents. However, each group must be able to recognise the other groups' inner procedures, since a lack of mutual recognition can threaten the overall unity of the groups, i.e. the country's unity.

(3) The third crucial question is the one which asks about how to hold the representatives accountable. Kymlicka (1995: 147) again discusses two possibilities: the first one guarantees that some representatives are only accountable to a minority's electorate, but without guaranteeing that those representatives belong themselves to that minority; the second possibility is that the representatives mirror a certain minority, but without guaranteeing their accountability to the latter. Applied to the case of Bhutan, the question is: can the Lhotshampa only be truly represented by Lhotshampa representatives? Affirming this question would mean that one can only act in favour of a group if one shares its experience, which, in the end, demands a representative's membership in this group. It would further mean that Bhutanese representatives are only guided by their ethno-linguistic ties when making politics. The consequence of this would be that the consensus model does not work: if every group makes politics only according to one characteristic of the group (here: the ethno-linguistic), a compromise can never be found. Nevertheless, since experience can indeed be a valuable source in politics, and since voters have to be able to identify as much as possible with their representatives to have confidence in them, Lhotshampa should be represented by Lhotshampa. However, this is only one side of the coin. Remember that all groups have sub-groups. This means that a supposed *conservative* Lhotshampa would perhaps be a worse representative for a supposed *progressive* Lhotshampa than might be the case with a progressive *Drukpa* representative - hence, the progressive Lhotshampa should be given the possibility to choose the progressive Drukpa as her or his representative. Thus, a representation system should unite both models mentioned by Kymlicka.

(4) The last crucial question to be discussed here asks about the institutions or bodies to be structured along the principle of special representation. Special representation should be part of all the public institutions and bodies which structure people's public life - such as the governments, the administrations, the judiciary, the police and army, public education and health institutions and the public media. People are more or less in steady contact with these institutions, and as one purpose of decentralisation is to bring government and state closer to the people, dealing with and seeing that one is represented in those institutions can enhance people's feeling of being a part of the state. And as the feeling of being represented means the ability to identify, such a state is more likely to become an *identity-securing interpretive system*. Therefore, the answer to the fourth question is: all the relevant bodies and institutions of (sub-)national decision-making and (sub-)national implementation and all those bodies and institutions that can enhance people's identification with the state. In the case of Bhutan, this includes at least the National Assembly, the Royal Advisory Council, the Cabinet (and thus some ministerial posts in the government, which is supposed to be the strongest signal for power-sharing), the High Court as well as the District Courts and Sub-Divisional Courts in the southern districts, the administration, the police and army, the education and health systems and the public media such as newspaper, radio and television. All these bodies not only are of an 'institutionalist' importance, but they further have a crucial psychological and symbolic meaning. The example of the health system shall demonstrate these essentials of special representation as well as the point that the latter can be of importance where one would not think that it can be. As Bhutan's health services are free for everyone, one can imagine that the health sector too is strongly identified with the centralising state; moreover, Lhotshampa doctors could be a signal for other Lhotshampa that they have the same chance as everybody to become well educated and to occupy a post which is essential for the country's future. If all the institutions, bodies and systems are completely dominated by individuals of Drukpa descent, they will seem only to symbolise the Drukpa state, but will not have the meaning of an identity-securing interpretive system for the Lhotshampa.

Vertical Consensus

As explained above, discussing the possibilities of vertical consensus in the case of Bhutan primarily means thinking about the probable advantages and disadvantages of territorial federalism. I see one large advantage of a Bhutanese federal state: to implement federal structures and, thereby, to give the Lhotshampa self-government rights would be a strong signal for the Lhotshampa, which could restore Lhotshampa confidence in the Bhutanese state (a missing

