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„GNH, GNH. GNH - Oh God, it is so confusing. This GNH has me totally baffled. The more I think about it, the more I am convinced that the principles of GNH are the antithesis to GPH - Gross Personal Happiness.“

(Dorji 2011)

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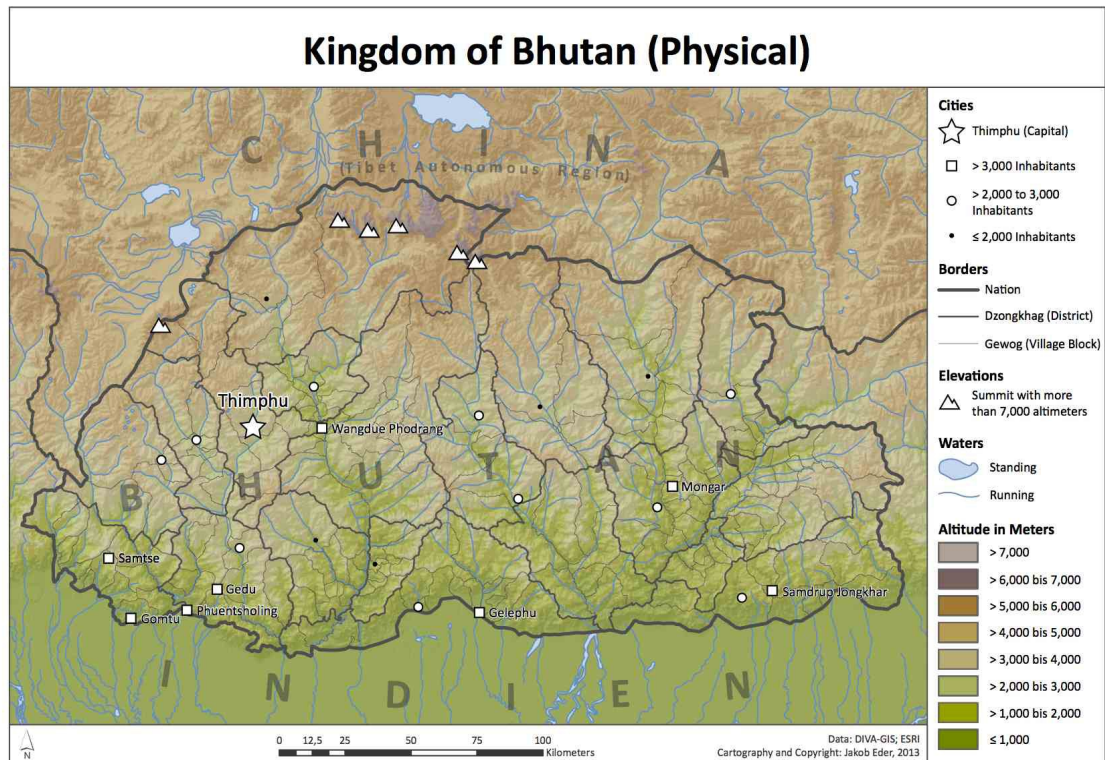


Figure 1: Map of the Kingdom of Bhutan (Eder 2013)

1 Introduction

The story goes as follows. In the 1970s¹, a small group of journalists was given entry into the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. The journalists had the opportunity to meet the fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, and one of them asked the king: “How big is the annual Gross Domestic Product of Bhutan?” It was 50 US-Dollars, the lowest value in the ranking; the journalist had known this before. The king of Bhutan answered: “I am not so much interested in the Gross Domestic Product. Gross National Happiness is more important than the Gross National Product” (Rutland, quoted in Walter 2009: 70).

The first reference to Gross National Happiness (GNH) was the starting point of a development idea that evolved from a mere philosophical guideline into a scientific index and concrete policy programs. Bhutan’s development concept has received widespread attention all over the world as an indigenous idea and an alternative to existing development paradigms.

Despite its great success, there are some critical voices as well. People on the streets of Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan, sometimes refer to GNH as “Gross National Hypocrisy” and some measures meant to increase GNH, like the discussion about mandatory wearing of the traditional dress in public at all times, from a European perspective seem like an “enforcement” of happiness.

The inspiration for this paper came from a journalistic visit to Bhutan in 2011, where I researched the concept of GNH. In conversations with Bhutanese citizens and during several interviews with ministers and other officials, it sometimes seemed that the strive towards collective happiness was given more importance than the individual freedom of the people. The idea for the topic of the thesis thus did not originate from literature, but from experiences in Bhutan. In order to examine this relationship scientifically, I dedicated my final thesis to it.

