Chapter 1

Introduction

Understanding the nature of a nation and its dimensions requires a multifaceted approach. In order to present a holistic picture, the first two chapters of the present study must be read by clubbing together in an interconnected scheme to understand the broader aspect of the objectives the thesis entails. In these two chapters, multi-dimensional nature of the nation is highlighted, by discussing their historical journey, theoretical aspects, and challenges in contemporary claims and how the case of Tibetan refugees challenges our preconceived notion of nation and nationalism. The discussed concepts intend to portray an explicit understanding of how the ideas and implicative aspects of nations are developed, maintained, evolved, and transformed in the present time. In these chapters, the idea of nation and state, and its trajectories in interconnected world politics, is elaborated. Such explanations will create a bridge for discussing the idea of a nation without states, which is necessary to explain the research context, i.e. Tibetan refugees, and the various psychological factors that provide fluidity to its concept, such as experiencing and expressing nationalism and mobilisation beyond borders. Thus, it helps in exploring the various aspects of a nation (such as belief system, identification factors, political orientation etc.), and its related concept in the case of the refugee population. These sections highlight how the refugee populations live and exercise the idea of a nation to achieve their social and political goals. Also, particularly the present chapter introduces the research problem of the current study and the following chapter contextualises the research problem by discussing the case of Tibetan refugees in relation to nation, national identity and mobilisation. With a social psychological approach, the first two chapters add to the ongoing discourses on nation as a static entity versus nation as a fluid concept, the psychological factors such as identity and sentiments that make the

concept exercisable beyond borders, nationalism within and without state, and how the case of Tibetan refugees in India possess new challenges to the way we understand and conceptualise nation and nationalistic sentiments such as the phenomena of mobilisation.

Nation, Nationalism and National Identity: Exploring Theoretical Underpinnings

Nation as a concept has been a prominent theme for academicians for centuries. Scholars from various disciplines such as political science, sociology, and anthropology understood nation as a social construct, ideological construct or an ethnic continuity characterised by recognising shared identity among in-group members belonging to marked geographical boundaries and sharing commonality in ancestry, history, culture and language (Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1986; Hobsbawn, 1990). However, the debate over the definition of nation and understating what constitutes its essential characteristics, still occupies scholarly attention. The differences in approaches, either from the theoretical perspectives or historical contexts, make the discourse more complex and often contested. The origin of the concept of a nation can be linked with the emergence of the modern state system during the 17th century, particularly with the Treaty of Westphalia, Europe (Philphott, 1995; Osiander, 2001). The Treaty was intended to promote religious toleration, protect minorities, and establish territorial sovereignty, and from there, the concept of national sovereignty became popular (Croxton, 1999). Gradually, the phenomena of nation-state - a territorially marked sovereign polity - became the ruling organisation structure in the politics of international order.

The post-World War II era witnessed flexibility regarding how different independent nations exercised their nationality. From civic nationalism, following an inclusive approach based on shared values and legit citizenship, to ethnic nationalism, oriented towards an exclusive paradigm and based on shared ancestry and ethnic culture, nationalism exists in many forms

(Kohn, 2017). Further, the concept of nation has undergone significant changes and continues to evolve, experiencing emerging challenges and dynamics of modern times (Reicher & Hopkins, 2000). The situations of transnationalism, migration, rights across borders, and multicultural citizenship, among other intriguing concepts, have challenged the essentialism of a nation. Establishing supranational entities like the European Union, globalisation, and the rising migration trends have made concepts like traditional national sovereignty and notions of identity more complex and questionable (Brown, 2000; Agnew, 2017).

On the contrary, the re-emergence of populist nationalist movements worldwide indicates the influence of the concept of nation and national identity in deciding the nature of political projects (such as the Brexit referendum) and shaping public sentiments (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018). The rise of globalisation has stretched the current international politics to two ends. On the one hand, it creates a space for various nations to grow interconnectedly by promoting goods exchange and integration of economies, thus facilitating cross-cultural appreciation of liberal democracy (Rosenau, 2003; Rodrik, 2012; Monuk, 2018). On the other side, it results in discontent and intolerance, which manifests in the form of strengthened ethnic nationalist sentiments and aggressive movements. Such dualities are evident in the conflicts between globalist and nationalist agendas going on in many countries, highlighting the complexities and confutations intrinsic to the present political landscape (Smith, 2001; Held & Mcgrew, 2007).

Nation and nationalism, as complex and multifaceted ideologies, are characterised by its imaginative dimensions, wherein collective identities, symbols, and narratives play a central role in shaping national consciousness. Here, we explore the imaginative features of nationalism, focusing on critical theoretical perspectives, empirical studies, and conceptual frameworks that elucidate the role of imagination in the construction and mobilisation of national identities.

Scholarly attention to study nations can be categorised, based on their approach, into two elements - subjective elements such as national consciousness and identity, and the objective components comprise language, culture, social and political institutions (Connor, 1978; Joseph, 2004; Wodak, 2009). For instance, the early works on nations, such as Benedict Anderson's (1983) concept of '*Imagined Communities*' focus more on subjective components like the factors of shared narratives and symbolic interactions in constructing a national identity. Such an approach emphasises more on the idea that a nation is a socially constructed phenomenon forged through shared experiences and collective imaginations. On the contrary, researchers such as Ernest Gellener's work explored the concept of a nation from the perspective of objective elements, highlighting the role of industrialisation and homogeneity factors concerning population in the development of a nation and its sustenance potential against modern economics (Hall, 1998).

Despite such scholarly efforts, defining a nation still holds conceptual ambiguities that make it hard to comprehend conclusively and keep it open for further interpretations. Before the 1950s, the primordial theory explained ethnic assertions that interpret a nation as a natural phenomenon comprising a community of natural order, common ancestry and kinship ties, and emotional and spiritual bonds (Handman, 1921; Connor, 1994; Viroli, 1995). Later, this viewpoint was labelled as irrational and intolerant, lacking a liberal stand (Lijphart, 1977; Smith, 1991; Eller & Coughlan, 1993; Coakley, 2018), and with the upsurge of cultural pluralism, the concept of nationalism started to assimilate the idea of nation-states, a heterogeneous space for ethno-regional nationalism (Hechter & Levi, 1979) and civic nationalism (Connor, 1994; Brown, 2000). In this sense, the nation becomes a territorial land for cultural communities, integrated socio-economic communities, and sovereign political communities. While the ethno-regional