confidence even resulting in Lhotshampa self-discrimination, as reported by several respondents). As confidence increases, this would further enhance Lhotshampa loyalty to the centralising state – at least theoretically. Indeed, as Schneckener (2002: 222) warns, there is the inherent danger that federalism results in a permanent competition and struggle between the central government and the self-government bodies. Even if this potential danger can be avoided, the costs of federalism are simply too high in the case of Bhutan. First, the ongoing process of modernisation will further increase social mobility and thus reduce geographical concentration, which is the base of a territorial federalism. Second, federalism would create a new minority – the Drukpa living in the southern districts. Third, federalism-gained Lhotshampa self-government rights might lead to the state's fear of losing the south. Fourth, federalism would only make sense if it created a new political majority in the south, which would not be the case at the moment, it seems. Fifth, according to Linder and Cavin (2003), decentralisation is a success in Bhutan, which is an argument for continuing on this basis. Sixth, as Linder (1997: 193) puts it, "Federalism has chances of success exactly in cases where [...] cleavages of culture, language, and economy do not coincide geographically." In the case of Bhutan, Lhotshampa culture (and hence their language) is concentrated in the south; thus, federal structures would coincide with the perceived cultural gap between the Drukpa and Lhotshampa and lead to a growing distance instead of more unity. Moreover, there is, as we have seen, the possibility of (growing) socio-economic inequality. Finally, the Lhotshampa never seemed to have demanded self-government rights.

From the social-psychological perspective, one could recommend changing as little as necessary since every change has the inherent potential to create uncertainty and to endanger already made identifications, which might result in personal as well as collective crises.

Veto Variations - Formal and Informal Rules

Schneckener (2002: 221) distinguishes between three types of veto rights: delaying veto, indirect veto and direct veto. *Delaying veto* means that a fixed and (very) large majority of a minority group is able to delay processes in the legislature. However, delay does not mean the definitive cancellation. And as the political processes in Bhutan are "very slow, but thorough, [...] somewhat similar to Switzerland" (respondent), an additional means of delay does not seem to make sense: why should a decision taken in an "eminent consensus-oriented society" (respondent) be changed again after a forced delay? The *indirect veto*, on the other hand, seems to be a much better possibility here. Since it is based on the principle of double majority, this kind of veto would not only require a majority of the representatives in the National Assembly, but also a majority of the representatives within each group. Of course, this possibility not only would bring a veto for the

Lhotshampa, but also for the Ngalong and Sharchop (unless one limits it to the Lhotshampa); hence, this mechanism (1) demands a real consensus, (2) makes it possible for the Lhotshampa to block decisions, (3) gives the Drukpa some psychological security since they would be able to force a re-formulation of a consensus too and (4) would also work in case of a growing Sharchop consciousness. The right to *direct veto*, finally, means having the possibility of declaring each matter to be of 'vital interest' for a group, which would stop every process. As one has to minimise the danger of the misuse of a veto right, this last possibility cannot be recommended.

According to Schneckener (ibid.: 218-19), *formal rules* of strengthening minority groups are based on a written constitution, a peace accord or special laws, whereas *informal rules* are based on oral agreements or unwritten customs. Following the principle of 'as few changes as necessary', one might prefer the informal solution with reference to the consensus-oriented character of Bhutanese society. But as it seems that the Lhotshampa have not really been a part of this consensus-oriented society until today, the argument in favour of the formal solution is that it means more security for the minority group. In the end, both possibilities have their advantages and disadvantages, and neither can be clearly favoured here.

Discussing all the above mentioned possibilities for Bhutan, one should be aware of the fact that Bhutan has a big advantage: it is already familiar with the principle of (special) representation and some of its related issues. A few examples shall support this view: there not only are Lhotshampa in the National Assembly, but also in the Royal Advisory Council and the High Court, the police and army; the *Kuensel*, Bhutan's only newspaper, not only is published in English and Dzongkha, but in Nepali too; and the Bhutanese radio services are available in English, Dzongkha, Sharchop and Nepali (personal communication and *ad hoc* observation). One should also remember the fact that Bhutan made big efforts in integrating the southern population before the crisis that emerged in the 1980s. Thus, one could speak of an existing basis for a new start and attempt.

Nevertheless, the psychological hurdles to re-evoke and intensify these Bhutanese advantages seem to be high at the moment - a quite important disadvantage. A second disadvantage seems to be that at least the Lhotshampa exile organisations are not calling for special representation and other minority rights in particular, but for democratic reforms and human rights in general. However, the Bhutanese élites have the chance to meet such demands and to absorb them: at the moment, a committee is working on a written constitution. As it is the government's aim to make Bhutan a democratic state, my final considerations shall concern a democratic constitution.