This paper starts with an overview of how happiness emerged as a development factor and gives an overview over different concepts of freedom. Amartya Sen’s work on development as freedom is the basis for the definition of freedom used in this paper and thus is discussed in a separate chapter. In order to combine the two major approaches in this paper, freedom and happiness, their relationship is examined through the findings of research of the past years. Even though GNH is not synonym with “Western” perceptions of happiness, they still have their role in GNH and therefore I included the discussions on correlations between happiness and freedom. The chapters about the universality of values and individualism and collectivism

¹ The exact year differs across sources.

are of importance, as I am writing this paper as a European with corresponding values. These chapters are meant to reflect on this factor and open a broader field of analysis.

The theoretical part is followed by a chapter about Bhutan, describing its geography, history and political system. In order to understand the concept of GNH, background knowledge about Bhutan is essential, as the development of some ideas related to GNH were clearly influenced by specifics of the Bhutanese context. The chapter also includes culture and religion, since GNH is strongly influenced by those issues. Furthermore, I discuss the Bhutanese society and economy.

The chapter about Gross National Happiness explains the development of the concept from a philosophical idea into a scientifically measurable index, corresponding initiatives and a related ministry. I also discuss briefly the results of the first nationwide GNH survey that was conducted in 2010.

The last chapter brings together what has been discussed before and combines it with empirical data that were collected for this paper. Including interviews with Bhutanese officials, an examination of the GNH Index and content analysis of the discussions led on a Bhutanese Facebook group, it brings together eclectic voices to enable a multifaceted view on the issues of individual freedom and collective happiness.

1.1 Research Interest and Contextualization

What happiness is and how to achieve it are questions that scientists and philosophers have been trying to answer for hundreds of years. There is no consensus about it and most likely, there never will be (Frey/Frey Marti 2010: 10f).

Many states are trying to play a vital role in enabling their citizens' pursue for happiness, but the means differ substantially. The pursuit of happiness as stipulated in the constitution of the United States of America is obviously not the same form of happiness as Gross National Happiness in Bhutan.

In Europe, the pursuit of happiness in Europe was for a long time related to restraining the sovereign's powers vis a vis the individual (Frey/Frey Marti 2010: 10f). Bhutan makes the happiness of its citizens explicitly a responsibility of the state:

„- The State shall strive to promote those conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness.

- The State shall endeavour to create a civil society free of oppression,

discrimination and violence, based on the rule of law, protection of human rights and dignity, and to ensure the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people“

(Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008: Art. 9.2; 9.3).

The meta-level question underlying this thesis is about the relation between private and public, about the individual and the collective. On a philosophical level it is the question which form this relation takes on when the happiness of individuals becomes a public concern.

Historical approaches to this question have been made by Hobbes, Mill and Bentham, who elaborated on the pursuit of happiness and the state's role in helping the individual following their path towards happiness. A modern approach is the Human Development Index of the United Nations, which established a broader definition of development that centered around the opportunities of the individual instead of focusing exclusively on the economic progress of a nation.

As mentioned before, this paper is written from a specific point of view and reference. Even though science tries to achieve objectivity by using reproducible techniques and transparency, it can never be entirely objective. Every scientist is influenced by the culture and beliefs they inherit and they should be aware of this limitation of objectivity. Nevertheless, apart from working with acknowledged scientific methods and accuracy, I tried to counteract a eurocentric view by balancing out literature sources.

I think it is essential to scrutinize one's own perspective, but I also believe that an outside perspective can contribute to opening up a broader field of discussion.

1.2 Research Questions

The focus of this paper is determined by the title:

Q: What is the role of individual freedom in the strive towards collective happiness in Bhutan?

In order to answer this broad and philosophical question and to better operationalize the question, I divide it into sub-questions .

Q1: What is the definition of “freedom” within the GNH Index?

I want to analyze what place freedom has in the GNH Index, whether it is explicitly mentioned or implicit in some of the components or the design of the index. The answer to this question relates to the question which definition of freedom seems relevant for policy makers in Bhutan.

Q2: Does the state interfere with the personal freedom of individuals?

This question is relevant, since the Bhutanese constitution explicitly calls the state an actor who “(...) shall strive to promote those conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness” (Art. 9.2.).

Q3: What is the public discourse about freedom and GNH in Bhutan?

To answer questions two and three, I analyzed postings in a Facebook group that was established after the first person was convicted under the controversial Tobacco Control Act of 2010. The analysis shows how the members of the Facebook group perceive state control in this situation and whether the arguments mentioned the role of individual freedom. Interviews with representatives of state institutions also help to answer the questions.

1.3 Current State of Research

Happiness and freedom contested issues in contemporary science. They are both highly ideological terms and thus subject to different interpretations. This, one has to keep in mind when reading this paper, which includes discussions that may sometimes contradict each other.

