

Negotiations in the Diaspora: Diagnosing Tibetan Exile Politics

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to situate the issues regarding the Tibetan sovereignty question and Tibetan diaspora mobilization within the wider debate of ethnic bargaining and Diaspora politics to get the bigger picture of what factors influence the changes and negotiations that occur within the Tibetan Diaspora. In order to get a clear picture and allow for ease of analysis, the case study would be divided based on time focusing on the three main time periods where demands and mobilization capacity of the Tibetan diaspora varied greatly, showing that the former is driven by the latter and further speculates on the conditions under which the diaspora can and can not influence the minority. Identifying root causes of relative Tibetan mobilization in each time period allows for a greater understanding of the factors that influenced shifts in Tibetan mobilization against the Chinese state. Finally, concluding remarks with policy advice to the Central Tibetan Administration and other major actors with the diaspora will be presented based on the findings.

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List of Abbreviations

TGIE – Tibetan Government in Exile

CTA – The Central Tibetan Administration

PRC- People’s Republic of China

PLA – People’s Liberation Army

CCP – Chinese Communist Party

RTYC- Regional Tibetan Youth Congress

SFT - Students’ for a Free Tibet

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations	iii
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 The Research Puzzle	3
1.2 Research Question	6
1.3 Tibet In Context of this Thesis.....	7
Chapter 2: Explaining Tibetan Demands	9
2. 1 Plan of thesis	12
Chapter 3 Research Design and Case Justification.....	14
3.1 Argument	14
3. 2 Research Design/Methods	15
3.3 Limitations	16
3. 4 Justification of Case selection.....	17
Chapter 4: Background	19
4.1 The Tibetan Sovereignty Debate	19
4.2 The Tibetan Diaspora.....	20
Chapter 5: First Period since 1959: Following Independence	22
5.1 Introduction.....	22
5.2 The Role of the Dalai Lama.....	23
5.3 Negotiations In Exile	26
Chapter 6: Second Period: Shift in Policy towards a Middle Way.....	30

6.1 Introduction:.....	30
6.2 Emergence of the Middle Way	31
6.3 Reactions to the Middle Way Approach	33
Chapter 7: Third period: continued minority resistance against the effects of outside lobby actor	36
7.1 Introduction.....	36
7.2 Devolution of the Dalai Lama's Political Power	37
7.3 New Prime Minister and Continued Resistance	39
Chapter 8: Conclusion.....	42
Bibliography	44

Chapter 1 Introduction

After a failed uprising against the People's Liberation Army in 1959, The Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetans fled to India and established a Tibetan government in Exile, now known as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)¹ Throughout the years the Administration has shifted its policies from seeking to restore complete independence in Tibet to that of seeking "genuine autonomy" within the People's Republic of China's framework through non-violent means with an emphasis on dialogue. This switch to a pursuit of autonomy rather than independence by the government in exile serves as a dividing line within the wider Tibetan Diaspora and especially the younger educated generation around the world who are mobilizing and holding on to their Tibetan identities through their political activities within vocal groups such as the Students for a Free Tibet and the Tibetan Youth Congress.

To be Tibetan is to be part of a community of sentiment in which the experience of exile is geared toward the eventual recovery of the homeland."² For the Tibetan Diaspora in India and elsewhere the hope of "returning" to the homeland and the struggle for establishing an independent Tibet has been the uniting force and the basis for Tibetan identity. Despite this, the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in Exile have gradually shifted its goals and policies from restoring full independence in Tibet to that of a Middle Way Approach. This ambiguous approach that is heavily pushed forth by the exile leadership claims to be seeking

¹ Throughout this thesis, Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and Tibetan Government in Exile (TGIE) would be used interchangeably. Even though the official name of the Tibetan leadership in Exile is the CTA, it is set up as the Government In Exile and is structured with formal government-like institutions.

² Yeh, Emily T. "Exile Meets Homeland: Politics, Performance, and Authenticity in the Tibetan Diaspora." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space Environ. Plann. D* 25 (2007): 648-67. Accessed May 4, 2015.

"genuine autonomy for all Tibetans living in the three traditional provinces of Tibet within the framework of the People's Republic of China". On the other side stand those vocal and mobilized activists and political groups with networks throughout the Diaspora communities in India and the West and even with underground activist communities in occupied Tibet who fiercely resent Chinese occupation and organize in the name of Rangzen (Independence). Though strong proponents of both side lay on opposite ends of the spectrum much of the population in the Diaspora community lie somewhat in a midst of confusion between the two sides unable to decide or even understand what is the best solution, goal or policy that the exile community needs to adopt

This research on the Tibetan Diaspora and the existential challenges being faced by this community is an issue that is currently at the heart of discussions- a hot topic within the Tibetan Diaspora community. If one keeps up on Tibetan political discussions on social media and within the Tibetan community, the concerns and the importance of understanding this issue of Middle Way Approach versus Independence is the major topic being addressed both at the individual and organizational levels. With China's continual rise, it's hard lined policies toward restive regions, the questions regarding the Dalai Lama's reincarnation and the increasing push from the Tibetan Government in Exile to spread it's Middle Way policy, it is a crucial time to understand the current path of the Tibetan movement and the future awaiting the Tibetans both in exile and in the homeland.

Since having fled to exile in 1959 and up until 1979, the Dalai Lama and his government in exile has focused singularly on the pursuit of Tibetan independence which resonated with the people and other groups in the diaspora who all held this same view and will for restoring an independent Tibet³ and returning to the homeland. After 1979, there was a shift in the

³ There is considerable controversy regarding the title Tibet itself. While the diaspora Tibetans term it Occupied Tibet, China, which treats it as one of its provinces, describes it as the Tibet Autonomous Region. For scholarly convenience, I will use Tibet throughout this text.

official policy towards the future of Tibet to that of a Middle Way approach which the CTA defines as a democratically adopted approach striving for the creation of a political entity comprising of the three traditional provinces of Tibet within the framework of the People's Republic of China without seeking independence. The Middle way approach was proposed by the Dalai Lama to peacefully resolve the issue of Tibet and to bring about stability and coexistence between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples based on equality and mutual co-operation. Though, pro-independence groups maintained their stance and continued their work there was a sense of agreement and acceptance among the greater populace and the exiled government of the Middle Way approach being an optimal solution for the future of the Tibetan people.

Despite this huge concession made from the part of the Tibetan side, the Chinese authorities have not responded positively and attempts at negotiations remained unfruitful. To this extent, the Dalai Lama echoed a need for a referendum to determine the best course of action for the Tibetan cause. Based on official opinion poll conducted by the CTA, a majority of 64% of the respondents comprising of Tibetans in Exile expressed that they would support the Middle-Way Approach or any decision the Dalai Lama takes to realize the cause of Tibet. Since then this has remained the key policy of the CTA even after the Dalai Lama has stepped down as the political leader of the Tibetan people for a democratically elected Prime Minister.

1.1 The Research Puzzle

This change in path in terms of the collective demands from the Tibetan side was adopted with relative ease and existed without much criticism even though no significant changes or improvements were brought about. In the wake of the Beijing Olympics the pro-Independence groups have gained much stronger momentum and support internationally and

calls for independence from within Tibet became more vocal with protests breaking out and a series of self-immolations taking place in Tibet. At the same time, the CTA has increased its marketing efforts to maintain and increase popular support for the Middle Way Approach leading ultimately to a split between Pro-Independence (Rangzen Advocates) and the Pro-Middle Way. The puzzle here lies in that most of the literature on diaspora that has been surveyed for this thesis suggest that Diasporas usually and mostly have a radicalizing impact on their ethnic kin in the homeland. Much of the literature which is focused heavily on the Jewish, Armenian and the Cuban diaspora in the United States have looked at and show that at times even when the ethnic kin in the homeland are willing to accept certain concessions or moderating in their demands, it is the diaspora whose are having a radicalizing impact on the ethnic kin. Despite this, in the Tibetan case at this point, the Diaspora has had a moderating impact on the ethnic kin in that that the leadership in the Diaspora is promoting a policy and a path willing to make significant concession in comparison to their previous demands.