nationalists perceive the nation as a homeland of common ancestry, civic nationalism is founded on the ideological articulation of situational functionality for the modernisation process, identifying territory, everyday language, economy and culture to constitute a nation (Deutsch, 1966; Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983; Greenfeld, 1992). However, the modernist theory of nationalism points out the constructivist elements in nationalism (e.g., Armstrong, 1982; Breuilly, 1982; Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1986; Hobsbawm, 1990) and considers the concept a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon marked by power struggles that led to its political transformation and association with the nation-state for the gains of economic and political forces (Khan et al., 2017; Ozkirimli, 2017). Anthony D. Smith's (1983) ethno-symbolism theory of nationalism proved to be a research bridge between modernist and primordialism theories. According to Smith, modern nations share roots with primitive ethnic lineage ('*ethnies*') characterised by common narratives of myths and mythologies, symbols, and collective historical memories. Such perspectives on nations directed the scholarly attention towards exploring the role of the emotional and cultural significance of nation and nationalism more profoundly. Thus, nation and national identity are cognitive artefacts depicting the human intellectual universe (Haas,1986). The nation has always been a pride factor for the people associated with it. It gives them a sense of security, fulfills their socio-economic and political needs, and a sense of belonging (Druckman, 1994). Hopkins (2001) observes that feelings associated with a nation are complex, as people who do not see each other and have no physical contact or mutual communication feel for a single entity and this feeling is driven from their supranational identity. When we think about this horizontal relationship and how each other could identify with their nation as a community, we can assume the importance of the imagination that Anderson (1983) mentioned in the creation of a nation.

Social Psychology of Nation and Nationalism

The study of a nation has been of significant interest to sociologists, anthropologists, historians, and politicians, but it has yet to find enough space in the interests of social psychologists (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Social scientists, especially psychologists, have yet to take much interest in studying this imagination, the process, its content and its articulation. Psychologists have studied nation and national identity to understand intergroup relations and stereotypical studies (Druckman, 1994; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). However, the process of construction of national identity and how this leads to mobilising people for social action remained unexplored by mainstream social psychology.

The psychological intervention provided a cognitive aspect to the nationalism studies that helped develop new perspectives on the interpretation and explanation of nationalism and nation formation. For instance, the psychological perspective recognises nation and national identity as a cognitive artefact (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) that depicts the human intellectual universe (Haas, 1986). Initially, social psychologists were particularly interested in researching the factors responsible for arousing feelings of group loyalty, when such loyalty can be hostile towards other groups, how multiple loyalties determine the characteristics of nationalism, and how such loyalties influence and shape collective behaviour (Druckman, 1994). Thus, psychologists have studied nation and national identity for a long time with a constrained view of understanding intergroup relations and stereotypes (Druckman, 1994; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). However, over the past few decades, nationalism research has grown interested in examining the particularities of national identity (Reicher, Hopkins & Condor, 1997; Stevenson & Muldoon, 2010). The social identity perspective manifested nationalism as a dynamic process and started investigating the inevitable significance of national identity in constructing a nation and

nationalism. The proponents of such perspectives (mainly Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) believe that all the aspects of national identity are persuadable to serve the ambitions of particular political projects (Stevenson & Muldoon, 2010). Further, Reicher and Hopkins (2001) define national identity as a socially constructed phenomenon governed by self-categorization and social identity processes (Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005; Khan et al., 2017).

The nature of collective actions and nationalism depends significantly on how the individual defines himself in association with national or political projects (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Nelson et al., 2008). The process of self-definition is not passive; it actively shapes collective action not only for immediate results but also to shape the future. However, the mobilisation power is associated with the prototype national leaders that define and determine the nature and destination of the national identity. To conclude, the construction of national identity depends upon the shared identity people possess, remembrance and memories of national history, institutions, and symbols, and it helps in historical continuity (De Cillia, Reisigl & Wodak, 1999). Such constructions and mobilisation become comparatively more straightforward when the process is exercised on the residents from within the territorial boundaries of one's nation.

Nevertheless, displaced people from their nation often need help to establish their national identity in a foreign land. Considering the scenario, constructing a national identity is unique for Tibetan refugees. It provides an alternative perspective to understand national identity construction and citizenship criteria for being identified with a nation (Smith, 1988). The concept of an imagined nation, limited assimilation with the host culture, interweaved religion and politics, strategies of protest in the name of their country, limited acculturation, and the way of maintaining and recreating Tibetan Identity in exile are some of the elements that distinguish

Tibetans concept of nation and nationalism from other refugees (Kolas, 1996; Arakeri, 1998; Anand, 2000).

Nation Versus State: An Analytical Exploration

In order to reach the locus standi on the conception of '*nation without states*', it is imperative to understand how 'nation' and 'state' differ. It is necessary to highlight the distinction between both the concepts and how they differ in their unique characteristics and discuss complexities that arise from their interlinked entities before moving to the research problem of this thesis.

Definitions and Core Differences

A nation is a sociocultural establishment characterised by a shared sense of identity-based belongingness among individuals who share homogeneity in terms of ancestry, culture, historical events, language and, often, religious beliefs (Bhabha, 1990; Renan, 1990). The idea of a nation as lived by a group of people is more rooted in psychological and sentimental bonds, imaginary oneness, shared identity, and the collective narratives of heritage and kinship that unite people (Anderson, 1983).

In contrast, a state is primarily a political body defined by a well-marked territory, a population recognised as legal and permanent by the international communities, a sovereign government, and the potential to negotiate political and lawful relations with other states (Robinson, 2013). In other words, a state is a legal administrative organisation and a governing body that exercises sovereignty over a marked territory, maintaining a monopoly on the legitimate use of power within its boundaries (Agnew, 2005).

Historical Context

The idea of a modern state system was born from the execution of the Treaty of Westphalia 1648, which laid the foundation for the principles of territory-based sovereignty and re-constituted the political order of Europe into distinct sovereign states (Philphott, 1995). Such rearrangements led to the state-centric global order that continues to govern international politics today.

However, nations have existed for centuries (mainly in the ethno-cultural form), often predating the formation of modern states (Smith, 1989). The decline of feudalism and church, particularly in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, resulted in the rise of nation and nationalism (Anbarani, 2013). The system of nation-order emphasises rooting national identity with political sovereignty, resulting in the constitution of nation-states where the nation's borders coexist with those of the state (Hobsbawm, 1990).

Nation-States and Multinational States

The idea of a nation-state developed as a political entity where a state's territorial borders are infused with a united nation's identity, thus securing unity and controlling internal conflicts (Meyer et al., 1997). France and Japan are classic examples of such setups, as their national identity and state governing systems are strongly interwoven.