For this paper, works considered essential for an approximation of an implicit definition of freedom were “Development as Freedom” by Amartya Sen and articles and papers by Veenhoven and Frey, who are also experts on the relationship of freedom with happiness. This relationship has also been studied extensively by Inglehart.

Even though they play a minor role in this paper, I want to mention happiness measures currently in use across countries, specifically the Gallup World Poll, the World Values Survey,

and the European Social Survey. The World Happiness Database by Veenhoven provides an extensive range of data over various happiness surveys.

Up to date scientific contributions about Bhutan by a variety of Western and Non-Western scholars can be found on the official websites of Gross National Happiness and the Center for Bhutan Studies. The most prominent Bhutanese scholar, Karma Ura, has written about the history and society of Bhutan and was significantly involved in the planning and implementation process of the Gross National Happiness Index. Due to the rapid changes in Bhutan, earlier publications about the country are out of date because they do not portray modern Bhutan adequately. This refers especially to books about the political system of Bhutan, which changed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in 2008. Nevertheless, the work of Aris for example enables a historical evaluation of current processes.

Daily information about Bhutan is available at the websites of Bhutanese newspapers Kuensel, the Bhutanese and Bhutan Observer, as well as the national broadcaster BBS.

The keywords for literature research I conducted revolved around the topics of happiness, capabilities, freedom, well-being, liberty, Bhutan and Gross National Happiness.

2 Theoretical Background

This chapter gives an overview over the development of happiness as a guiding factor in development and about concepts of freedom with a special emphasis on Amartya Sen's work on development as freedom. Further, it explains the relation between freedom and happiness and discusses the related topics of the universality of values and the role of individualism/collectivism.

2.1 Happiness as a Development Factor

In the theoretical field of development studies, the idea, that mere economic growth is not an appropriate tool to measure a country's national development progress, has been widely discussed. Only in the past few years this idea of trying to find broader indicators for development has made its way into mainstream politics though. It might well be that the ongoing discourse about happiness and alternative development factors in the past years may constitute a shift in development paradigms for the future. Therefore this chapter gives an overview over how happiness emerged as a development factor and discusses current initiatives that deal with an alternative idea of development.

Making happiness the desirable outcome of a society's development is not a new idea. John Steward Mill and Jeremy Bentham pursued the idea of Utilitarianism, which expected people to act in a way to produce the greatest aggregate happiness for all. The moral good of an act was to be measured in terms of the resulting increase in total happiness. In the 19th century, the major drawback to the approach of maximizing social welfare in the name of Utilitarianism was that the social welfare function could not be measured (Frey/Stutzer 2007: 2).

Nowadays, many options exist to measure happiness or the subjective well-being of people. From the most basic – a questionnaire that asks people to rate their perceptive personal well-being on a scale – to complex research designs combining subjective evaluations with functional MRI measurements of the brain (ibid.).

While the potential to measure subjective well-being has risen, mainstream development policy has focused on economic progress a majority of the time. While well-being is still a major driver for economic theories, the means of economic growth seem to have become the ends in the past couple of decades.

Economic data like countries' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is used as an indicator for development of nations. The benefit of measuring development in such a way is that GDP aggregates the added value of all money-based economic activities. It is based on a clear methodology and thus allows comparisons over time and between countries and regions. Happiness on the other hand is more individual and less easy to compare (COM 2009: 2).

GDP comes from a time when material production was considered essential to our conception of the future, but in recent years, the perception that GDP is not an appropriate indicator for societal and national well-being, has grown stronger. The GDP measures the size of the economy of a country, but since the Second World War it has been used to measure the welfare of a nation – even though originally it was never intended to do so. Simon Kuznets, one of the creators of GDP, explicitly said it should never be used to measure the welfare of a nation (Kuznets 1934: 7).

GDP is an indicator that does not differentiate causes of its growth or decline. It grows even when other outcomes, like the effect on the environment, are negative. The faster we cut down a forest, the quicker the economy grows, but the externalized costs may in fact be negative contributors to human well-being. Coleman (in McDonald 2010: 13f) criticizes what he calls the misuse of GDP as a qualitative tool used to describe welfare, because it is in fact a quantitative tool. Mere GDP also leaves out how wealth is distributed.

When the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) launched the first Human Development Report (HDR) in 1990, their goal was to put people back in the center of the development process. The well-being of the people, not that of the economy, should become the main concern of development policies. The first HDR also stressed that the goals of development should be enabling choices and freedoms (see UNDP 1990).