Considerations about the Future Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan

If one accepts the findings and arguments of Lijphart (e.g. 1999) as well as that the overall constellation of the nine background conditions is favourable, then it is clear which polity (i.e. constitution) to recommend for cultural-pluralistic Bhutan: consensus democracy. Moreover, if one recognises that special representation has the potential of making a state and its political system an identity-securing interpretive system, then one can recommend consensus democracy with its core idea of special representation. All in all, consensus democracy's advantages (Linder 1998: 171-73) are striking:

- consensus democracy avoids majority decisions thanks to negotiation and compromise

- it rejects the idea of the hegemonic nation-state and avoids its fallacies

- its development is a process of social integration that takes time, hence, consensus democracy accepts slow decision-making rhythms

- one of its core elements, special representation, has a symbolic value favouring mutual respect between different segments

- one of its prerequisites, co-operation of inter-segmental élites, can favour general patterns of intra-cultural co-operation among the segments

- some of its elements are robust and can withstand pressure to change the rules in situations of severe conflict

- it provides more chances for peacemaking in culturally pluralistic societies than majoritarian democracy.

Hence, if 'future Bhutan' means 'democratic Bhutan', it should further mean 'consensus-oriented constitutional monarchy'.

But is it really that 'simple'? One crucial fact not yet considered has to be discussed in addition: the fact that any kind of democracy requires political parties, and that these parties in every society organise along social cleavages or conflict lines. Here, the crucial question is: what about the danger that these new parties might organise along the segmental division 'Drukpa – Lhotshampa'? As the term 'danger' indicates, this question is based on the assumption that purely segmental parties are counterproductive to intra-state harmony and, hence, independence, sovereignty and security. More generally asked: what, if the draft committee and the political decision-makers will prefer the Westminster, that is the majoritarian, model sketched in Table 1?

Generally speaking, the best form of democracy for Bhutan is that which succeeds in preventing purely segmental political parties. Unfortunately, the situation in Bhutan seems to favour the formation of such parties for at least four reasons. First, the large majority of Bhutanese society and its élites has been quite resistant to the several dominant world ideologies (such as liberalism or communism) – hence, ideology would not provide a basis for party formation. Second, the perception of the segmental constellation 'Drukpa – Lhotshampa' seems deeply-rooted. Third, even if this twofold segmental constellation is overestimated and in fact a threefold one 'Ngalong/central Bhutanese – Sharchop – Lhotshampa' occurs, this *per se* would not change the overall situation of purely segmental parties. Finally, the possibility of party formation along segmental lines seems probable because equally strong social cleavages are absent. However, if these four points are really met in Bhutan, neither consensus nor majoritarian democracy could prevent the country from a negative development.

But the country's future is far from being so gloomy, not only because almost all respondents challenge the fourth point which states the absence of other cleavages. Although it is not apparent, talks with several politically responsible persons and élites make clear that there do not only exist factions concerning the minority issue. Bhutan's isolation until 1961 and the modernisation process begun then make it natural that the modernisation issue is not treated the same by everyone – and here lies the chance of the majoritarian model as a second best alternative to the consensus one. According to some respondents, there indeed seems to exist the cleavage 'progressive – conservative' and the forces trying to mediate. As one very experienced respondent stated:

The worst case would be a Hindu party. If there will be only two parties, they rather will organise along the line 'progressive – conservative'. Whereas the former will try to mediate between the different languages and ethnic groups, the latter will uphold Buddhist values. I would favour a multiparty system [i.e. consensus democracy], but it has to be prevented from becoming like Nepal, which today has to be considered a totally failed state.

Indeed, if the conflict line between progressives and conservatives is strong enough to dominate the perceived segmental constellation 'Drukpa – Lhotshampa', then a two-party system could work in Bhutan without creating segmental parties. Moreover, as the Westminster model in New Zealand shows, a two-party system and the principle of special representation do not preclude each other (see Lijphart 1999: 22).