However, with recent developments in social and political scenarios worldwide, many states have now developed into multinational entities with multiple national identities within their territorial sovereignty (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Costa, 2003). For instance, the case of India, Russia, and Canada are nations where multiple ethnic populations, linguistic diversity, and various cultural communities coexist and are governed by a single state governing body. Governing such diverse interests requires consistent efforts to arrange and re-arrange the political

order of a nation and developing political projects such as government policies to unite different national identities with one state unity (Smith, 1986).

Contemporary Issues

Emerging factors like migration, globalisation, and establishing supranational bodies influence the nature of the relationship between nation and state. For instance, globalisation challenges the traditional aspects of nation and sovereignty by encouraging trade at the international level, economic independence and cultural migration (Hirst & Thompson, 1995). Further, migration trends introduce new dynamics to cultural and ethnic aspects of national attributes. Such complexities result in conflicts between national identity and the state's political projects focused on integration and multiculturalism (Delanty, 1996; Guibernau, 2003).

Nations without States

The cases of 'nations without states' possess potential challenges to the preconceived notion of nation, national identity, states, and nation-state. A nation without a state corresponds to groups of ethnic populations living within roughly marked boundaries (nation) without possessing their independence and a sovereign state (Gottlieb, 1994; Guibernau, 1999). Several factors led to the rise of nations without a state. However, the common factors among all these factors are geographical situation, instability, and political crisis, which contributed integrally to the emergence of nations without states (Guibernau, 1999). During the period of colonialism and imperialism, the colonial empires often drew arbitrary boundaries. Such territorial segregation brought different ethnic groups within single states ruled by a single power while dividing cohesive nations across multiple states. However, after the downfall of colonial powers, many nations were left behind without their states, as observed in Africa and the Middle East

(Anderson, 1987). Another significant factor is the wars and conflicts that resulted in the re-drawing of boundaries and population dispersion. Nations like Kurds are the classic examples divided into several territorial segments due to geographical rearrangements made during and post-war/conflict events (Eppel, 2016). Similarly, political oppression and denial of autonomy and sovereignty in cases where dominant groups within a state suppress minority neighbouring nations have resulted in a nation without a state setup. Such cases are evident in regions like Tibet and Xinjiang, ruled by the People's Republic of China (Shakya, 1999).

However, these groups persistently struggle to achieve self-determination and autonomy regarding internal and external affairs. For instance, in each country where the Kurds reside, they continuously fight to seek greater autonomy and or complete independence. Similarly, there are consistent efforts from the Palestinians to establish a state, but they have yet to be successful. The conflicts embedded in their historical claims, political tensions, and geographical factors are hurdles towards their aspired goals. For example, the root of Palestine's conflict corresponds to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the resultant never-ending Arab-Israeli wars that caused the forced displacement of lakhs of Palestinians. The Palestinians' territorial claims over the West Bank and Gaza Strip for a future state were disqualified by the Israeli government, which occupied the region in 1967 after dominating a Six-Day War against the Arab nations (Yiftachel, 2023). Similarly, the cessation of the Ottoman Empire after World War I remains the most significant factor in developing a new state-order in the Middle East region. However, such consequences left Kurds without their autonomous state. Later, a promise was made in the Treaty of Serves (1920) to grant Kurds their state, but was never fulfilled. Similarly, the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) also ignored the wishes of the Kurd people, leaving them divided among several states but with no autonomy (McDowall, 2021).

The cases of stateless nations are significant in understanding the fluidity present in the concept of nation and state, and raise potent questions about the legitimacy of identity, sovereignty, and international politics. Thus, understanding the dynamics of a nation without a state and examining its historical claims, strategies adopted for the struggles for recognition, and the consequences on inter-group relations is crucial before using these concept as an analytical tool in the case study of the present thesis.

Challenges Faced by Nations without States

The above discussion on the case of several groups living in a 'nation without state' phenomenon highlights the facts about their historical background and present situation. However, it is also pivotal to understand the challenges that such communities experience in their struggle for greater autonomy. The most critical challenge they face is seeking international recognition. They have their ethnic and social identities, but the desired national identity is shadowed under the identity of a nation of which they are a part. They feel such dominance as a misrecognition of their meaningful existence in this world. Like, the Catalans' base their demand for statehood on claiming to belong to a distinct ethnic group having their separate national identity. However, unfortunately now they are a part of the Catalonia region of Spain against their will. Their distinct history, language and cultural identity (especially from Spanish people) have prevented complete integration with their immediate surroundings and motivates them to aspire for a sovereign nation-state (McRoberts, 2022).

Also, from a political perspective, recognition is crucial for achieving statehood; without it, they are a group of people who are part of a nation that neither belongs to them nor defines them. Such feelings transform into feelings of betrayal and injustice among the strugglers (Gottlieb, 2006). In the long run, such unresolved issues also cause rifts in the internal unity. Many nations

without a state suffer from internal conflicts where divisions occur in terms of political support and groups. Such internal divisions and factionalism weaken the independence movement. For instance, the Oslo Accords (1993) formed the Palestinian Authority (PA). They proposed a two-state solution with a hope for achieving an autonomous statehood. However, negotiations have repeatedly stalled, and issues of borders, the status of Jerusalem, and the acceptance of Israeli settlements still need to be solved (Yakter & Tessler, 2023). The controversial division between Fatha (controls PA in the West Bank) and Hamas (rules over Gaza) further creates a hurdle for the Palestinian aspiration of statehood and weakens their solidarity approach which often results in accelerated internal conflict and fight for power within the group (Schanzer, 2008). Similarly, the conflicts in internal politics and un-unified government further weaken Palestine's negotiating position in front of Israel (Pratiwi, Syarafi & Nauvarian, 2022).

Another significant challenge involves disputes over geopolitical interests. The geographical interests of existing states often hinder the aspirations of nations without states (Newman & Visoka, 2021). For example, the Kurds in Iraq have succeeded to the extent that they have achieved a degree of autonomy by laying the foundation of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in the northern region. However, unfortunately, their strive for independence was hurdled by the opposition from the Iraqi government and the neighbouring countries (Aziz, 2017). Similarly, in Turkey too, the Kurds have faced intense resistance from the local government that often leads to the situation of civil riots, like the waging of war against the Turkish government by the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) for sovereignty. The conflict has resulted in a large number of deaths and human rights violations (Whiting & Kaya, 2021). The Kurdish conflict has severe implications for regional politics. The discontent among the geopolitical interests shared by countries like Turkey, Iran, and Syria has resulted in controversial and complicated alliances

and substantial conflicts. In other words, the Kurdish fight for statehood is hurdled by resistance from neighbouring countries like Turkey and Iran, because these dominant nations have their own geopolitical projects for territorial integrity and minority groups (Yegen, 2022).