By building on the ethnic bargaining argument/model these thesis seeks to explore the complex ways in which Diasporas can mobilize or de-mobilize their ethnic kin against the host. This is a development over the ethnic bargaining argument as demonstrated by Jenne because not much is talked about how Diasporas intervene to radicalize or moderate the minority in the host country.⁴ Also, looking at the theory that minority demands are a function of bargaining leverage against the center. The Bargaining Model holds that group radicalization is driven by shifting perceptions of relative power against the center. These perceptions are informed both by changes in the institutional opportunity structure and by the actions of the group's external patron (if one exists)⁵ Minority representatives continually calibrate their demands against the center in response to perceived shifts in leverage over time.⁶

⁴ Jenne, Erin. *Ethnic Bargaining: The Paradox of Minority Empowerment*. 1st ed. Vol. 1. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007. 288. Pg. 11

⁵ Ibid. pg 43

⁶ Ibid. 13

Further it is argued that change in demands of the Minority is driven by negotiations between the minority and the center over institutions of the state. In this case the model is applied quite differently in that the focus lies on the Tibetan Diaspora and its bargaining leverage with the host state. Following the arguments of Brubaker, Jenne suggests that a national minority, the state majority and the minority's lobby state (or external lobby actor) co-exists in triadic political space.⁷ In the case of the Tibetan Diaspora, the host state is China, the outside lobby actor is the wider diaspora consisting of activist groups, youth groups and youth groups around the world, and the CTA would be treated as the minority group that is bargaining with the host state even though it is not really a minority in the usual sense. Further, the CTA is in exile and does not function directly under the host state but it is the recognized representative of the Tibetans who negotiates effectively with the Chinese government just like minority leaders do in other states. This theory is applied to the actors in the diaspora because the Tibetans who are inside Tibet do not have much agency to effectively articulate their demands because of Chinese repression and a lack of leadership within the homeland. This allows us to effectively recognize the leadership in Dharamsala as the minority leaders bargaining with China. With this being said the external lobby that is other groups also articulating demands though not negotiating directly with the host state are the other factions within the Tibetan diaspora consisting of activist groups and other more radical institutions and actors trying to influence the CTA. Finally, the Tibetan case is looked at because it seems to be an outlier in that it does not necessarily follow the expectations of the ethnic bargaining model which would expect outside actors to influence the demands of the minority. The remainder of this chapter will present the research question and explain what Tibet means in terms of this thesis.

⁷ The logic of ethnic bargaining 732

1.2 Research Question

Currently, the Sino-Tibetan relationship is based on discontent and very conflicting visions where one side holds greater power and control while the other side is holding a much bigger stake in terms of the consequences with diminishing control over outcomes. Taking into account the unbalanced power dynamics and the importance of Tibet to Beijing I argue that it is important for the Diaspora to mobilize towards a united front with well-defined and achievable collective goals whether it be towards greater autonomy or independence. Based on the issues presented above and an analysis of the changes in demands from the Tibetans regarding the future of their homeland and the conditions of their kin at home, the puzzle arises as to why the demands of the Tibetan authority in **exile has shifted over time reaching to the divergence that currently exists between the official policy of the government in exile and major activist groups despite minimal change in Chinese policies toward Tibet**. In this case, diaspora has limited access to the kin at home and thus, instead of funneling change directly to the kin at home, the leadership in the diaspora is trying to negotiate directly with the repressive government at home in order to broker a deal that would ultimately shape the future of the Tibetans and their conditions at home. Whether the strategy is working or not is another issue. Utilizing the ethnic bargaining framework, I show conditions under which the diaspora leadership shifts its demands to a more moderating stance despite pressure from other actors within the diaspora. This question is important in this case because it ultimately shapes the identity of not only the Tibetan diaspora but of the Tibetans in Tibet and where they stand from a bargaining point of view and where the future of this conflict lies. By moderating the collective demand to that of greater autonomy and subsequently leading to a split within important political actors and leadership in the Diaspora does not only lead one to question the legitimacy of the claims of the TGIE in the international arena but presents sort of an existential crisis of the Tibetan Movement and where it is going in the future. Without any prominent

figures representing Tibetans and mobilizing towards the Tibetan cause within Tibet under the CCP's repressive policies, the diaspora community and the leadership in exile plays a key role in shaping the course of the Tibetan issue and maintaining its salience. Though the CTA has maintained the claim that the Middle Way Approach is the most realistic approach in dealing with the issue and thus the best solution, not much has been discussed about the core reasons behind the shift in policies and the recent wave of "aggressive" promotion of the policy against that of existing Pro-Independence groups.

The aim of this thesis is not to evaluate or comment on which side presents a better solution for the Tibetan conflict; neither is it the aim to evaluate the validity of China's claim over Tibet and its subsequent treatment of Tibetans in Tibet, though such issues will be raised throughout the work. Rather, what this thesis seeks to do is to raise multiple questions within the politics of the Tibetans in Exile and to make sense of the behavior of the Tibetan Diaspora or its leadership in dealing with China and with actors within the diaspora.

1.3 Tibet In Context of this Thesis

"The Tibet Question exists because it is controversial, China feels the need to defend their position on Tibet and their sovereignty over Tibet." "The Tibet Question refers to the Tibetan Sovereignty debate, which includes two main questions that are tied together. The first one is whether Tibet as defined previously should separate and become a sovereign state of its own and the second question which can serve as a basis for the first one is whether Tibet was independent or subordinate to China in much of its recent history before 1950 when Tibet became completely annexed by the Peoples' Republic of China. The basis for much of this debate lies on the conflicting views of the two sides about the nature of Tibet's relationship to China throughout history. The major claim put forth by the Peoples' Republic of China to justify its occupation of Tibet is the claim that Tibet has been a part of China since the Yuan

Dynasty. On the other hand, The Central Tibetan Administration, which serves as the Tibetan Government in Exile, claims that Tibet was an independent sovereign state until the PRC invaded in 1949. This thesis seeks to explain that despite this claim of independence by the Tibetan leadership, why did they moderate their demands from seeking full independence to that of accepting a situation where the Tibetans will remain under the Chinese authority.

Tibet and China, being in close proximity to each other, have been in contact throughout history in many different ways. Until the Yuan Dynasty, China and Tibet have mostly been operating independently from each other. During the Yuan Dynasty both Tibet and China were ruled by the Mongols and during the Ming Dynasty (1468-1644) Tibet was operating independently as a sovereign empire but then during the Qing Dynasty Tibet fell under the rule of the Qing Empire for much of its existence. Since the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, Tibet has ruled itself without Chinese influence for much of the time until the PRC's takeover *in 1950*.⁸

Chapter 2: Explaining Tibetan Demands

What follows is aimed not at criticizing or giving my judging the validity of the author's' work but rather at understanding where the academic discourse currently lies regarding the complex issue of the Tibetan politics in exile and Diaspora Mobilization in general. Thus, following analysis is conducted to tie together these two topics in attempt to search for a starting point in understanding why a radicalized faction in the Tibetan diaspora is has been unable to radicalize or influence strongly the CTA and subsequently the kin in the homeland in articulating demands against the host state.

This thesis seeks to add to the debate regarding the Sino-Tibetan question by attempting to account for the leverage of the Tibetan Diaspora in bargaining with the Center. That is to say, the focus of this thesis lies in understanding why Tibetans mobilize towards and away from certain goals and why these goals have changed and continues to change over time. Much of the recent scholarship related to Tibet has focused either on the origins of the Sino-Tibetan conflict or studying the identity of the Tibetan diaspora. As Anand points out “Until the last two decades of the twentieth century, Tibetan studies suffered from an over emphasis on Buddhism and pre-1950s Tibetan history.”⁹

The bulk of the literature on Tibet is heavily focused on historical analysis and the study of Tibetan Buddhism. Yet there is a growing field of studying Tibetan issue in regards to identity, politics, culture and etc. within the wider field of Diaspora Studies. The field of Tibetan Diaspora studies is limited and fairly new in that it is mostly focused on understanding how the Tibetan case fits in within this wider field and looking at the relation within the Diaspora and

⁹ Anand, Dibyesh. "A Contemporary Story of "Diaspora": The Tibetan Version." *Diaspora Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*: 211-29.

its actions in terms of maintaining their collective identity and holding up of their Diaspora image.

Scholars who have conducted much of the recent works on Tibetan Diaspora has focused on conceptualizing the study of Tibetan Diaspora trying to fit the Tibetan case in to wider theoretical aspects of Diaspora studies. He further argues that the adoption of the concept of Diaspora with all its versions within Tibetan studies is a significant development in that it constitutes a paradigm shift, given that the focus moves away from tradition to innovation, from preservation to construction, from culture to performative and material practices, from identity to processes of identification, from politics to politicization.¹⁰ This is explored further by Misra who looks at the dynamic of Tibetan nationalism in diaspora arguing that the nature and character of nationalism-in-exile is determined to a great extent by the corporation between the community within Tibet and those outside it. Further, he argues that no matter what the situation may be present in the territory, those in the diaspora always pursue a policy to establish links and ties- both clandestine and open- with their counterparts and work in tandem in order to facilitate their cause.¹¹

On the other hand looking at the role of Diasporas in conflict perpetuation or resolution, Shain, by studying the cases of Armenian-American and Jewish-Diaspora involvement in conflicts points out that diasporas play a very distinct yet powerful third-level role between interstate and domestic peacemaking efforts. Further he suggests that conflict resolution between ethnic or communal groups is often not just two-level but a “three-level-game of peacemaking” where the diaspora becomes a key constituency of concern for homeland leaders, adversaries and the governments of their host states.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid 223

¹¹ Misra, Amalendu. "A Nation in Exile: Tibetan Diaspora and the Dynamics of Long Distance Nationalism 1." *Asian Ethnicity* 4, no. 2 (2003): 189-206. Accessed May 12, 2015. EBSCO.