As a more comprehensive measuring tool for development, the Human Development Index (HDI) was constructed. Still, the HDI faces similar criticism as GDP in one way – the index also focuses on quantitative aspects of development, like mean years of schooling or Gross National Income per capita. Thereby it ignores qualitative aspects of development. Another point of critique is that the HDI by its very nature is an universally applicable index – thus being unable to accommodate cultural or regional diversity (Whitehouse/Winderl 2004: 395).

One man who shaped the form of the HDRs and the HDI was the Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen. His work on human development is also important for the definition of freedom in this paper and will be discussed later on.

The HDI and the HDRs were international projects, but in recent years, several national initiatives started to promote happiness as a factor in human development as well. In Great

Britain, Prime Minister David Cameron in 2010 entrusted the Office for National Statistics with finding out how happy the country is (Rogers 2011). The twelfth Five Year Plan (2011-2015) of the Chinese National People's Congress also aimed at “(...) *ensuring and improving the people's wellbeing* (...) [as] *an inevitable requirement of carrying out scientific development and promoting social harmony* (...)“ (NPC 2011). Apart from Bhutan, which constitutes a special case in this matter, I want to discuss the so-called “Stieglitz Report” in France as an example for a national initiative concerning happiness policies.

The report, which is titled “Mismeasuring Our Lives. Why GDP Doesn't Add Up”, was initiated in 2008 by then President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy to “(...) *align better the metrics of well-being with what actually contributes to the quality of life*” (Stiglitz/Sen/Fitoussi 2010: xvii). The authors argue that it is time to “(...) *shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people's well-being*” (ibid: 10).

The report is essentially a recommendation to redefine the measurement of development and progress of a country. Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi (2010: 15) identify eight key dimensions that should be taken into account when trying to define well-being:

- 1) Material living standards (income, consumption and wealth);
- 2) Health;
- 3) Education;
- 4) Personal activities (including work);
- 5) Political voice and governance;
- 6) Social connections and relationships;
- 7) Environment (present and future conditions);
- 8) Insecurity (of an economic as well as physical nature).

We will later see that the key points of this multidimensional definition can all be found – though partly under different denominations – in the Bhutanese Gross National Happiness Index as well.

An initiative that makes an effort to catalogue empirical findings of happiness research is the World Database of Happiness by the Dutch scholar Ruut Veenhoven. The database includes more than 5000 surveys for 166 countries and allows to rank countries according to their happiness levels and lists other indicators related to happiness. The World Database of Happiness is one of the most extensive overviews over current happiness evaluation data (World Database of Happiness 2012).

In 2012, the first “World Happiness Report”, commissioned by the United Nations, was published. Again, the intention was to examine the paradox of ever growing material wealth

and at the same time the rising figures of “ills of modern life” like depression, obesity and diabetes. The report analyses the state of world happiness, causes of happiness and misery and puts forward some policy implications of the findings (Helliwell/Layard/Sachs 2012).

The report challenges the traditional notion of happiness as something very subjective that is too vague to be translated into policy objectives. Instead, the authors point out that happiness, though admittedly a subjective experience, can be and has been objectively measured by a variety of scientists such as psychologists, economists and sociologists. They argue that reports on subjective well-being can offer important information about societies at large and can give impulses for policy change (Helliwell/Layard/Sachs 2012: 6).

The intensified focus on happiness as a development factor also leads to the scrutinization of the relationship between happiness and human development. Whitehouse and Windler (2004: 398) point out that this relationship is not straightforward. According to the authors, differences in demographic characteristics, like income or occupation status, explain little of the variation in people’s levels of subjective well-being.

Another point that has been made is the lack of definition of “happiness”. Firstly, the terms “subjective well-being”, “life satisfaction” and “happiness” are often used interchangeably in the literature. Secondly, definitions vary over time and across theoretical positions. In modern philosophy, the Benthamite concept of happiness as a hedonistic concept seems to be rejected by philosophers and economists like Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, who favor concepts more related to Plato’s and Aristotle’s concept of *eudamonia*, i.e. the study of a fruitful human life (see Frey 2011: 398f).

All these points give an overview over the ongoing discussions on a more comprehensive methodology to measure prosperity and well-being. The question remains, why there has been such an obvious increase in the search for alternative indicators of human development in the past years.

One prominent thesis was put forward by Easterlin. The Easterlin Paradoxon suggests that increases in real per capita income do not correspond with well-being after a certain threshold. More specifically, what Easterlin noted was that in the United States, while richer individuals are happier than poorer ones at any given time, the society at large did not become happier as it became richer (Easterlin 1974).

Veenhoven sees the recent interest in happiness founded in the existence of multiple-choice societies: “*When there is nothing to choose in life, there is no need to wonder if you are happy or not. Once you are able to choose, you wonder which way of life will make you most happy*” (Veenhoven in McDonald 2010: 34).