Every social and political movement is fueled by economic resources and one of the most challenging tasks for ‘nations without states’ is to secure monetary balance. Further, establishing statehood, an independent state with its own governing body, requires resources and economic empowerment, which the aspired groups often lack. For instance, the economic crisis in Gaza is a prime example of how economic instability can escalate political tensions and inner conflicts.

The Role of International Laws and Organisations

Struggles like separatist movements or demands for independence from the forced occupation are sensitive and require negotiators who interfere from a neutral position without sharing personal bias. Since such conflicts threaten world peace and international order, the negotiators must be led by powerful entities. Thus, the role of international law and supranational organisations becomes critical in addressing the issues faced by ‘nations without states’ and the resistance from the host countries (Minahan, 1996). In such a scenario, the United Nations Charter advocates the principle of self-determination and promotes the right of people or ethnic groups to determine their political nature and independently work for their social, political, economic, and educational development (UN Charter, Article, 1). However, the implementational aspects of this principle are contested and selective in many cases.

Similarly, the United Nations and other supranational bodies have mediated conflicts and facilitated negotiations, but their effectiveness varies. In cases like the Kurds conflict, Iran established autonomy arrangements due to the efforts made by the United Nations and other

international bodies (Adelman, 1992; Whitesell, 1992). However, international interference proves futile in producing lasting solutions in those cases which are more complex and include the direct involvement of powerful nations, such as China in the case of the Sino-Tibet conflict (Chosang, 2017) and Israel in the case of Israeli-Palestinian conflicts (Talib & Mwango, 2015). To elaborate, the Palestinians' struggle for a world-recognised statehood, the Israelis' counterargument for their own rights and the interests that the supranational bodies like the United Nations have shown, reflect how the national aspirations in modern times revolve around the complex interplay of international politics and local political interests (Khalidi, 2020). Similarly, the Catalan independence movement and harsh steps taken by the Spanish government have sought the attention of international media as their direct repercussions are related to Spain and the European Union (EU). The situation raises potent questions on the legitimacy of the right to self-determination, the integrity and unity of existing states, and the role of supranational organisations like the EU in negotiating such issues. The Catalan movement is also crucial, considering its potential to inspire other European separatist movements (Wagner, Marin & Kroqi, 2019).

The cases of 'nations without state' suggest that no fight is fought internally or against the outsider in isolation without causing repercussions in international order. Thus, every conflict is critical in its own way, and its resolution is essential to maintaining peace in global politics, ensuring fairness in international laws, and preventing human rights violations. Further, the cases of 'nations without states' like the case of Kurds, Palestinians, and Catalans portrays how stateless nations' diverse struggles and aspirations raise questions on the way we understand and interact with the idea of a nation and nation-state. Beyond autonomy and sovereignty, these groups' struggles highlight the significance of recognition and identity validation in bringing

stability to any kind of social and political significance. It also illustrates the approaches adopted by the struggling groups to categorise their group identity as distinct based on ethnic attributes like ancestry, language, religion and culture or in other words using ethnicity as a resource mobilisation (Pieterse, 1997). Thus, all such struggles for independence rests in the narratives of distinctiveness and arguments of how they are different from the host nations. They, then using such arguments, justify their aspiration for a sovereign nation-state. Another significant contributor is the unfair treatment and constrained democratic rights they face under the ruling party. In some cases, such factors also cause the people of 'nations without state' to flee their country and continue their struggle from a foreign land living a refugee status. Thus, here the case of Tibet becomes potent to study as it stands unique in two main aspects. First, as the Tibetans in Tibet do not have the freedom to speak for their rights, thus their refugee population assumed such responsibilities on their behalf and, second, as the only 'nations without states' established a replica of its democratic government in a foreign land who adopted non-violence and peace mobilisation as a tool for their independence movement.

Construction of National Identity in Exile: Identity Factor in 'Nations without States'

National identity is inevitable in the existence of any community who perceives themselves to be a nation. It helps transform the nation's people into a politicised interest group who stand up for their nation (Hopkins & Reicher, 1996). National identity is often taken for granted even though it is visible in our daily lives. It is sometimes interchangeably used with citizenship of a country (Tambini, 2001). Citizenship gives legal status to the right to belong to a territory and the duties and responsibilities of a citizen. In this work, we differentiate national identity and citizenship through the perspectives of the refugee population. We discuss the psychological construction of

national identity when citizenship status is absent. We articulate our argument that identification with the nation lies far ahead of the citizenship status for the refugee population.

In our daily lives, we relate to the nation we belong to in different ways. Observing nationally relevant days through which people of the nation share and remember the memories from the past or history, preserving national monuments through symbols such as currency, national anthem, social institutions, relating with the national heroes, the environment we live in, we relate with our nation (Smith, 1988; Bonikowski, 2016). The construction of national identity depends upon the shared identity people possess, remembrance and memories of national history, institutions, and symbols, and it helps in historical continuity. When such things are established in most of our lives, it is different for the refugee population. Since they are displaced from their nation, they often need help to establish their national identity in another country. Considering this scenario, constructing a national identity is unique for Tibetan refugees. It questions the established version of the construction of national identity as well as citizenship criteria for being identified with a nation (Hess, 2006; McConnell, 2013). Having a refugee status and still holding on to the vision of a nation, which is more of a virtual reality, the construction of shared identification among Tibetans through their faith in their religious and political institutions makes them different from other refugees in the world.

Religion and politics are intertwined in Tibetan idea of nation and nationalism. Religion is the way of living for Tibetans, their culture, and civilisation (Kolas, 1996). It is the essence of their lives as their soul and national identity (Arakeri, 1998; Vahali, 2020). They see their nation in exile through the same lens of a strong sense of religion (Mullen, 2017). Along with the strong sense of oneness, people are activated by the rich memories they carry about their nation, the sacrifices of their ancestors, shared cultural and traditional practices they observe in exile, and

more through their religious and political leader, His Holiness Dalai Lama (Anand, 2000; Houston & Wright, 2003). Most Tibetans who live in exile live with the idea of the nation rather than their personal experiences. This idea is framed in the new generations by teaching them their Tibetan language, traditions, food habits, dressing patterns, performing arts and artefacts, etc. These are the categories through which Tibetan refugees share their identity, providing them with a common platform of identification and distinction.