¹² Shain, Yossi. "The Role of Diasporas in Conflict Perpetuation or Resolution." *SAIS Review*, 2002, 115-44.

Looking at why some diaspora groups mobilize around their identity in the host state while others do not, Jenne et al puts analysis two different types of diaspora mobilization looking at the motivational aspect of identity preservation arguing that such types are best achieved through national struggles over political independence and territorial acquisition.¹³

None of these studies, however, explain why a diaspora's influence over its ethnic kin might change over time let alone explain why Diasporas might moderate their demands as it has happened in the case of Tibet. In order to explain such a phenomena would require a dynamic theory that takes into account bargaining between the minority group and its host state, showing how outside actors can influence the types of claims made by the group against its host state. The minority group here is represented by the CTA and more radical factions within the Tibetan diaspora represent the external lobby and the host state here is China.

This thesis applies the theory of ethnic bargaining to explain the relationship between Diasporas and ethnic kin in the Tibetan context. This thesis, through the subsequently explained theoretical lens seeks to address these exposed gaps in scholarship. However, it keeps its primary focus on the behavior of Tibetans as a collective entity since it is the Tibetan population who ultimately hold the strings of in terms of how they bargain for their interests and also what these interests are. The theory of ethnic bargaining suggests that more radical and powerful outside influence leads to more radical kin due to perceived shifts in leverage of the outside actors. Though this theoretical lens serves as good starting point and framework in order to understand the dynamics of bargaining in the Tibetan case, it does not explain why the minority group represented by the CTA remained resistant to influence from outside actors and is further moderating its demands. Thus, examining this case will explain the conditions under which the outside actors can have a limited influence, and that this case could possibly foster further

¹³ Saideman, Stephen, Erin Jenne, and Kathleen Cunningham. "Diagnosing Diasporas: Understanding the Conditions Fostering or Blocking Mobilization." APSA 2011 Annual Meeting Paper. Available, 2011.

research on cases where the radicalized diaspora does not lead to a radicalization of the minority.

2. 1 Plan of thesis

This thesis proceeds in five steps. First, I will introduce the Case selection and the research design in order to justify the case selection and the methods used to describe the issues at hand regarding the case. This would be presented not only in terms of explaining why the Tibetan Case is chosen but also provide justification for the way the case is being addressed and analyzed in this thesis. Second, I will provide a detailed historical background of the contemporary Tibetan case which would be necessary in order to analyze the behavior of the Tibetans not only as a collective entity on its own but the way they behave towards the Chinese state and within the international system. This background would include a detailed outline of the timeline of negotiations between the Chinese state and the CTA. This would be followed by a discussion of the Tibetan Diaspora attempting to fit the story of the Tibetan diaspora within that of wider diaspora theories to show the limits of theories that hold that Diasporas usually have more radical claims and act to radicalize kin groups. By focusing on the Middle Way and the conciliatory efforts of the Tibetan leadership in exile this thesis seeks to understand why radical actors in the Tibetan diaspora failed to leverage the CTA to make more radical claims after 1988.

The three subsequent chapters that will follow will be divided into three different time periods that reflect the changes in the politics of the Tibetan Diaspora. The contemporary story of the Tibetan Diaspora begins with a seminal event - the failed uprising in March 1959 that led to the flight of the current Dalai Lama from Tibet to India. Since then, more than 100, 000 Tibetans have fled from Tibet and the majority of this population have settled in India where the Tibetan Government in exile was established. The three time periods addressed in this thesis

begin from the establishment of the TGIE in Dharamsala in 1960 since which one could characterize the mobilization of the Tibetans in Exile and the beginning of Tibetan Diaspora politics.¹⁴ This period extends up to 1988 when the Dalai Lama shifted the goals of the TGIE to that of seeking “genuine autonomy” within China by proposing the Middle Way Approach which is classified as the second period under observation. And the third period starts from 2008 until which the Tibet Issue despite the fact that the central government in exile has abandoned its commitment for complete independence, the Tibetan movement as a whole has existed as a unified movement with room for debate and coexistence of varying views be it for genuine autonomy or complete independence. Following the 2008 Beijing Olympics, momentum towards independence and criticism for the middle way has been gaining high ground including waves of protest and self-immolations both inside and outside of Tibet while the CTA’s advocacy of the middle way approach as the right and basically only solution for Tibet is also increasing. This discussion would be followed by the concluding remarks.

¹⁴ "Tibet at a Glance." Central Tibetan Administration. Accessed May 12, 2015. <http://tibet.net/about-tibet/tibet-at-a-glance/>

Chapter 3 Research Design and Case Justification

3.1 Argument

The Ethnic Bargaining Theory in general is focused heavily on studying minorities within a state and how they mobilize and shift their demands over time. Even though this thesis is focused on the Tibetan Diaspora, by applying the ethnic bargaining framework to the behavior of the Tibetan Diaspora adequately helps understand and analyze why and how we observe variations in the demands of the Tibetan Diaspora as a group represented by the CTA vis-a-vis the center in this case, China and the leverage it holds in terms of how the kin in the homeland is affected and the policies that are brought forth that affect those in the homeland.

I seek to situate the politics of the Tibetan Diaspora within the Ethnic Bargaining framework. The Ethnic Bargaining Model as proposed by Jenne looks at why leaders of minority groups have a tendency to change the intensity of their demands over time while their grievances largely remain fairly constant¹⁵ The theory looks in detail at different underlying forces of ethnic bargaining focusing on the roles of the three main actors: the minority leadership, the majority state and the external lobby which could be kin in the diaspora or external state etc. that also influence the minority. This model pays an emphasis on the significant role that the lobby actor¹⁶ plays in swaying the intensity of the minority demands in response to actions and non-action by the majority group. Further, the intensifying demands of the minority group is

¹⁵ Jenne, Erin. *Ethnic Bargaining: The Paradox of Minority Empowerment*. 1st ed. Vol. 1. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007. Pg. 2

¹⁶ The term “external lobby actor” is used in the Jenne’s ethnic bargaining framework to denote any state, organization, or private interests that lobbies directly on behalf of these minority in the course of these negotiations. In the Tibetan case the wider Tibetan Diaspora in advocating demands that contradict or beyond the CTA’ demands represent the external lobby.

strongly influenced by the actions and signals from the external lobby actor. The overarching prediction of this of this model is that the change in the demands of the minority is not changed necessarily by increased grievances or an inability of the central government to meet its commitments to the minority group but rather due to shifting perceptions of relative power against the center and their confidence of external support.

For the scope of this thesis and the case being analyzed, it becomes problematic to look at the leverage and the behavior of all actors involved in the model and thus it would seek to focus particularly on the Tibetan Diaspora and the leadership in exile to understand the sway and intensity of demands by the Tibetan leadership in Exile. Though, small in number, the Tibetan Diaspora carry more weight than those in the homeland whose voices are easily suppressed. By applying the ethnic bargaining framework to the Tibetan case; I argue that even though the overarching prediction of the model that change in demand not necessarily due to change in grievances holds true for this case, the lobby actor has been unable to play a significant role in swaying the intensity of these demands. This inability to

3. 2 Research Design/Methods

The research methodology utilized for this thesis involves a thorough analysis of discourses that either has a direct or indirect relation to the Tibet issue generated by various sources ranging from scholarly articles, blogs, newspaper articles, government/ NGO press releases, policy documents. Though, conducting fieldwork in Dharamsala, the seat of the TGIE and the center of Tibetan Diaspora activities would have been ideal for such a case study, due to time constraints and a lack of resources, extensive research of the existing debate has been done to the best of my ability to get a clear picture of where the debate lies and how to go beyond what currently exists.

In order to make sense of the current Tibetan issue, the behavior of the Tibetans and the changes in their behavior vis-a-vis the kin in the homeland and in those the diaspora it becomes necessary to situate the debate into a theoretical structure.

3.3 Limitations

The ideal research on this issue regarding the relationship between the kin at home and that of the diaspora and analyzing the leverage of the Diaspora in terms of mobilization of the kin and observing how the kin bargains with or mobilizes against the Central government would require one to do thorough research both inside Tibet and within the Diaspora community. Due to many limitations including the inability to travel and conduct fieldwork due to time, financial and political constraints such a research was impossible. Moreover, the lack of much relevant data on social movements and publications of political issues from within Tibet and the growing restrictions on communication inside to those inside Tibet since the 2008 crackdown has made it impossible to contact any relevant sources inside Tibet. Another challenge presented in this process of searching for available data was the questions regarding the authenticity of the data provided by the Chinese government.