This view is supported by findings by Whitehouse and Winderl (2004: 403). The authors show in a study that “(...) *the three highest correlations of happiness for high HDI countries (...) scored amongst the very lowest in the low HDI countries (...). Conversely, the top three correlations for the low HDI countries (...) were amongst the low correlations of the high HDI group (...)*”.

Furthermore, they found that indicators that are seen as being contributors to happiness by authors like Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi (2010) are in fact negatively correlated with happiness in some low HDI countries. Their study shows that education, adult literacy and life expectancy for example have a negative correlation with happiness in these cases (Whitehouse/Winderl 2004: 403).

Their conclusion is that the great number of high correlations in low HDI countries may indicate that those countries cannot provide the opportunity to choose one's means to happiness while high HDI countries allow diversity in expressions of happiness (ibid.).

This relates to the topic of the next chapter – the role of freedom.

2.2 Concepts of Freedom

Like “happiness”, “freedom” is neither a neutral nor a universal word. It is a diffuse term that can be and has been defined in a diversity of ways. Although this thesis focuses on Amartya Sen’s concept of capabilities as enhancements of personal freedom, I find it useful to briefly discuss other concepts of freedom and the role of freedom in Buddhism in this chapter. Thereby the reader should be enabled to compare how different definitions of “freedom” would lead to different outcomes concerning the question of the relationship of individual freedom to the strive towards collective happiness.

Freedom on a national level exists in various shapes. There is economic freedom in regard to the way the financial system is regulated. Political freedom presupposes that there must be a political system that one is able to participate in. Furthermore the state is also an important actor in guaranteeing private freedom, like the freedom to practice religion, freedom of movement and freedom to choose one’s lifestyle.

Especially in the development context, freedom has often been used in an economic and political context. The liberalization of markets and trade is linked to the push towards political freedom in the form of democracy, that is seen to allow greater economic freedom (see Fischer et al. 2006).

In liberalist theory, freedom is regarded as the ultimate goal, and therefore more important than happiness. In a liberalist society, every individual shall be able to decide what happiness means for themselves. “Freedom of choice” here is defined as a negative freedom, meaning that it has to be protected from interference² (Frey/Frey Marti 2010: 11f; Hirata 2003: 127).

It is assumed that under liberal conditions, people make choices that benefit their well-being, but as research has shown, individuals not always act in their own (or general) best interest. They find it hard to evaluate to which extent future activities and goods will raise their happiness (Frey 2011: 408).

In economics, choices within the frame of a state can be described with the Pareto principle. A social state is described as Pareto optimal if no-one’s utility can be raised without reducing the utility of somebody else. So it assumes, for example, that the poor cannot become richer without the rich sacrificing some of their wealth. The question is what is better for an individual. If an individual has to choose between two different alternatives, is the alternative better which the individual chooses or the one which is better for the individual?

² Negative freedom defines freedom through the absence of external restrictions while positive freedom is generated by adding power and resources.

Grenholm (2011: 44) argues, that while many economists may favor the “choice”-alternative, one has to keep in mind that preferences are not always based on the best information available and thorough consideration.

Therefore it is generally considered that a form of organization, like that of a state requires guidelines. The republican-liberalist view does not assume that people always choose in their own best interest, but rather aims at creating conditions under which people have the possibility to do so. The precondition for this view is that people be responsible members of the state and subordinate their own interests to the condition of public legitimacy. While this may be seen as an interference with personal freedom from a strictly libertarian point of view, the republican-liberalist theory does not view these measures as limitation of one’s freedom. Restrictions on individual freedom are thus seen as legitimate when the restrictions themselves are manifestations of free choice, thus, when they arise from a democratic consensus (Hirata 2003: 127ff).

This applies for any nation state, but probably has even more importance for a state that tries to enhance the happiness of its population via political measures. It is more likely that for Bhutan the concept of libertarian paternalism plays a greater role.

Thaler and Sunstein (2003: 175) claim that there are no viable alternatives to paternalism: *“In many situations, some organization or agent must make a choice that will affect the choices of some other people.”* They advocate what they call “libertarian paternalism”, an approach that challenges the notion of paternalism necessarily involving coercion. In this view, institutions are authorized to guide people towards making choices that will enhance their welfare and well-being, while at the same time maintaining freedom of choice (ibid. 175f).

Frey (2011: 408) also seems to advocate the idea of “soft paternalism” which suggests that people should be able to choose from a range of variables but the variables should be presented in such a way that the individuals are induced to choose what is (apparently) best for them. An example for this is whether people can opt in or out of organ donations. It is proven that more people will chose to donate their organs if the choice is presented as opt-out (i.e. organs will be donated unless otherwise stated). The problem with this approach is that it implicitly assumes a benevolent paternalistic government.