However, some crucial points seem to have to be met to make the two-party system a valuable option too. A Lhotshampa special representation in a Bhutanese two-party system only

seems to work if party landscape contains a progressive and a conservative block crosscutting the segmental lines and if segmental parties are not strongly established or are even forbidden. Each elective person on each level would have to register either as a progressive or as a conservative and would be elected according to his character and that membership. Although there would be a threshold number of reserved seats for the Lhotshampa in the National Assembly, they nevertheless would have to register either as progressive or conservative. The king could appoint the ministers proportional to the majorities in the elected National Assembly, and his appointments could be approved by the National Assembly, either *in globo* or position by position. In this way and at least from a psychological perspective, the electorate's will would be followed, but the ministers would be freed from the bond to their segment and accountable to the king first, i.e. to the integrative personality and institution representing the whole country. The ministers' approvals could follow the principle of indirect veto, i.e. each minister would have to be approved by a majority of the progressives, conservatives and the Lhotshampa (or one could limit the right to indirect veto to the Lhotshampa or widen it to the other ethno-linguistic groups). The same procedures could be followed when electing, appointing or approving the representatives of the main national institutions and bodies. That is, since all relevant forces are part of these institutions, the latter have to work according the principle of consensus.

Of course, the only claim this sketch can make is to show that, besides a multiparty system, a two-party system could work well too in the Bhutanese case – as long as the chosen political system incorporates the principles of *consensus* and special representation and prevents a party constellation which corresponds to the current segmental constellation in Bhutan; or, in short, if the centralising state will manage to become an *identity-securing interpretive system* for all the groups building Bhutanese society and community. Hence the following *propositions*: (1) A Bhutanese consensus model should:

- be based on a special Lhotshampa representation

- be based on a threshold number

- make it possible to vote both as Lhotshampa in particular and as Bhutanese in general

- make sure that the representational principle is part of all public bodies that can enhance the state being perceived as an identity-securing interpretive system

- deepen decentralisation, but avoid federalisation

- introduce the indirect veto, at least for the Lhotshampa.

(2) A future democratic constitution:

- in theory and principally, should install consensus democracy in Bhutan, but

- could also bring the theoretically assumed success of multiparty consensus democracy by introducing a two-party system – as long as this system incorporates the six points mentioned above and prevents a party constellation that corresponds to the current segmental constellation in Bhutan.

In their report, Linder and Cavin (2003: Executive summary) state that the

introduction of political parties, and further democratisation through a competitive two-party system bear considerable political risks if ethno-linguistic conflict potential cannot cool out by means of political integration.

As shown in this paper, there are ways to combine political integration and a two-party system – but as I also stated, such a system should not follow the majoritarian principle of competition, but incorporate the one of consensus. Hence, I can re-formulate the original third assumption somewhat: it is not primarily the consensus model (which incorporates the cornerstone of a multiparty system) that has to be seen as the best possibility to strengthen national unity in Bhutan, but a model which incorporates the principle (or spirit) of consensus, since such a model contains political integration. As Bloom has shown, this political integration is the best way to make the centralising state an identity-securing interpretive system – hence, to build a nation. As the chances of establishing and maintaining a successful consensus model are at least good, Bhutan is in the comfortable situation of having a true choice. In my opinion, Bhutan could think about an integrative political system as part of its choice. The combination of such a system and the unique development philosophy with the envisioned aim of 'Gross National Happiness' can bring about and strengthen internal unity and external distinctiveness – and hence future independence, sovereignty and security for the Bhutanese nation-state and kingdom of Bhutan.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

<u>Introduction</u>
As a student of political science at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, I am studying the political system of the kingdom of Bhutan. I would like to contribute to the discussion of the cultural plurality of Bhutan, examining questions about (a) the chances of a consensus model and (b) the crucial points concerning such a model based on the rich Bhutanese tradition. Therefore I would like to ask you to think about the following statements and to answer the related questions.
First, please fill out:

- Name:
- Occupation/Function:

<u>Notice:</u> Your answers will be treated with absolute confidentiality and will be used anonymously in the thesis.