Thus, with these limitations in mind, the best solution to address this without losing the essence of the intended research was to focus on the behavior of the Tibetan Diaspora. I focus on the dynamics within the Tibetan diaspora and track their behavior and situate it within the global environment to make sense of why they behave the way they do in terms of their demands and strategies towards the central government which is the People's Republic of China. Further, emphasis is placed on developments of the identity of the Tibetan Diaspora and how they perceive their relation with the homeland and the kin at home. It is also the fact that the voice of Tibet in the international arena is ultimately in the hands of those in exile though small in number compared to major diaspora groups. For ease of analysis and in order to have a better

grip on understanding the behavior of the Tibetan diaspora, the case has been periodized into three different time periods during which the behavior and the demands of the Diaspora varied significantly. Thus, this thesis will analyze each period separately in order to get a better grip of what is happening both in terms of what the demands, what is provoking this sort of ideology and what the implications are and what it says about Diaspora mobilization in general.

3. 4 Justification of Case selection

Despite having personal connections to the Tibet, I will be sure to pay utmost care in avoiding personal biases in regards to my personal experience and opinions regarding each of the issues and situations discussed throughout this thesis. With this in mind, there are several reasons for the selection of the Tibetan case. First of all, with China's rising economic power and the role it plays in the global politics, it is important to understand the various issues surrounding the nation beyond that of its economic growth. The Chinese leaders have determined Tibet as one of China's core issues and what becomes of the Tibetan-Sovereignty debate plays a crucial role for the future of China both in terms of stability in the region and in maintaining the legitimacy of the nation of the Chinese Communist Party.

Secondly, from a more general point of view, much of the study on Diaspora politics is based on studying the relationship that Diaspora have in influencing and mobilizing kin in the homeland where the ones in the homeland have a strong leadership or a well mobilized group that the diaspora can support, fund or influence. In that way the Tibetan case is a unique one to study in that almost all of the leadership is present in exile without any strong group or insurgent acting within the homeland making it difficult to track the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland kin in influencing each other's behavior. From a regional point of view, Tibet is a very salient issue in terms of a regional security point of view for all its neighbors. Beijing has continuously maintained that Tibet is a core issue for China, which in

turn makes it a core issue in Beijing's relations with countries like India, Nepal and Bhutan who did not have a common border with China until Tibet was occupied.¹⁷ Thus, resolving the Tibetan issue is very much in the interests for the major players in the region if stability is what they seek. Because the CTA is the only an main actor bargaining from the Tibetan side, it makes sense to treat it as the minority following the ethnic bargaining framework and the wider diaspora as the lobby actor who is also articulating demands but not as effectively.

¹⁷ Chelleney, Brahma. "Why Tibet Remains The Core Issue In China-India Relations." Forbes. November 27, 2014. Accessed June 2, 2015. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/brahmachellaney/2014/11/27/why-tibet-remains-the-core-issue-in-china-india-relations/>.

Chapter 4: Background

4.1 The Tibetan Sovereignty Debate

In order to make any sort of argument, take any side on this debate, offer some sort of solution or even speculate what the future might hold one must understand the conflict and why the Tibet question even exists in the first place. First of all, this paper will explain what the Tibet Question essentially is and how both sides of this debate address this issue. Secondly, a brief historical analysis of the Sino-Tibetan relations will be presented in order to show the reality of the constantly shifting nature of the Sino-Tibetan relation. Finally, in light of the historical data, this thesis will seek to understand current realities and attempt to figure out what is in store for the Tibet's future under China.

First of all, it is important to understand that at this point in time, even the nature of what is geographically Tibet is one of contestation. Tibet as understood by the Central Tibetan Administration and Independent Tibet Support Groups around the world includes all areas under "Historical Tibet". This reference to Tibet takes into account whole of Tibet known as "Cholka-Sum" in Tibetan consisting of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo. The "Cholka-Sum" area defined by the Central Tibetan Administration and those pursuing an independent Tibet extend beyond the present-day Chinese administrative areas of the Tibetan Autonomous Region; it includes the Qinghai Province, two Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures and one Tibetan Autonomous County in Sichuan Province, one Tibetan Autonomous County in Gansu Province and one Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province.

On the other hand, under official Chinese policy when referred to Tibet, there is only mention of the Tibetan Autonomous Region which includes less than half of what the Tibetans claim.¹⁸ Further the ‘Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet’, (the ‘Seventeen Point Agreement’ of 23 May 1951), which is the legal agreement under whose provision Beijing has exercised its authority over Tibet in recent times, is subject to dispute.¹⁹ The Dalai Lama, CTA and all other actors in the Tibetan Diaspora maintain that the agreement is void because it was not only signed under duress but China has failed to adhere to its commitments.

4.2 The Tibetan Diaspora

In this section I will discuss the evolution and the creation of the Tibetan Diaspora as a collective political entity with specific goals and strategies. I will discuss this within the context of wider theories of Diaspora attempting to show what makes the Tibetan community outside of Tibet a Diaspora rather than just minorities of their hosts’ nations or a dispersed ethnic group. The identification of Tibetans in Exile who until recent times have been concentrated close to the homeland in India as a diaspora is a recent phenomenon and thus studies of this group as a diaspora is at its primary stage. With that being said, the word Diaspora is gaining wide circulation within the Tibetan intellectual community as well within the scholarly community of Tibetan Studies²⁰ Further he suggests that the term Diaspora has traveled beyond the confines of its Jewish-centered definition to charted and uncharted, familiar as well as strange territories. Inevitably, by the time Diaspora came to be used for the Tibetans, the term not only

¹⁸ "Tibet at a Glance." Central Tibetan Administration. Accessed May 12, 2015. <http://tibet.net/about-tibet/tibet-at-a-glance/>

¹⁹ Misra, Amalendu. "Tibet: In Search of a Resolution." *Central Asian Survey*: 79-93. Pg. 87

²⁰ Anand, Dibyesh. "A Contemporary Story of "Diaspora": The Tibetan Version." *Diaspora Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*: 21

contained the reality of Tibetan exile community and the remnants of classical definitions, but also constitutive traces of its travel among several theoretical fields as well as among several formations that have adopted the label of Diaspora.²¹

Also, remarkably, the Tibetan case fits such a definition of Diaspora quite closely. Like the seminal moment of the 586 BCE exile within the Jewish diaspora consciousness, the Lhasa Uprising of 10th March 1959 plays an important role in Tibetan's discourse about themselves, pinpointing a particular date as the moment of exile of the Tibetan nation.²² Whereas Tibetans dwelling in displacement was once primarily characterized as an exile and refugee situation, here, too, the diaspora term has taken off since the mid-1990s, especially among scholars and the Tibetan leadership. Interestingly as within other regional studies and disciplines, in Tibetan studies the pattern of the "ten-year adoption gap."²³

Furthermore, despite the rapidly growing field of diaspora studies, very little has been done to distinguish specific Tibetan issues within the larger contexts of diaspora debate.²⁴ The identity of the Tibetan diaspora and their Tibetan national imagination is a means to a particular political end-national independence for some, genuine cultural autonomy for others.²⁵ Thus, the debates in the Tibetan diaspora is heavily focused on their nationalist aspirations,

²¹ Ibid. 23

²² Ibid. 23

²³ Baumann, Martin. "Shangri-La in Exile: Portraying Tibetan Diaspora Studies and Reconsidering Diaspora(s)." *Diaspora Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*: 377-404. Pg. 389

²⁴ Venturino, Steven. "Reading Negotiations in the Tibetan Diaspora." *Constructing Tibetan Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, 1997, 98-121. Pg. 101

²⁵ Ibid. pg 103

Chapter 5: First Period since 1959: Following Independence

5.1 Introduction

The Central Tibetan Administration was established in 1959 by the 14th Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India. The main objectives of the CTA are to rehabilitate Tibetan refugees and restore freedom and happiness in Tibet. While the CTA serves as the Government of Tibetans in Exile guided by the Charter of Tibetans in Exile it has explicitly stated that it is not designed to take power in Tibet but rather, it will dissolve once freedom is achieved for a government that is elected by the people of Tibet.²⁶ The structure of the CTA is Government-like and has a democratically and popularly elected leadership at this point in time.

The exodus of the Dalai Lama and the subsequent events that followed serve as the starting point of not only the story of the Tibetan Diaspora but of the Tibetan Movement as we know it. Exiled Tibetans of that generation that were exiled immediately following Chinese occupation carried their own memories of the homeland with them to India in 1959, and these immediate memories directed all initial attempts to negotiate a return to Tibet.²⁷ Further the pan-Tibetan identity that currently exists is ultimately a constructed identity that has formed after 1959. This chapter would be focused on analyzing the behavior of Tibetans and the demands they are articulating in the time period immediately following Tibet's occupation and the Dalai Lama's exile in to India. Keeping in mind that it was after shifting to Exile that the Dalai Lama and his administration's role as an all-encompassing and undisputed leader of the Tibetan people begin to take place as it is during this period that Tibetans start shaping their

²⁶ "Tibet at a Glance." Central Tibetan Administration. Accessed May 12, 2015. <http://tibet.net/about-tibet/tibet-at-a-glance/>.