Another option to analyze the relationship between the state and the freedoms of individuals from a liberalist paternalistic approach is to look at the “positive freedoms” a state offers. In this case the state does not solemnly protect the individual’s freedom from illegitimate coercion, it also has to provide opportunities of choice (Hirata 2003: 127).

The Buddhist relationship with freedom is different from approaches like Sen's belief in the intrinsic value of freedom (see chapter 2.3). Other than freedom from oppression and coercion, it is freedom from one's own negative emotions that is sought after. The importance of freedom thus is to liberate oneself from the sufferings of human existence (Interview Ura 2011).

The idea of Karma is that all actions cause reactions and the world has to be viewed in a holistic way. In a world where everything is interdependent then, one can never be truly "free". The freedom that matters in this view comes from inside a person. The mind has to be freed and attachment has to be reduced in order to overcome suffering.

Transferring this idea into a state guiding philosophy, Tashi (in McDonald 2010: 28) says: *"(...) we really have to educate and enlighten our citizens so that they can make the right choices. To deliver this service is very important from a Buddhist point of view."*

Freedom and autonomy thus are seen as individual self-government, but with guidelines and help from the state. This relates to Rössler's view of individual freedom:

"Autonomy can be understood as the capacity to reflect critically on one's wishes and desires, one's plans and projects, one's commitments and therefore to be able to revise (at least) aspects of one's self which constitute one's practical identity, to act, that is, only on those desires which one endorses after critical reflection" (Rössler 2002: 163).

I agree with what has been said about libertarian paternalism to the extent that when great numbers of people are organized in the form of a nation state, this institution of the state needs to play a vital rule for decision making processes and providing freedoms and opportunities, while safeguarding that these will not interfere with the freedom of other people (e.g. laws that prohibit discrimination). What I find essential though is that in such a state people need to be given the right and the opportunities to participate in national decision making processes.

2.3 Amartya Sen: Development as Freedom

“Freedom” is a term that has many definitions. In this paper I focus on Amartya Sen’s work on “capabilities”, which shall be examined here.

In his standard work “Development as Freedom”, Amartya Sen elaborates on his vision of development. Sen (1999: xii) sees the expansion of freedom “(...) *both as the primary end and as the principal means of development*”.

In this view, “[d]evelopment (...) *is the process of expanding human freedoms, and the assessment of development has to be informed by this consideration*” (Sen 1999: 36).

Freedom for Sen comes in the form by capabilities, which are the substantive freedoms one should have to lead a life one has reason to value and enhance the choices one has. “*A person’s ‘capability’ refers to the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for her to achieve. Capability is thus a kind of freedom: the substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations (or, less formally put, the freedom to achieve various lifestyles)*” (Sen 1999: 75).

They therefore are the primary goods a persons holds and additionally relevant personal characteristics that govern the conversion of primary goods into the person’s ability to promote her ends. Development therefore is constituted by the freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations from which a person can choose (Sen 1999: 74f).

The capabilities approach, as opposed to standard analyses, is not concerned with personal decisions. Whether someone actually decides to make use of the choices available or not is of minor concern, what matters is whether an unrestricted choice was available in the first place (Johnson 2004: 466).

In other words: having food, shelter and money does not create happiness, but they offer the opportunity to reach it. Coleman (in McDonald 2010: 20) conducted a survey about values, in which financial security was ranked as much more important than material wealth. This shows that in accord with Sen’s theory, the conditions for happiness are what is most important.

Sen (1999: 16; 37) sees freedom in the forms of political liberty and civil rights not only as important in terms of their effects on the economy, but he stresses its direct importance. Not only the instrumental value counts, but also the intrinsic importance of freedom.

Sen distinguishes the process aspect and the opportunity aspect of freedom. While processes allow freedom of actions and decisions, opportunities are what people have, given their personal and social circumstances. Both aspects are seen as important:

“The process aspect of freedom would have to be considered in addition to the opportunity aspect, and the opportunity aspect itself has to be viewed in terms of intrinsic as well as derivative importance. Furthermore, freedom to participate in public discussion and social interaction can also have a constructive role in the formation of values and ethics” (Sen 1999: 292).

In Sen’s opinion, a set of instrumental freedoms constitutes the overall freedom people enjoy. He names political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. Political freedoms are the opportunities that people have to decide who should govern them and other forms of freedom like press freedom, freedom to vote and the opportunity to choose from a range of political parties. Economic freedom exists in the form of availability and distribution of resources, and the availability to finance. Social opportunities are factors like education, health care and similar facilities. Transparency is achieved by trust and anti-corruption measures, while security is defined as a social safety net (Sen 1999: 38ff).