Various studies claim that national identity is an essential identity available to any individual (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Howard, 2000; Inac & Unal, 2013). People are ready to sacrifice, kill and die for their nation because of the importance they give to their national identity (Langman, 2006). When people identify deeply with their nation, they try to enhance their self-esteem by enhancing their group members' well-being (Billig & Tajfel, 1973). It becomes most appropriate in the case of refugees. Tibetan nationalism, which the world sees today, has emerged out of necessity more than anything else. The need for their nation Tibet and its freedom struggle make nationalism among Tibetans, and in turn, this nationalism keeps alive the idea of Tibet as a nation. The Tibetan freedom struggle confirms Reicher and Hopkins' (2001) argument that the 'nation is one of the most universally accepted categories for political action'. Action in terms of nation invokes national identity among the people being mobilised, which invokes national identity. In short, we can say that this is a cyclic process.

Reicher & Hopkins (2001) suggest that invoking national identity depends upon the categories defined as well as how the interests of the nation are represented. For Tibetans, their primary interest lies in the freedom of their land from the colonisers. To attain the nation's goal, people who share their nation's identity mobilise themselves and work together for social action. For people to get mobilised for a national goal, a strong sense of identification with each other is

required. This strong sense of identification develops in terms of the same culture they follow, the common Tibetan language they speak, and the rituals and worship they perform. This identification helps them develop a group feeling where they are considered in-group members and differentiate them from the out-groups. When people consider themselves to belong to a group that shares common values, morals and goals, it motivates them to act together towards their goals (Verma, Shankar & Venu, 2024). The social identity approach helps to understand how such socio-cultural realities regulate the behaviour of individuals. It also helps understand one's place in a system of categorical social relations and how this category construction leads to the various dimensions of mobilisation.

Social Identity Theory

For the past several decades, the social identity approach in social psychology has served as a major theoretical framework for understanding psychological understanding of inter-group relations (Sindic & Reicher, 2009; Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). It helps us to understand the relationship between collective identity and intergroup conflict and emphasises the connection between individual and society. People feel a sense of belonging when they are attached to any group, and this attachment regulates their behaviour. When people act in terms of social identity, they are viewed in terms of their groups, and fellow group members become our reference point (Sindic & Condor, 2014). In the process of social categorisation within social identity theory discussed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), it is argued that people categorise themselves into different categories and attach meaning to them, which form the basis of their behaviour. In order to identify oneself, one has to categorise oneself in terms of the groups one belongs to, and this 'us' versus 'them' is understood by looking at the self-categorisation theory (Turner, et al.,

1987). The role played by an individual changes according to the context and also which context is valued in a particular time and space.

Identity is the primary source of self-definition about oneself regarding personal attributes or characteristics (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). When individuals share a sense of identification with a social group, the value and meaning that group membership has for the individual determines their social identity (Reicher & Hopkins, 2013). People define themselves in comparison to others, enabling them to form groups and identify or differentiate between people around them. When people identify based on social identity, they can come together and act together towards a common goal (Hopkins, 2001; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Hence, social identity is important in terms of group and group action. When it comes to a group or collective, such as a nation, this identity may be contested in different ways. The construction of this identity depends on how superordinate or national identity is defined (Reicher & Hopkins, 2013).

Social identity as a process suggests that national identification happens when a group of people who share the same values, beliefs, traditions and culture identify themselves with those who share the same elements (Tajfel, 1978). Hence, a shared identity is formed among these individuals through various categories that they share. A shared identification happens when people distinguish themselves from others they feel are different or out-group (Hogg & Rinella, 2018; Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010). In the case of refugees, both in-group identifications and out-group distinctions are of marked importance. For them, the in-group members become the ones they identify with, and the out-group becomes the ones with whom they differentiate. While identification with in-group members help them preserve their solidarity, differentiating with the out-group can bring hostility towards the out-group (Sapountzis et al., 2013). However, it is not always the case. For instance, when differentiation happens on positive grounds with the

out-group members, it can enhance inter-group relations by developing mutual respect and promoting understanding. Social psychologists have understood such a differentiation approach as positive intergroup differentiation (Knippenberg & Ellemers, 1990), emphasising focusing on each group's unique strengths and distinctive positive-ness and avoiding unfavourable comparisons. For example, recent research has demonstrated that when groups acknowledge their distinct cultural practices and celebrate these differences, they can increase appreciation and reduce prejudice (Verkuy & Yogeeswaran, 2017; Brannon & Lin, 2021). Further, a study on pedagogical settings posits that programs encouraging students from diverse backgrounds to share their unique cultural traditions have effectively promoted positive intergroup interactions and respect for distinctiveness (Williams-Gualandi, 2020).

In the case of refugees, the out-group is mostly the host nation, and the hostility between the host nation can bring disharmony in the life of refugees (Smeekes, 2015). Nevertheless, hostility toward refugees among host nations is not always an inevitable outcome of ethnic or cultural disparity. However, it is often the result of intended political mobilisation that instrumentalises national identity for various political projects meeting populists' desires. For example, Salmela and von Scheve (2017) argue that in several European cases, negative attitudes toward the refugee population are often exacerbated by the political rhetoric that defines them as existential threats to the original custodians of the national heritage, ethnic-national identity and economic stability. For instance, during the European refugee crisis, populist parties capitalised on cultural integration and security fears and labelled refugees as aliens, challenging the social harmony of a nation-state (Czymara, 2021). Additionally, the political discourse on refugees involves

categorising them as a loss to national economic balance or cultural contamination, thereby justifying restrictive asylum policies and reinforcing public hostility (Schmidtke, 2018).

For instance, in Germany, scholars have associated the success of the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) with the strategic popularisation of narratives based on anti-refugee sentiments, which holds refugees responsible for the loss of cultural cohesion, thereby contributing to social disharmony (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). Similarly, in Italy, political leaders have reinforced anti-refugee sentiments to secure power by developing an "us versus them" narrative that marginalises refugee communities and justifies intergroup divides (Rydgren, 2018). This politically driven hostility is not confined to Europe; in Asia, for instance, in countries like Japan, the contemporary political discourse has often centred on preserving a historically homogeneous national identity, in which refugees are portrayed as incompatible with the cultural and social dimensions of the nation. Yoon and Asahina (2020) and Kawai (2021) posit that such xenophobic narratives have been seminal in implementing restrictive immigration policies and social marginalisation. Similarly, Turkey's political scenario has witnessed the rise of parties like the Victory Party, which policises refugee issues to capitalise on domestic politics (Bahadir-turk, 2023). By instrumentalising anti-refugee narratives, such parties become influencing examples for other political bodies to adopt similar rhetoric strategies and establish a national culture in which exclusionary attitudes are normalised.