²⁷ Venturino, Steven. "Reading Negotiations in the Tibetan Diaspora." *Constructing Tibetan Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, 1997, 98-121. Pg. 104

nationalist ideals as well. Even though, before 1959, a sense of belonging to an overarching tradition, in the lives of the majority of the people, what defined their features ultimately were their local identities and their devotion to specific sects within Buddhism.²⁸ The representation of the Dalai Lama and the devotion to him by the Tibetans in Exile as an uncontested leader can be credited largely to Tibetan politics in Exile rather than that of a historical Tibetan account.²⁹ Therefore among the Tibetans in diaspora, the focus of identification has now shifted far from local contexts to a Tibetan national one-instead of individual localities and regions, it is to the nation of Tibet that is collectively imagined as the homeland that the refugees hope to return one day and rely on the Government-In-Exile to restore their freedom.

This first time period sets the ground for the Tibetan movement and negotiations between the Tibetans in Exile and the Chinese state as we know it. From a bargaining point of view, in this early stage the minority, which is the Tibetan leadership in Exile is just beginning to shape their demands coherently but their identity as a group being able to articulate reasonable demands and negotiated effectively with a Central government is just forming. During this time, the presence of a strong, stable and lasting external lobby influencing the demands of the Tibetan Diaspora was also missing except for the United States, the CIA to be specific is using the Tibetan cause as a proxy for its cold war intentions against China by funding a guerilla resistance army which ultimately failed.

5.2 The Role of the Dalai Lama

To address almost any socio-political issue regarding Tibetans both at home and in exile whether contemporary or historical, one cannot ignore the role and influence of the Dalai Lama

²⁸ Anand, Dibyesh. "A Contemporary Story of "Diaspora": The Tibetan Version." *Diaspora Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*: 211-29.

²⁹ Ibid.

which in a way makes the story of the Tibetan Diaspora unique and complicated in its nature. In Tibetan Buddhist cosmology the Dalai Lama is Chenrezig, the Avalokiteshwara, the Bodhisattva, the enlightened one who is periodically reborn to rule and manage both religious and political realms of the Tibetans.³⁰ He is the charismatic and all-encompassing leader of the Tibetan people and is believed that he would have nothing other than the best interests of the Tibetans in his heart making it difficult for anyone at least in the Tibetan community to dispute his role and his decisions. Therefore, any question on Tibetan autonomy and sovereignty is unvaryingly related to the Dalai Lama and officials appointed by him dealt with the issues at hand.³¹ With this in mind, ultimately the bargaining structure at this point is between the Chinese state and the Dalai Lama himself.

Further political decisions and the subsequent ramifications are clearly dependent on the decisions and actions of the Dalai Lama (edit) Almost all scholars on Tibet related issues acknowledge not only the role he plays as the undisputed leader of the Tibetan people but also the high level of international sympathy and reverence for the Dalai Lama. Thus, the survey that follows analyzing the changes of the behavior or demands of the Tibetans must acknowledge this prominence and position of the Dalai Lama.

When analyzing both scholarly and Media discourses, one cannot ignore the variation in the way importance for the Dalai Lama is paid by different actors involved in the Tibet's relation with China. For China, the Dalai Lama is a threat to China's claimed legitimacy over Tibet displayed by its labelling of the Dalai Lama as a "separatist" and the TGIE and other actors in Tibetan exile politics as the "Dalai Clique" and the pressure posed on the international community by the Chinese state to refrain from receiving the Dalai Lama as a representative of the Tibetan community.

³⁰Misra, Amalendu. "Tibet: In Search of a Resolution." *Central Asian Survey*: 79-93. Pg. 80

³¹ Ibid. 82

Moving closer to home, the Dalai Lama has served as both the undisputed spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetans in exile until he stepped down from his political leadership for a democratically elected Prime Minister in Exile. Still, the position and the persona of the Dalai Lama remains though he had officially stepped down from being a political actor yet still holds as much clout as he did and remains the undisputed spiritual leader. Despite giving up De Jure power of the TGIE, the Dalai Lama still continues to shape policies and impact the Tibetan movement either directly or indirectly in that his Middle Way Approach for Tibet has become institutionalized in the CTA and continues to be the sole agenda of the Administration. This is apparent in the CTA's website for the MWA time and again refers to the strategy as "The Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach"

This role played by the Dalai Lama in the socio-political life of the Tibetan in exile and even at home and in turn the relationship of Tibetans with the international community has largely been interpreted as a positive and unique feature of the Tibet struggle with an emphasis on non-violence. The popular personality of the Dalai Lama and his strong emphasis on amplifying messages on non-violence, peace and human rights has managed to link the Tibetan cause with Universalist discourses.³²

But some scholars have suggested that such a strong dependence on a singular religious leader could be detrimental to the Tibetan nationalist cause. Not only had that, in the TGIE, loyalty to the Dalai Lama played a key role in its efforts to strengthen a unified Tibetan identity.³³ Though this prominence and devotion towards the Dalai Lama has helped in the union of Tibetans in Exile who come from a very heterogeneous background, it also has the potentially having

³² Anand, Dibyesh. "A Contemporary Story of "Diaspora": The Tibetan Version." *Diaspora Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*: 211-29. Pg. 226

³³ *Ibid.* 226

discouraging effects on the formulation on opposing views and the development of the TGIE in to a full robust democracy receptive to change and opposing views within the society.

5.3 Negotiations In Exile

Following the Tibetan National Uprising in 1959 in the capital of Tibet, it was made clear that Tibetans resisted China's authority and following rumors of threats to the Dalai Lama, the 20 year old Dalai Lama fled to India with small party. Since then over 100, 000 Tibetans have fled to Nepal and India during

It was during this period that the Dalai Lama was the sole leader of the Tibetans in Exile and even of those within and he was the only one capable of speaking for the demands and the plight of the Tibetan people. The Dalai Lama and the government in Exile established by him was at the time committed to fighting, mainly through non-violent and diplomatic strategies for the complete Independence for Tibet and returning to Tibet. From his position in exile, the Dalai Lama petitioned numerous countries to support the Tibetan resistance, but failed to get more than relief aid for Tibetan refugees in India.³⁴

Until 1959, the Dalai Lama and his representatives were engaged in negotiations for some sort of autonomy deal with the Chinese leadership leading to the signing of the 17th point agreement.³⁵ But after 1959 and as he established the government in exile, the Dalai Lama has explicitly raised the issue of independence citing the 17thPoint Agreement as evidence of Tibetan's sovereignty prior to Chinese occupation. At the same time he questioned the validity of the agreement and declared it void because the Chinese had violated it and because, he

³⁴ Jenne, Erin. "Sanctifying the Homeland: Religionizing the Tibetan and Jewish Diasporas." Accessed May 10, 2015. <http://www.eui.eu/Documents/RSCAS/Research/MWG/200910/MWG2009-11-09Jenne.pdf>. pg. 22

³⁵ "Seventeen-Point Plan for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (1951) [p.182]." Legal Materials on Tibet - China. May 23, 1951. Accessed June 2, 2015.

claimed, it had been signed under duress. He also made clear that he was in favor of economic, social and political reforms, but that the Chinese had not acted in good faith.³⁶

During this time, Dalai Lama has spoken well and clear of his search of Tibetan independence. Further he was is explicit in his appeal to an essential Tibetan identity based on a necessarily Buddhist Tibetan spirit and a "birthright" springing from the physical Tibetan homeland, the "cradle and homeland of Tibetan Buddhism" itself. Echoing these sentiments of the Dalai Lama, to many Tibetans in the diaspora, appeals to a stable, genuine, historical identity are deeply felt characteristics of an essential individual, society, and spiritual purpose.