These different forms of freedom are interconnected and complementary. Political freedoms like free speech and elections contribute to promoting economic security. Social opportunities like education facilitate economic participation, and so on (Sen 1999: 11).

Like the different aspects of freedom, Sen (1999: 296) also attributes various roles to capabilities. They have a direct relevance to the well-being and freedom of the people, but also play an indirect role through influencing social change and economic production.

As Sen’s work is about development, it is also about the success of a society. This is to be evaluated, in his view, primarily through the substantive freedoms that its members have. In this point Sen’s theory differs from the focus of more traditional normative approaches, which put other factors in the center, like real income or utility (Sen 1999: 18; 37).

Sen’s approach is different from utilitarianism in the way that it does not only concentrate on achievements, but actually focuses on means to achieve desirable goals (see Grenholm 2011: 49). In utilitarian theory, significant matters like individual freedom or fundamental human rights are only useful in their effect on the desired outcome (e.g. mental satisfaction, pleasure or happiness). Sen (1999: 56ff) emphasizes the intrinsic value of freedom.

Another limit to the hedonistic idea of happiness is that it does not take into account the equality and distribution of happiness. In utilitarian theory, the greatest overall happiness is of most importance – but according to Grenholm (2011: 47) this cannot be accepted from the perspective of a principle of human dignity.

The capabilities concept is also not to be mistaken for a libertarian approach. Freedom in

Sen's definition has to exist within certain boundaries. Firstly, capabilities are restricted by the scale of the world population and by the finite ecology on earth. Those natural boundaries have to be respected, otherwise it would not be possible to utilize the capabilities. Secondly, absolute freedom is not possible per se. For example, one cannot choose to fly or not to sleep, and the moral aspect of the concept would not be possible in a world of absolute freedom, where one had the freedom of killing other people for example (Jackson 2009: 7; Veenhoven 2000: 259).

Sen describes libertarianism as having no interest in happiness or desire fulfillment. The informational base in libertarian theory consists entirely of liberties and rights of various kinds, therefore showing a deficit in diversity. The capability approach on the other hand promotes theoretical inclusiveness and argues for the enlargement of informational spaces in normative assessments (Sen 1999: 57; Comim 2005: 161).

One benefit of the capabilities approach is its extensiveness, which in theory allows a broad definition and a dynamic shape of development. In terms of operationalization though, this can be an obstacle. Veenhoven (2000: 280) names as measures of capabilities to choose the awareness of alternatives, a person's inclination to choose (because whether people act or not partly depends on their values and beliefs) and the courage to choose (since inclination sometimes is not enough if a choice is contested). He also argues that capabilities cannot be measured exhaustively to include all possible restrictions and varieties though.

Sen acknowledges that extensive coverage of a wide range of relevant freedoms can be seen as a problem and that metrically measuring capabilities might hide more than it would reveal. The capabilities approach has been criticized for not providing feasible operational metrics for evaluating human well-being – and thus, operationalization is seen as obstacle to the development as freedom approach. Sen argues though that evaluating capabilities is possible by establishing so-called functioning vectors, that provide information on the options a person has to choose from (Sen 1999: 24; 74ff; Comim 2005: 162)

In practice, the state plays an important role in helping individuals realizing their capabilities. Opportunities and prospects of individuals depend on the availability and functionality of institutions. That being said, Sen (1999: 142) argues in favor of viewing all institutions, like the market, the media and the democratic system, together rather than examining their effects individually. In his eyes, it is necessary to be aware of their interdependence in order to analyze their contribution to people's freedoms.

The question is therefore on which scope interventions by the state are legitimate in order to provide individuals with appropriate opportunities. While "positive" interventions like

provision of social services are rather uncontroversial, the question remains whether “negative” interventions that impair some freedoms in order to provide specific opportunities can ever be justified (see Follesdal 2005: 273). This issue relates to the question the relationship between individual and collective interests, which will be discussed in the following chapters.

One more subject of interest is Sen’s criticism not only of libertarianism but also of happiness itself as an indicator for well-being. In a 1985 paper, he makes an argument that is worth to be quoted in full length:

“(…) [H]appiness has two basic problems in its claim to stand for well-being. First, as it is interpreted in the utilitarian tradition, happiness is basically a mental state, and it ignores other aspects of a person’s well-being. If a starving wreck, ravished by famine, buffeted by disease, is made happy through some mental conditioning (say, via the “opium” of religion), the person will be seen as doing well on this mental-state perspective, but that would be quite scandalous. Second, as a mental-state concept, the perspective of happiness may give a very limited view of other mental activities. There are mental state [sic!] other than being just happy, such as stimulation, excitement, etc., which are of direct relevance to a person’s well-being. Furthermore, mental activities involve evaluation of one’s life – a reflective exercise – and the role of evaluation in the identification of the person’s well-being obviously cannot be seen in terms merely of the happiness that such reflection itself creates. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that although happiness is of obvious and direct relevance to well-being, it is inadequate as a representation of well-being” (Sen 1985: 188f).