However, refugee-related hostility is not an inevitable outcome of a social process but a consequence of specific political strategies. Alternative approaches that promote inclusive narratives highlight the constructive nature of inter-group hostility. For example, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2020) argues that initiatives emphasising shared values and successful integration stories hold the potential to neutralise populist rhetoric and promote harmonious

intergroup relations. For example, grassroots movements in Germany (such as the German Peace Movement) have engaged in door-to-door campaigns to develop understanding and solidarity between indigenous citizens and refugees. Similarly, as Reicher and Hopkins (2001) demonstrated, Irish and Scottish nationalist movements have mobilised narratives of cultural distinctiveness and historical self-determination to differentiate themselves from the British state on positive intergroup differentiation. These movements have emphasised celebrating unique traditions and democratic aspirations rather than framing their difference in antagonistic or exclusionary terms, thus allowing constructive intergroup dialogue.

Irrespective of the cases mentioned above, there is no denying that a refugee group, by default, is a subordinate (often categorised as a misfit) part of a social system. Additionally, they are in a constant struggle to negotiate their space in the foreign land and simultaneously are at war with an outgroup organisation responsible for their exiled state. However, due to their marginalised situations, they are forced to fight in isolation, lacking essential resources, adequate international support and even international recognition of their status quo. Given the following circumstances, a few questions are potent to address here - How could these refugees stand up for their nation in such a scenario? How do they manage their multiple identities and mobilise themselves for their nation? This study attempts to understand these processes in the light of the social identity approach.

Identity, Mobilisation, and Collective Participation

Scholarly attempts to explain individuals' participation in social movement can be drawn into two pieces of literature, based on what questions they pursue: 'what draws an individual to participate in collective action?' or 'how are people mobilised using social and economic capital'? If the former is pursued, then arguments proposed in grievance theories (Toch, 1965;

Geschwender, 1968; Rothman, 1974; Opp, 1988; Johnston, Larana & Gusfield, 1994), personality trait theories (Kerpelman, 1969; Keniston, 1970; Gallego & Oberski, 2012; Brandstatter & Opp, 2014) and relative deprivation theories (Runciman, 1966; Kawakami & Dion, 1995; Walker & Smith, 2002) provide context for collective participation as an expression of the struggle for social justice where an individual's motive to participate depends on their sense of anticipated sanctions and emotions of deprivation (McPhail, 1971; Crosby, 1979; Walker & Pettigrew, 1984). Empirical studies have acknowledged the subjective interpretations related to the concept of deprivation and the associated feelings that correspond to the various institutions and cultural forces in an assignment to construct and control the narratives of social order (Pettigrew, 2002; Moghaddam, 2005; Smith et al., 2012). However, if the latter question is pursued, the resource mobilisation theory is proposed as an alternative explanation for social movements as it focuses on the mobilisation process of resources, including discourses, media, and economic forces. The theory made us understand that if resources are mobilised effectively, the social movement will become a platform for individuals sharing common problems to interact and act (Oberschall, 1973; Jenkins & Perrow, 1977; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Barkan, 1980; Jenkins, 1983; Klandermans, 1984). It positions the state and individuals in a constant negotiation for social stability and change.

Furthermore, the advent of resource mobilisation theory laid the foundation of a new approach to the academic literature that explicitly addresses choice rationality, mobilisation tools, and mobilising strategies adopted in state-imposed constraints. For instance, the treatment of non-violent resistance as the idea of building a new social system emphasises how mobilisation as a process holds the potential for developing new forms of political and social space for a marginalised group to seek target goals (Kurtz & Kurtz, 2015; Gallo-Cruz, 2021). Similarly,

works like “Mobilising the Diaspora” (Betts & Jones, 2016) and “Solidarity Mobilization in Refugee Crisis” (Porta, 2018) provide perspective into mobilising capacities beyond borders. It challenges our notion that a displaced community is not a passive group solely dependent on host nations’ policies. In contrast, these works explain how a displaced community actively participates in political struggles using tools available in a crisis. Proceeding with this mindset, we consider how a displaced community member’s experiences, belief structure and thoughts behind routine interactions can enrich our understanding of mobilisation and its practice aspects.

Moving to collective action, examining identity mobilisation becomes relevant to understanding its potential as a psychological strategy in managing characteristics of a social structure and determining people’s obedience to the norms of such structure. In this direction, Tajfel’s concept of social creativity (Jackson et al., 1966; Tajfel, 1975) proposes enhanced self-assessment and reduced cognitive uncertainty, achieved by identifying with a collective group and experiencing meaning in self-evaluation, as a reason for in/out-grouping. Similarly, he uses social competition (Tajfel, 1975; Ellemers & Haslam, 2012) to seek transformation in the group status and strive for social change to explain why people exercise collective action. In the context of inter-group conflicts, these assumptions help us understand under what circumstances people participate or avoid participation in collective actions and perceived rationality in such interpretations and decision-making.

Tibet: A General Introduction

History of Tibet Conflict

The history of the Tibet conflict revolves around three broad spectrums encompassing geopolitics, culture and religion. The conflict is due to the contentious nature of the relationship

between Tibet and China, with consequential historical roots and ongoing implications for international relations, human rights, and territorial stability.

Early Political History and Independence

Tibet, a culturally and historically united region situated on the Tibetan Plateau of Asia, shares a rich history of fluctuating degrees of independence and foreign dominance (Sperling, 2004). In their writing, historians represent a conflicted history of Tibet either as an independently developed civilisation with distinct cultural and religious trajectories and political structures or always existed under the control of Chinese rule (Shakya, 1999; Powers, 2004). Tibet rose to supreme power under the reign of Songsten Gampo in the 7th century, and territorial power expanded well into the neighbouring dynasties, including China, and established political relationships with these states (Goldstein, 1997).

Later, Tibet fell under the suzerainty of the Mongol Empire during the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), and the same dynasty ruled over China then. However, the nature of the relationship between the Yuan Dynasty and the Tibetan leaders can be characterised more as sharing tributary and symbolic ties than direct dominance or complete control, similarly, during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Tibet maintained formal relationships with the Chinese rulers, and Tibet functioned with a high degree of autonomy (Sperling, 2004).