37

Also at the time active negotiations were well alive at the time yet the Chinese government was reluctant to budge from their position until the mid-80s when Chinese government hardened its position in the face of a growing wave of political dissidence and social unrest by the CIA and similarly, the exile government's fact finding trips of the late 1970s and 1980s included incitement of the population against the authorities by the fact finders. (Misra, 195)

During this same time period, saw the rise of a Tibetan guerrilla resistance group with a base was established in Mustang, Nepal with support from the United States. By spring 1961, Mustang guerrilla units had begun raids along a 250-mile stretch inside Tibet. In addition, some 12,000 Tibetans eventually joined the Special Frontier Force that manned the Sino-Indian border.³⁸ But as the years passed without any bases established inside Tibet, US enthusiasm over the Mustang fighters dwindled and already sparse and insufficient arms drops ceased in

³⁶ Knaus, John Kenneth. *Orphans of the Cold War: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival*. New York: PublicAffairs, 1999. pg. 177

³⁷ Venturino, Steven. "Reading Negotiations in the Tibetan Diaspora." *Constructing Tibetan Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, 1997, 98-121. Pg. 191

³⁸ Knaus, John Kenneth. *Orphans of the Cold War: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival*. New York: PublicAffairs, 1999. Pg. 281

1965, leaving an aging and barely armed guerrilla force in dire straits.³⁹ The 25 small teams of Colorado-trained Tibetans who were sent into Tibet from 1964 to 1967 on fact-finding missions had no better luck. Only two were able to operate in-country for more than two months, finding no support from compatriots.⁴⁰ Also at the time the exile guerrilla movement operating out of Mustang, Nepal in the late 1970s carried out repeated incursions in an attempt to make contact with the local population aided⁴¹

The support of the CIA for the Tibetan Resistance was short-lived and was motivated by the U.S' cold war intentions of provoking a communist regime rather than helping Tibetans regain their territory. Gyalo Thundrop. Years later has stated that:

“America didn't want to help Tibet. It just wanted to make trouble for China. It had no far-sighted policy for Tibet[...]The Americans promised to help make Tibet an independent country. All those promises were broken...I can't say the CIA help was useful...whatever help they provided really provoked the Chinese [and] led to reprisals. I feel very sorry for this.”⁴²

The United States ended all its support for the resistance movement and Tibetan independence in general following normalization of relations with China and provided the government-in-exile money to open offices in Geneva and New York and to basically further establish exile institutions. Though the armed guerilla resistance failed to make any significant developments and ended rather prematurely it plays a significant role in understanding history of the Tibetan independence movement and the future discourses that are taking shape. This highlights that the Tibetan resistance has not always been one of non-violence and peaceful negotiations and that a desire to engage in possible violent insurgencies to fight for demands did exist in the

³⁹ Ibid. pg. 126–279

⁴⁰ Ibid. 281

⁴¹ Misra, Amalendu. "A Nation in Exile: Tibetan Diaspora and the Dynamics of Long Distance Nationalism 1." *Asian Ethnicity* 4, no. 2 (2003): 189-206. Accessed May 12, 2015. EBSCO. 195

⁴² "Gyalo Thondup: Interview Excerpts." *Wall Street Journal*. February 20, 2009. Accessed May 15, 2015.

past. Whether or not this sort of radical desire or solution would surface again in the Tibetan struggle is another question.

Chapter 6: Second Period: Shift in Policy towards a Middle Way

6.1 Introduction:

Years following the successful establishment of the Tibetan Government in Exile and raising considerable voice and awareness of the Tibetan cause, the case for Tibetan Independence has continuously remained far-fetched and international support for Tibet remained at the level of narratives surrounding human rights, religion and cultural aspects of the Tibetan cause not reaching anywhere near a full and concrete support for Tibetan Independence. The focus of this chapter lies in the developments following 1988; the year when the Dalai Lama publicly outlined his new strategy for the Tibetan movement dubbed the Middle Way Approach. At this time, the Tibetan leadership and the people in exile are still developing their identity and political motifs while establishing themselves in a new environment. This chapter will demonstrate that despite the development of external groups beyond the CTA who are advocating for a strengthening of the Independence movement and keeping the momentum alive, the CTA headed by the Dalai Lama shifted their demands against the central government to a much more moderate demand for genuine autonomy, reiterating the need for peaceful dialogues as a means of achieving this cause. By looking at the evolution of the Middle Way and discourses within Tibetan politics since the adoption of the MWA, this chapter will attempt to show that the minority leadership (CTA) is able to not only resist influence from more radical outside lobby actor but even shift to more moderate demands due to the presence of the Dalai Lama's leadership and the lack of strong contending voices that can credibly represent differing interests.

6.2 Emergence of the Middle Way

It was on 15 June 1988 at the European Parliament in Strasbourg that the Dalai Lama issued a statement to pursue a Middle-Way approach for the future of Sino-Tibetan relations- which formed the basis of negotiations as to what kind of autonomy was needed by the Tibetan people.⁴³ The advocates of the Middle Way continuously iterate the policy as a democratically adopted one with the best interest of Tibetans at its core. Prominent Tibetan scholar Dawa Norbu has commented on this by stating that The Dalai Lama, like his people, has come to the conclusion that he does not have any alternative but to negotiate for a greater degree of autonomy from the PRC⁴⁴.

The negotiations were participated by the members of the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies and the Kashag⁴⁵, public servants, Tibetan settlement officers and the members of the local Tibetan Assemblies, representatives from the Tibetan NGOs, newly-arrived Tibetans and special invitees. They held extensive discussions on the text of the proposal and finally endorsed it unanimously.⁴⁶ This strategy for a middle way approach was adopted by the TGIE abandoning its prior pursuit of restoring an independent Tibet to reach a mutually beneficial outcome. Yet, the Chinese government did not respond positively to the proposal, the Dalai Lama again proposed in 1996 and 1997 that the Tibetan people should decide on the best possible way of realizing the cause of Tibet through a referendum. According to the Dalai Lama's website and the TGIE, a preliminary opinion poll was conducted in which more than 64% of the total opinion letters⁴⁷ received expressed that there was no need to hold

⁴³ "His Holiness's Middle Way Approach For Resolving the Issue of Tibet." His Holiness's Middle Way Approach For Resolving the Issue of Tibet. Accessed May 7, 2015. <http://www.dalailama.com/messages/middle-way-approach>.

⁴⁴ Norbu: China's Dialogue with the Dalai Lama: 1978-90

⁴⁵ The Kashag refers to the Cabinet; the Executive branch of the CTA

⁴⁶ "Introduction to the Nature, Evolution and Achievement of the Middle-Way Policy." www.mwa.tibet.net. Accessed May 17, 2015. <http://mwa.tibet.net/read/#/periodicals/1>.

⁴⁷ After searching the official websites of the CTA, The Dalai Lama and that of the MWA no detailed explanation of where and from whom the opinions came from could not be found.

a referendum, and that they would support the Middle-Way Approach, or whatever decisions His Holiness the Dalai Lama takes from time to time, in accordance with the changing political situation in China and the world at large.⁴⁸ Thus, the referendum that was proposed by the Dalai Lama never really took shape and this opinion poll serves as the proxy for the claim that the MWA was adopted democratically. To this effect, the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies adopted a unanimous resolution in favor of the MWA on 18 September 1997 and informed the Dalai Lama.⁴⁹ To this, the Dalai Lama added that he continues to believe that his "Middle-Way Approach" is the most realistic and pragmatic course to resolve the issue of Tibet peacefully. This policy was, hence, adopted as the official policy of the CTA.

According to the Dalai Lama's office, the realization of need to shift to such a policy is particularly contingent on the Chinese Leader Deng Xiaoping's assertion to the Dalai Lama in 1979 that "except independence all other issues can be resolved through negotiations". This, the Dalai Lama has maintained was very much in agreement with his long-held belief of finding a mutually-beneficial solution.⁵⁰ The Dalai Lama and his administration took this statement from Deng to mean that except for establishing an independent nation, all other aspects of Tibet's political status could be negotiated including the terms of a genuine autonomy.⁵¹ Taking in to consideration wider political factors, this realization for the need to shift demands seem to have come more acutely with the U.S abandonment of the Tibetan cause early in the 70's when Sino-Tibetan rapprochement began.

⁴⁸ "His Holiness's Middle Way Approach For Resolving the Issue of Tibet." His Holiness's Middle Way Approach For Resolving the Issue of Tibet. Accessed June 2, 2015. <http://www.dalailama.com/messages/middle-way-approach>.

⁴⁹ ⁴⁹ "Introduction to the Nature, Evolution and Achievement of the Middle-Way Policy." Wwww.mwa.tibet.net. Accessed May 17, 2015. <http://mwa.tibet.net/read/#/periodicals/1>.

⁵⁰ "His Holiness's Middle Way Approach For Resolving the Issue of Tibet." His Holiness's Middle Way Approach For Resolving the Issue of Tibet. Accessed May 7, 2015.

⁵¹ Smith, Warren. "ORIGINS OF THE MIDDLE WAY POLICY." Tibetan Political Review. March 24, 2015. Accessed May 8, 2015. <https://sites.google.com/site/tibetanpoliticalreview/articles/originsofthemiddlewaypolicy>.