Thank you for your co-operation!

<u>Statements to rate</u>
Arend Lijphart, a political scientist from the Netherlands, has outlined nine background conditions and two additional crucial points that are important in his view concerning the chances of a consensus model in a certain state and for a certain, i.e. plural, society. He has defined the variance of these conditions as follows: (++) "very favourable", (+) "favourable", (0) "neither favourable nor unfavourable", (-) "unfavourable", and (--) "very unfavourable". Please (a) rate the following statements by the above mentioned scheme for the case of Bhutan and (b) give a (short) argument/reason for your rating. The statements describe the (rather) ideal situation for a consensus model, and you should estimate and rate the situation found in Bhutan using the below statements as measurement. The term *<u>segment</u>* refers to the groups of the total population bounded by segmental cleavages (i.e. conflict lines) which may be of a religious, linguistic, ethnic, ideological, regional, racial or cultural nature.

1.1 "No segment constitutes a clear majority."
a) *Your rating for Bhutan:*
b) *Your argument/reason for your rating:*

1.2 "The segments are of more or less equal size."
a) *Your rating for Bhutan:*
b) *Your argument/reason for your rating:*

1.3 "The optimal number of segments lies between 3 and 5."
a) *Your rating for Bhutan:*
b) *Your argument/reason for your rating:*

1.4 "The total population size is small."
a) *Your rating for Bhutan:*
b) *Your argument/reason for your rating:*

1.5 "There are some external threats which are perceived in a same manner by all the segments."
a) *Your rating for Bhutan:*
b) *Your argument/reason for your rating:*

1.6 "There are overarching loyalties which balance out the segmentation to a certain degree."
a) *Your rating for Bhutan:*
b) *Your argumentation/reason for your rating:*

1.7 "There is more or less socio-economic equality between the segments."
a) *Your rating for Bhutan:*
b) *Your argument/reason for your rating:*

1.8 "The segments are geographically concentrated."
a) *Your rating for Bhutan:*
b) *Your argument/reason for your rating:*

1.9 "A long tradition of accommodation and compromise can be found (among the élites)."
a)   *Your rating for Bhutan:*
b)   *Your argument/reason for your rating:*

1.10 "The will and skill to resolve problems on the basis of working together and mutual trust can be found among the élites of all the segments."
a)   *Your rating for Bhutan:*
b)   *Your argument/reason for your rating:*

1.11 "The degree of fragmentation of a society must not be too high."
a)   *Your rating for Bhutan:*
b)   *Your argument/reason for your rating:*

Questions
2.1 Which cleavages (conflict lines) can be found in Bhutan's society?

2.2 Which cleavages (conflict lines) can be found concerning the tension between the Drukpa and the Lhotshampa?

2.3 Which cleavages (conflict lines) and differences can be found among the Lhotshampa?

2.4 The census of 1988 used categories from F1 to F7 concerning citizenship in Bhutan. How does this classification function and what are its central impacts today?

2.5 Which classification is needed for the right to elect at the level of the Geog, the Dzongkhag and the National Assembly?

2.6 In the document "Vision 2020" (1999) written and edited by the Planning Commission (RGoB) there can be found the following terms: "democracy" (II, 76), "tolerance" (II, 70), "consensus" (II, 75) and "national identity". What is the meaning of these terms among Bhutan's élites?
a)   *National identity:*
b)   *Consensus:*
c)   *Democracy:*
d)   *Tolerance:*

2.7 What do you know about the content of the most actual draft of a written constitution being discussed at the moment?

2.8 Is that draft already available for the public and has a public discussion begun?

Thanks for your time and co-operation!
Daniel Schaeppi
University of Zurich, Switzerland

About the Author

Daniel Schäppi, born 1976 in Männedorf ZH and raised in Küsnacht ZH, studied Political Science, Philosophy and International Law at the University of Zurich (MA December 2004). As a student, he among other things worked for the Department of International Relations at the Institute of Political Science. Even then, before his studies and as a young teenage boy, he was fascinated about the hidden Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan and decided to visit it one day. So far, he has travelled to Bhutan twice, in 2001 and 2003.

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