Chinese Communist Party and the Incorporation of Tibet

However, with the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the Chinese nationalist sentiments were significantly revived and reshaped, bringing significant changes to its political projects in which the vision of Han nationalism was treated with utmost priority. Under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the PRC reorganised itself to incorporate all pending territorial claims that they project

as a part of their ancestral rights, including China (Goldstein & Rimpoche, 1989). Thus, by 1951, the Seventeen Point Agreement was signed, ostensibly affirming Tibet's status as part of China while promising autonomy and respect for Tibet's indigenous religious and cultural traditions.

Uprisings and Exile of the Dalai Lama

However, the promised autonomy was never fulfilled by the Chinese leaders and the consistent efforts to infringe the traditional religious-political systems of Tibet made the Tibetan government resist (Shakya, 2003). Gradually, the PRC started adopting forceful measures to deprive Tibetans of their autonomy and establish the complete rule of the communist party over Tibet. Such hostilities led to the Uprising Day on 10th March 1959, in which the mass protests by the Tibetan people were forcefully suppressed by the Chinese forces, leading to a significant number of casualties (Goldstein, 2019). This event forced the 14th Dalai Lama to escape to India with his eight thousand followers and establish a government-in-exile without a state in a foreign land.

Post-1959 Period: Repression and Cultural Destruction

The Han nationalist government indeed Tibet with a mindset to replace Tibet's national aspect with that of their own. Their agenda was not simply to rule over Tibet but to eradicate every traditional and religious aspect of Tibet. Thus, the Post-1959 era was marked by the ruling of a force that was determined to change the ethnic as well as psychological aspects of the land Tibet. For decades, Tibetans have undergone political oppression and the destruction of cultural heritages. Such policies peaked during the Cultural Revolution, which started in 1966 and ended in 1976. During this period, countless monasteries were grazed to the ground, religious practices

were prohibited and criminalised, and lakhs of Tibetans were persecuted without any trial (Sautman, 2006).

Tibet, China and India

Until now, the land of Tibet witnessed two mutually contradictory ownership claims corresponding to historical, geographical and socio-cultural interpretations. Considering history, communist China positions its claim of ruling Tibet since the Yuan Dynasty (Kehoe, 2020) by perceiving Tibet's past as an integral part of the glorious Chinese Kingdom. In comparison, Tibetan monarchs counter Chinese assertions by situating their arguments on a priest-patronage relationship, defining their past with China (Sperling, 2004; Oidtmann, 2014). Geographically, China's perception of Tibet's territory is limited to the 'Tibetan autonomous region' referred to as 'political Tibet'. In contrast, the Tibetan leaders recognise their territorial hold based on ethnic similarities encompassing a few regions of China, India, Nepal and Bhutan, known as 'ethnographic Tibet' (Mukherjee, 2021). Third, China calls the Tibetan sociocultural setting feudal, hence perceives it morally corrupt, and on that basis, communist China justifies its stand to annexe Tibet into mainland China for emancipating the lower class from an oppressive hierarchical social setup to a social paradise (Powers, 2004; Warner, 2011). Whereas the Tibetan leaders refute such a claim and produce a counter-argument that describes this annexation as annihilating the most peace-oriented social structure. Furthermore, the Tibetan leaders perceived the intervention of Dragons as a threat more to faith rather than territorial integrity and called the Dragons' Tendra' - enemies of faith (Angmo, 2019). Such contentions, on the one hand, fuelled strategic vitality in the communist discourse of Han nationalism and, on the other hand, transformed Tibet from an ethnographic region to a nation. However, the conflict emerged in its political extremity only after the establishment of the Republic of China on January 1, 1912 (Yu

& Kuwan, 2013). Determined by the great Han mentality, in October 1950, around 40,000 military troops of communist-controlled China crossed the River Yangtze. They declared victory over the Tibetan forces for the first time and finally succeeded in capturing the entire Tibetan autonomous region on March 10, 1959 (Shakya, 1999). From 1959, when the Dalai Lama and his 80,000 followers took shelter in India, Tibetans continued to escape from the Chinese occupation through the secret paths of the Himalayas to take refuge in neighbouring countries like India, Nepal and Bhutan.

Moreover, besides Tibet, China's expansion should also be assessed by considering Mao's Five Finger Policy annexing the Himalayas region. China's control over Tibet caused a buffer between India and China to vanish. It becomes significant for further redefining inter-nation politics, especially when both nations compete directly for Asian leadership. The seriousness of the consequences became evident in the India-China 1962 War, China's eye on Arunachal Pradesh, and the Doklam face-off (Ahlawat & Hughes, 2018). It also reflects on India's confusing stand on Tibet. For instance, even though the Indian government welcomed the Dalai Lama and his 80,000 followers and assisted in developing the Tibetan government-in-exile at the same time, then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru did not want the Tibet conflict to toxicate the India-China relationship (Sikri, 2011). Similarly, India does not recognise Tibet as a part of China (Bentz, 2012) nor validate Tibet's status as an independent nation, indicating India's passive approach towards Tibet. However, India's treatment of Tibetans as privileged refugees (Lin, 2022), gainful employment (Norbu, 2001b), granting calculated political and economic autonomy to the exiled government and reinforcing their cultural citizenship (Hillman, 2018) helped develop a semi-settled space for Tibetan refugees to continue their social movement struggle from a position of national crisis.

Contemporary Developments: Autonomy and Human Rights

Even though the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976 with the death of Mao Zedong, Tibet is still living under the continuous checkhold of the Chinese communist party. With the election of Deng Xiaoping as the new chairman of the communist party, there has been a partial relaxation of some suppressive measures and the development of new policies aimed towards the betterment of Tibet, such as economic reforms in 1978. The economic reform of 1978 aimed at the economic development of Tibet. This is done by fulfilling modernisation norms and focusing on improving the nation's infrastructure and standard of living in Tibet (Asian, 2004). However, such development measures were complemented by the Han Chinese migration policy that intended to establish the Han population among the Tibetans, even in the interior and remote areas (Hillman, 2008). Such a motive of the communist government was viewed by many Tibetans as a threat to their cultural and demographic integrity and compromising their ethnic distinctiveness, thus diluting their distinct identity.

International Response and the Quest for Dialogue

Human rights organisations continue to report incidents of unfair treatment towards Tibetans under the PRC's rule, such as the prohibition on religious freedom formation of political groups and others. The PRC government maintain continuous surveillance and strictly scrutinises religious institutions in Tibet and their activities, and interferes with the Tibetan traditional system (Woesor, 2016), such as selecting religious leaders, as in the case of Panchen Lama (Barnett, 2008; Agnihotri, 2020), which is a contentious issue. However, while addressing the Tibet issue, the international community remains divided, sharing contradicting opinions. While some countries and human rights organisations advocate for the independence of Tibet or greater autonomy (Noakes, 2012; Kauffmann, 2015), others support China's territorial annexation and

sovereignty claims. The Dalai Lama has advocated for a 'Middle Way' approach, seeking greater autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the Chinese constitution. However, meaningful dialogue between the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government has been sporadic and largely ineffective.