6.3 Reactions to the Middle Way Approach

The policy of the MWA and its demands are framed in the spiritual Buddhist beliefs of pursuing a mid-point between extremities; the method Buddha has used to achieve enlightenment.⁵² Prominent Tibetan blogger, activist and a former member of the Chushi Gandruk⁵³ has expressed that the naming of the policy of surrendering Tibetan sovereignty to Communist China the “Middle Way” was a stroke of genius. It was also a deeply dishonest, perhaps even a sacrilegious act” taking in to account that majority of the Tibetan population both at home in exile a devoted Buddhists who have grown up accepting Buddha’s Middle Way.⁵⁴ The dilution of the “spiritual” in the “political” has made religious symbolism a potent element in Tibetan nationalism which includes ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural and geographical variants.⁵⁵

Further, Jenne suggests that political agents within a diaspora may choose to elevate a their religious identity over others, effectively “religionizing” the diasporic community as a means of binding them more closely to the homeland because religionized diasporas tend to offer greater assistance to their co-ethnics in the homeland.⁵⁶ Whatsoever the reason for branding the policy in the line of Buddhist ideals; the spirituality that the term emanates and the fact that it was proposed by the Dalai Lama makes it difficult for most Tibetans to even consider opposing or criticizing such a policy.

Despite the adoption of the policy to make progress in the Sino-Tibetan relations and further negotiations to resolve the conflict, the Chinese government continuously remained

⁵² Tsering, Wangchuk. "Tibet's Middle Way." Central Tibetan Administration. November 5, 2013. Accessed May 4, 2015. <http://tibet.net/2013/11/tibets-middle-way/>.

⁵³ The guerrilla Tibetan resistance army is known as Chushi Gandruk in Tibetan

⁵⁴ <http://www.rangzen.net/2011/02/01/not-the-buddhas-middle-way/>

⁵⁵ In search of resolution

⁵⁶ Jenne, Erin. "Sanctifying the Homeland: Religionizing the Tibetan and Jewish Diasporas." Accessed May 10, 2015. <http://www.eui.eu/Documents/RSCAS/Research/MWG/200910/MWG2009-11-09Jenne.pdf>. Pg 2

reluctant to engage in negotiations but proposed the Tibetan leadership to make further concessions in order for negotiations to take place.⁵⁷

Statements coming from the Chinese government stated that due to the changing nature of the international situation in the 70s and 80s during which India and the United States were attempting to improve relations with China, the “Dalai Clique”⁵⁸ had no option but to “give up efforts of seeking Independence and attempt to return to China.”⁵⁹ Additionally, they accused the Dalai Lama of changing his attitude with the changing tide of international affairs and giving different signals at different time.⁶⁰ The official Chinese response to the MWA has been labeling it as a pro-separatist strategy in disguise and has continued to refuse the proposal as nothing different from the pro-Independence policy that existed previously.⁶¹

In the international arena, the Dalai Lama’s MWA was met with strong support after the Dalai Lama’s address in Strasbourg. Many foreign supporters of Tibet and the international community in general were welcoming of proposal seemingly due to its pragmatic nature and focus on mutual benefit and peaceful conciliation. In fact, the pacifying nature of Dalai Lama’s proposal was cited in the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989⁶² which helped bolster the Dalai Lama’s international image and confirmed the wisdom of the MWA for many who doubted the policy in the beginning.⁶³

⁵⁷ Negotiation progress

⁵⁸ "The Dalai Clique’s Separatist Activities and the Central Government’s Policy." CCTV-English Channel. August 30, 2005. Accessed May 14, 2015.

<http://www.cctv.com/english/special/C14619/20050830/101565.shtml>.

⁵⁹ "What Is Dalai Lama's 'Middle Way'" Embassy of the People's Republic of China- Belgium. Accessed May 12, 2015. <http://www.chinaembassy-org.be/eng/zt/zgxz/t265177.htm>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Aneja, Atul. "White Paper on Tibet Denounces 'middle Way'" The Hindu. April 15, 2015. Accessed May 9, 2015. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/white-paper-on-tibet-denounces-middle-way/article7106400.ece>.

⁶² "A Buddhist Advocate for Peace and Freedom." The 14th Dalai Lama - Facts. Accessed May 12, 2015. http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1989/lama-facts.html.

⁶³ <https://sites.google.com/site/tibetanpoliticalreview/articles/originsofthemiddlewaypolicy>

During this time period institutionalized activists groups within the Tibetan Diaspora began to emerge such as the Tibetan Youth Congress, the Tibetan Women's Association and so on who have slowly began to play a crucial role in creating, sustaining and promoting distinctiveness ideas of Tibetan identity and nationalism - sometimes complementing but often many times contradicting the activities of the government in-exile.⁶⁴ Prominent Tibetan scholar Tsering Shakya points out that as time progressed, the lack of concrete political outcomes from the moral position of the Dalai Lama and his popularity in the West has led to growing sense of disenchantment with the TGIE's nationalist policies.⁶⁵ While the Dalai Lama has called for greater Tibetan autonomy and the TGIE is conciliatory towards Beijing, the TYC has expressed demands for complete independence since its inception. In addition, they have even shown frustration towards the message of peace and Buddhist ideals that contemporary Tibetans are confined to drawing on history to suggest that it is not only on Buddhism that Tibet was founded on.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ (Lopez, 219)

⁶⁵ Misra, Amalendu. "A Nation in Exile: Tibetan Diaspora and the Dynamics of Long Distance Nationalism 1." *Asian Ethnicity* 4, no. 2 (2003): 189-206. Accessed May 12, 2015. EBSCO. Pg. 191

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, pg.191

Chapter 7: Third period: continued minority resistance against the effects of outside lobby actor

7.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter lies in analyzing the behavior of the Tibetan Diaspora since 2008. Several landmark events took place in the exile Tibetan socio-political field since then. Leading up to the Beijing Olympics, violent protests and riots broke out inside Tibet during an annual commemoration of the March 10th Uprisings of 1959. During this time at least 95 separate protests took place in Tibetan areas within China in the three and a half weeks from 10th March to 5th April 2008.⁶⁷ This led to further protests and more violence due to a subsequent crackdown from the CCP in Tibetan areas. With these events as a background, the 2008 Beijing Olympics brought about opportunity for Tibetans both inside and outside of Tibet to express their grievances against China and draw international attention to the plight of the Tibetans worldwide. Throughout Beijing's famous torch relay around the world, Pro-Tibet supporters around the world gathered to protest against China's hosting of the Olympics and its occupation of Tibet, turning sometimes to violence to stop the Olympic torch from smoothly travelling. This incited a brand new momentum in the Tibetan movement for independence among activists and other more radical youth factions of the diaspora.

Following these events which drew global attention to the Tibetan cause and the call for a Free Tibet, criticism on the effectiveness of the MWA began to grow and the Chinese government still remained reluctant to engage in any meaningful dialogues. During these times, the Dalai Lama has continuously called on Tibetans to adhere to non-violence and also brought up the idea of stepping down from his political leadership of the TGIE which finally took shape

⁶⁷ The Tibet protest of spring 2008

in 2011 followed by a democratic election for a Prime-Minister. Amidst growing criticism and the increasing momentum of groups seeking alternative solutions to the Tibetan conflict, the newly redone government has pushed its Middle Way agenda even further and more strongly.

Following the ethnic bargaining framework presented earlier in this thesis, the critics of the CTA's approach and groups mobilizing for pro-Independence cause are the "external lobby" that is articulating demands for the future of Tibet and attempting to channel influence towards alternative and possibly more radical approach. Despite what the theory and literature on diaspora seems to predict, the radicalizing of the external lobby is, at this time is failing to radicalize the minority leadership (CTA) but rather they are met with further and stronger resistance from the leadership. Following the discourses both of the CTA and that of external groups within the diaspora this chapter focuses on understanding the framing of the arguments and the background behind both to analyze why the external lobby at this point in time despite gaining more opportunity to voice their grievances has failed to radicalize the CTA and subsequently has been unsuccessful at this point in time in shifting the nature of conflict within the homeland.

7.2 Devolution of the Dalai Lama's Political Power

It was in March 2011 that the Dalai Lama has announced his resignation from his role as the Tibetan community's political leader and proposed amending the Charter for Tibetans in Exile to devolve his formal authority when the Tibetan parliament-in-exile started its next session.⁶⁸ This was then followed by elections in the exile community for a democratically elected prime minister who would play a much more prominent role in Tibetan politics than had past prime-ministers and suggested a complete devolution of the Dalai Lama's political

⁶⁸ "So Long, Farewell." The Economist. March 14, 2011. Accessed June 2, 2015.
http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2011/03/dalai_lama_resigns.

role. The subsequent elections that followed saw all secular candidates and not monks unlike previous elections adding to a sense of modernization to politics in exile.⁶⁹ This move by the Dalai Lama that Beijing denounced as “tricks to deceive the international community”⁷⁰ was seen by the Tibetans as a new turn in their struggle.

Elections that followed in the same year saw strong campaigning efforts by the candidates as never been seen before in Tibetan exile politics and Tibetans around the world, in over 30 countries participated in the election. Dr. Lobsang Sangay a full bright scholar and a Harvard law graduate won with a sweeping majority of 55% of the vote⁷¹ and have since lead the CTA as the Sikyong of the TGIE. The Sikyong has a previous history of being active during his youth as a member of the Tibetan Youth Congress, a leading pro-Independence activist group and throughout his campaign trail have remained ambiguous about his stance on the Middle Way or Complete Independence. However, he is also open to a review of that policy, if everyone, including His Holiness, the Parliament and the Tibetan people decide to change it. Of course, if all those people decide to change the Middle Way Policy, it is doubtful any Kalon Tripa could stand in the way of change.⁷² With this, there were speculations that the CTA could possibly rethink its policies regarding the future of and its negotiation tactics with the Chinese government.

Once in power, the Prime Minister had made it very clear that the CTA is committed to pursuing its policy of seeking Middle Way between repression and separation from China as proposed by the Dalai Lama.⁷³ Further, since the his administration has come in to power the

⁶⁹ "Seventeen-Point Plan for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (1951) [p.182]." Legal Materials on Tibet - China. May 23, 1951. Accessed June 2, 2015.

⁷⁰ Page, Jeremy. "Dalai Lama to Hand Over Political Leader Role." WSJ. March 11, 2011. Accessed May 13, 2015. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703453804576191542646350586>.

⁷¹ Khazan, Olga. "The Accidental Prime Minister of Tibet." The Atlantic. May 15, 2013. Accessed June 8, 2015.

⁷² "INVESTIGATING THE CANDIDATES ON THE MIDDLE WAY." Tibetan Political Review. March 15, 2011. Accessed April 16, 2015. <https://sites.google.com/site/tibetanpoliticalreview/project-updates/investigatingthecandidatesonthemiddleway>.

⁷³ "CTA Committed to Pursue Middle-Way Approach: Sikyong." Central Tibetan Administration. Accessed June 2, 2015. <http://tibet.net/2013/07/cta-committed-to-pursue-middle-way-approach-sikyong/>.

campaign for promoting the policy has grown stronger along with much tougher resistance of opposing views. This could be explained by his view that the reason this proposal has made little headway with China could be due to the inability of his group in explaining well enough CTA's position and the proposal to the world. Further he has elaborated that many world leaders who he has spoken to "still think that we are seeking independence".⁷⁴ Further on June 2012, the European Parliament passes a resolution commending the decision of the new democratically elected Tibetan political leadership to continue its efforts to pursue the Middle-Way Policy of the Dalai Lama and calling on Chinese authorities to engage in a meaningful discussion with the representatives of the CTA on the future of Tibet.⁷⁵

Throughout these affairs, one can notice that despite the fact that the Dalai Lama had officially stepped down from his position as the political head of the Tibetan people; he still remains the de-facto leader in politically affairs in exile whether such is desirable to him or not. If one has spent a good amount of time in the Tibetan community or have followed Tibetan political affairs, discourses both in the political and the social field has a strong adherence to mentioning the Dalai Lama in justifying ones actions and beliefs. This suggests the very strong role of the Dalai Lama in shaping the discourses within Tibetan politics and the unconditional devotion to him within the majority of Tibetans.

7.3 New Prime Minister and Continued Resistance

In the Tibetan case the hope for the external lobby to influence the CTA in rethinking its policies and demands seem to have been diminished even further since the new administration has come to power. The Dalai Lama has based its initial proposal of the MWA

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⁷⁵ "European Parliament Resolution of 14 June 2012 on the Human Rights Situation in Tibet." European Parliament. March 20, 2012. Accessed May 13, 2015. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT/TA/P7-TA-2012-0257/0/DOC/XML/V0//EN>.

on Deng's suggestion or willingness to negotiate anything but Independence. Years have passed since the days of Deng and with no concrete progress in sight; the current Chinese policy orientation on Tibet is much more hard lined that is strongly in favor of cultural assimilation and hostile to the demands for Tibet's autonomy or independence. With this fact in mind, one would assume that the MWA which has been particularly formulated in response to Deng's initiative as a pragmatic approach would be rendered obsolete in the current tide of affairs.

The opposite has turned out to be true amidst growing criticism of the effectiveness and the progress of the MWA and the growing support for pro-Independence groups among youth activists and other actors within the diaspora. The TGIE on its website has published a statement by the Kashag stating that it will "spare no efforts in dealing with such criticisms in its pursuit of Middle-Way and those who denigrate and misconstrue His Holiness the Dalai Lama."⁷⁶ Further the Prime-Minister iterated that Middle-Way is the as only way forward to resolve the issue of Tibet and source of growing global support.⁷⁷ This provokes one to not only question the salience of the official policy of the CTA but also brings one to question the democratic ideals of the institution. Moreover, this statement from the Kashag again demonstrates the usage of the Dalai Lama's name to somehow legitimize its actions whether the Dalai Lama officially endorses such acts or not and again raises the question of the political role of the Dalai Lama despite his official devolution of his powers.

Late Tibetan scholar Dawa Norbu has shone the light on this issue early on when he stated that the Tibetan diaspora populations need to more openly exercise debate over the complexities of democracy, especially regarding the question of administrative, if there is to be any hope for a Free Tibet. He has further criticized the TGIE, charging that "Tibetan Democracy will remain a farce that perpetuates patrimonialism unless the Dalai Lama's power

⁷⁶ <http://tibet.net/2013/09/middle-way-approach-shapes-growing-world-support-for-tibet-issue-kashag/>

⁷⁷ "Umaylam - Middle Way Approach." Middle Way Approach. Accessed June 1, 2015.

elite “gives way to broad popular participation in policy making.(112)⁷⁸

This resistance and the varying discourses between the CTA and the external groups are apparent in that the Tibetan Government in Exile has continuously and purposely downplayed and ignored the role and even the existence of the armed resistance group in the early history of the Tibetan resistance as it doesn't fit into the image of non-violence and peace that it is projecting globally and also with the current official position of seeking peaceful reconciliation with China.⁷⁹ Yet, pro-Independence activist groups have begun to fit these in to their narratives of the Tibetan resistance highlighting that there patience for the CTA's strategies are slowly diminishing while the youth look for other methods to contribute to the Tibetan movement. This is not to say that the radicalizing groups are necessarily looking to seek armed guerrilla resistance but other means not just limited to trying to have dialogues with the Chinese government.

⁷⁸ Venturino, Steven. "Reading Negotiations in the Tibetan Diaspora." *Constructing Tibetan Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, 1997, pg. 112

⁷⁹ McGranahan, Carole. *Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War*. Durham [NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This thesis has sought to situate the role of the Tibetan leadership in exile in to the ethnic bargaining framework to understand how its behavior is successfully resisting the influence of outside actors within the diaspora. In the Tibetan case, the existence of and the dependence on the Dalai Lama along with the lack of a strong collective lobby actor bucks the dynamics of ethnic bargaining. Though this case does not directly fit in to the triad of the minority, majority and the external lobby; the emphasis on the CTA as the minority leader and the wider diaspora as the external lobby has allowed us to shed a light on cases where the minority leadership has been successful in ignoring radicalizing influence from the diaspora. This suggests that a minority group that has a charismatic religious leader or is able to frame their arguments or demands around that of religious ideals for which a strong devotion exists in the minority population is able to successfully resist the influence of outside lobby actors who might not necessarily confirm with the demands and the strategies of the minority leadership.

Till now, the CTA has successfully been able to resist the influences of radicalizing groups within the Tibetan diaspora to change its policies but the tides might have begun to shift in the coming future. With self-immolations continuously taking place in Tibet and the increasing mobilization and dissatisfaction among the Tibetan youth and other groups suggesting a change in policies along with the aging Dalai Lama, it might finally be time for the CTA to consider the interests of the outside actors work together possibly to bargain more effectively with the Chinese government. This disunity within the Tibetan diaspora makes it difficult to reach any bargaining offer that seems legitimate. With the CTA strongly campaigning for the MWA and activist groups resorting to protests and other forms of grassroots activism for independence

allows the Chinese government as it has always done to debunk the MWA as a farce policy of seeking separatism in disguise.

Changes need to come not only for the CTA but the outside actors also could mobilize stronger by uniting in to one collective group to make it difficult for the CTA to resist its influence. These groups promoting independence and suggesting that the main goal of the Tibetan diaspora is their fight for regaining the motherland or a nation separate from Chinese rule seem to have already realized that and have begun discussions to further strengthen their campaign. An International Rangzen Conference was recently hosted in New Delhi which saw Tibetan students, activists, and community leaders around the world gather to re-affirm their stance for independence. Further an observer pointed out that unlike the older generation, the youth do not see a contradiction in standing for policies that are different from the one proposed by the Dalai Lama.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Yangchen, Phuntsok. "International Rangzen Conference Re-affirms Rangzen Stance." Phayul. May 26, 2015. Accessed May 30, 2015. [http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?article=International Rangzen Conference re-affirms Rangzen stance&id=36079](http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?article=International%20Rangzen%20Conference%20re-affirms%20Rangzen%20stance&id=36079).

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