Background of the Tibetan Refugees in India

Following the 1959 Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, along with thousands of Tibetans, sought sanctuary in India. The Indian government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, extended support and granted asylum to the fleeing Tibetans. It marked the beginning of a longstanding relationship between the Tibetan refugee community and India. Tibetan refugees in India have established a vibrant community, preserving their cultural heritage through religious practices, language, arts, and traditions. Educational institutions, monasteries, nunneries, and cultural centres have been established to nurture Tibetan identity and provide formal and informal education to Tibetan youth. Despite the challenges of exile, Tibetan refugees in India have actively engaged in political activism and advocacy for the Tibetan cause. The Central Tibetan Administration, led by the Dalai Lama, continues to advocate for genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the Middle Way Approach, seeking dialogue and reconciliation with the Chinese government. Tibetan refugees in India face various socio-economic challenges, including limited access to employment opportunities, healthcare, and social services. However, the resilience and determination of the Tibetan community, coupled with support from the Indian government and international organisations, continue to sustain their aspirations for a free and autonomous Tibet.

Tibetan Refugees and Nation in Exile

Recent statistics from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2016 show an emerging trend of increase in the number of people getting displaced throughout the world. It shows that the total number of displaced persons has risen to 65.3 million in 2015 from 45.2 million in 2012 (UNHCR Global Trends, 2016). The most successfully unified and economically independent refugee population is Tibetan refugees, spread worldwide, with a significant concentration in South Asian countries (Anand, 2000; Unen, 2014). They differ from other refugees in their way of unifying and identifying with their nation. The concept of an imaginary nation, limited assimilation with the host culture, interweaved religion and politics, approach of protest in the name of their country, limited acculturation, and the way of maintaining and recreating Tibetan Identity in exile are some of the elements that distinguish Tibetans from other refugees (Kolas, 1996; Arakeri, 1998; Anand, 2000; Unen, 2014).

Possessing a territory, defined boundaries, socio-political institutions, people, and sovereignty helps define a nation effortlessly. In the absence of these essential elements, defining a nation and identifying in the name of nation becomes a significantly complex task, specially when one is displaced from one's nation. Despite these difficulties, Tibetan refugees have successfully built up their nation in exile without the boundaries of territory but within people's psyche. Studying this process of nation creation is fascinating, especially when it happens to be a psychological construct. When the nation exists as an experienced reality for the first generation of Tibetans who can afford to travel despite the protocols, it remains a virtual reality for most of the later generations.

Another interesting fact is that even after decades, people come together for the exact cause and freedom for their nation remains the ultimate goal of a community. The construction of national

identity is another distinctive feature of the Tibetan refugee population. Despite the fact that very few Tibetan refugees have visited Tibet, everyone identifies with Tibet. This identification is a construction of their national identity. This is where psychology has to be involved in understanding nationhood. How does this identification and mobilisation happen, or how do people who do not possess a land of their own believe they are part of a nation? How are people connected in the name of a superordinate identity when numerous differences exist? It questions the very existence of a nation. How and where does a nation exist? Is national identity a construction or acquired? The present work attempts to answer these questions with the help of the social identity approach.

The Present Work

The current research explores the idea of a nation and national identity , and how people are mobilised in the name of their nation. We proceed with our exploration with the help of the social identity approach, which gives in-depth information regarding people's categories and identity construction. In the present research work, the construction of national identity and mobilisation of people is observed through the lens of the refugee population. The majority of the refugee population fled from their homeland because of multiple reasons, political or otherwise. In this modern globalised world, the refugee population is often faced with the difficulties of identity issues. Beyond refugee status, it becomes difficult for them to manage their national identity in their host nation. Especially mobilising for their homeland becomes a cumbersome task in another nation. When they settle down in the host country, their identity will be either refugee status or the identity of their host nation. In such circumstances, people gradually adapt to the present environment and rarely mobilise for their motherland. This is where Tibetan refugees stand out among the refugee crowd. Since the Chinese occupation of

Tibet, many Tibetans have fled from their country and settled down in different parts of the world. Even though many of them have taken the citizenship of their host countries, the majority of them still firmly believe that they are Tibetan. This is reflected in the ongoing protests and demonstrations for their country till today. In such circumstances, it is interesting to explore their mobilisation process. When people come together for a cause, there are certain underlying factors. When we look into the case of Tibetan refugees who seek asylum in various countries due to political disharmony in their land, we can see that even after years of unsuccessful attempts at negotiation, they continue to strive towards their goal. However, to understand their struggle the enquiry for the mobilisation process must be located in the refugees' everyday lives in exile and to understand reasons for their decision in daily life. This process is analysed in this thesis by collecting evidence from the lived experiences of Tibetan people.

Summary

This chapter traces the theoretical and conceptual development of the nation, nationalism and national identity to understand its open-interpretative nature. It then discusses the cognitive and imaginative elements of the nation by using the social-psychological approach. These discussions highlight the nation's cognitive aspects that rely on the individuals' belief systems and can be exercised without state boundaries. It further progresses to validate these conceptions by discussing the social and psychological mechanism of 'nations without states' and how it sustains its existence through the process of identity construction. It shows that the construction of national identity is crucial for surviving cases in which nationalism is exercised on exiled lands or in statelessness. The key elements of such national identity often depend on the ethnic attributes of their traditional past. Through these arguments, the chapter explains the social identity theory and its relevance in the survival of the concept of nation, as well as the

psychological transformation that it can inflict among the identifiers. Then, the chapter establishes the relationship between identity and mobilisation, which is essential for motivating individuals to come together and participate collectively in social or political movements. The discussion in such a particular direction led to the introduction of the case study of the present thesis, Tibet. The chapter also introduces the history of Tibet's political conflict, including the historical events that led the Dalai Lama and many others to the Tibetan diaspora. The following two sections provide a brief account of how Tibet's situation has reshaped the politics of India and China, as well as the background of Tibetan refugees in India. The final section of this chapter introduces the intentions of the present work, which included understanding the everyday aspects of a mobilisation process among exiled Tibetan refugees by interpreting their voices using the key concepts in social identity theory and social psychological aspects of nationalism in diasporic situations.