While Sen is a critic of the use of well-being as an indicator for development, happiness and capabilities are two interdependent concepts. Veenhoven (2009: 350) found that capability is usually conducive to happiness, while happiness enhances capability. He argues that the neglect of happiness in capability theory derives from the fact that happiness as a biological signal is typically absent in philosophical reflection on happiness.

Comim examines the relationship between the capabilities approach and the subjective well-being (happiness) approach, in order to find out where they differ and in which ways they overlap. The most obvious difference is that the capabilities approach lays emphasis on freedom, autonomy and agency, while subjective well-being evaluates people’s own perceptions without focusing on any particular aspect (Comim 2005: 165).

Veenhoven (2009: 346) found that answer to the question, which capabilities are

conductive to happiness, differs according to the level of analysis. At the societal level, the relationship between capabilities and average happiness of the citizens is more important, while at the individual level the focus is on the relationship between skills and subjective happiness of particular persons. For example, he found that IQ is related to happiness at the societal level, but not at the individual level.

Sen's critique about subjective well-being for Comim (2005: 167) is related to the fear of paternalistic policies leading to the denial of individuals' autonomous nature in the name of utilitarian policies. The emphasis on autonomy, in his argument, threatens to be ignored by using happiness as an indicator for well-being.

Comim (2005: 164) argues that the subjective well-being approach and the capabilities approach could draw on each other in order to balance out each approaches' shortcomings:

"(...) both capabilities and happiness are simple constituents of particular informational spaces that reveal dimensions of HWB [human well-being, author's note]. This means that neither capabilities nor happiness as informational spaces might always provide the exclusive answer for the problem of assessing HWB."

He points out that while the capability approach sees subjective metrics as problematic due to adaptive preferences (Sen 1999: 62), it may not even be desirable to eliminate subjectivity in participatory exercises such as the evaluation of human well-being. Another open question is how one should "negotiate" among different informational spaces and theories that arise from the capabilities approaches' enlargement of informational spaces (Comim 2005: 163).

Another critical argument is that the capabilities approach uses ethical universalism (Grenholm 2011: 51), which will be discussed in chapter 2.6.

2.4 Freedom and Happiness

Since I have discussed the relationship between the capabilities approach and subjective well-being in the previous chapter, it is also of importance to discuss the relationship between freedom and happiness in general. Multiple studies have tried to analyze this difficult relationship that exists between two variables that are subject to a diversity of (sometimes contradictory) definitions and interpretations. This chapter aims to give an overview over some of the debates.

Well-being or happiness is affected by several life dimensions. Biological, economic, biographical, social, cognitive and cultural preconditions influence a person's perception of their own life and therefore their happiness level. One key factor influencing happiness is freedom.

In a study by Veenhoven (2000: 263), happiness measures appear to be highly correlated with individualism, human rights and the emancipation of women; there is also a firm correlation with perceived freedom.

Inglehart et al. (2008: 270) come to a similar conclusion. In a study they proclaim that a growing feeling of free choice explains about thirty per cent of the change over time in subjective well-being and thus is the most important factor for the change in subjective well-being by far.

The World Happiness Report reports that the top four countries in average national happiness are significantly more likely to have a sense of freedom, at 94 per cent, whereas only 64 per cent of people in the bottom four countries reported a sense of freedom (Helliwell/Layard/Sachs 2012: 13).

The impact of freedom on happiness thus seems to be important. That being said, the freedom a person can experience is subject to some limitations, most obviously the inevitable constraints of the human condition (e.g. the impossibility to decide to live without breathing). Freedom defined as the possibility to choose is a concept in which absolute freedom is not possible. The question is, though, to which degree the possibility to choose is limited (Veenhoven 2000: 259).

In some way this also relates to the negative effect freedom can have on happiness: *“We can have a happy life but one that is not very useful – you can enjoy yourself but ruin the earth”* (Veenhoven in McDonald 2010: 39).

A key question related to freedom and happiness is concerned with national differences. Some countries are reportedly happier than others and the reasons for these differences are

manifold. The following figure, from Inglehart et al. (2008: 275), shows how a sense of free choice and subjective well-being are related over time across countries. The data for the figure comes from representative national surveys carried out from 1981 to 2007, thus encompassing a significant period.

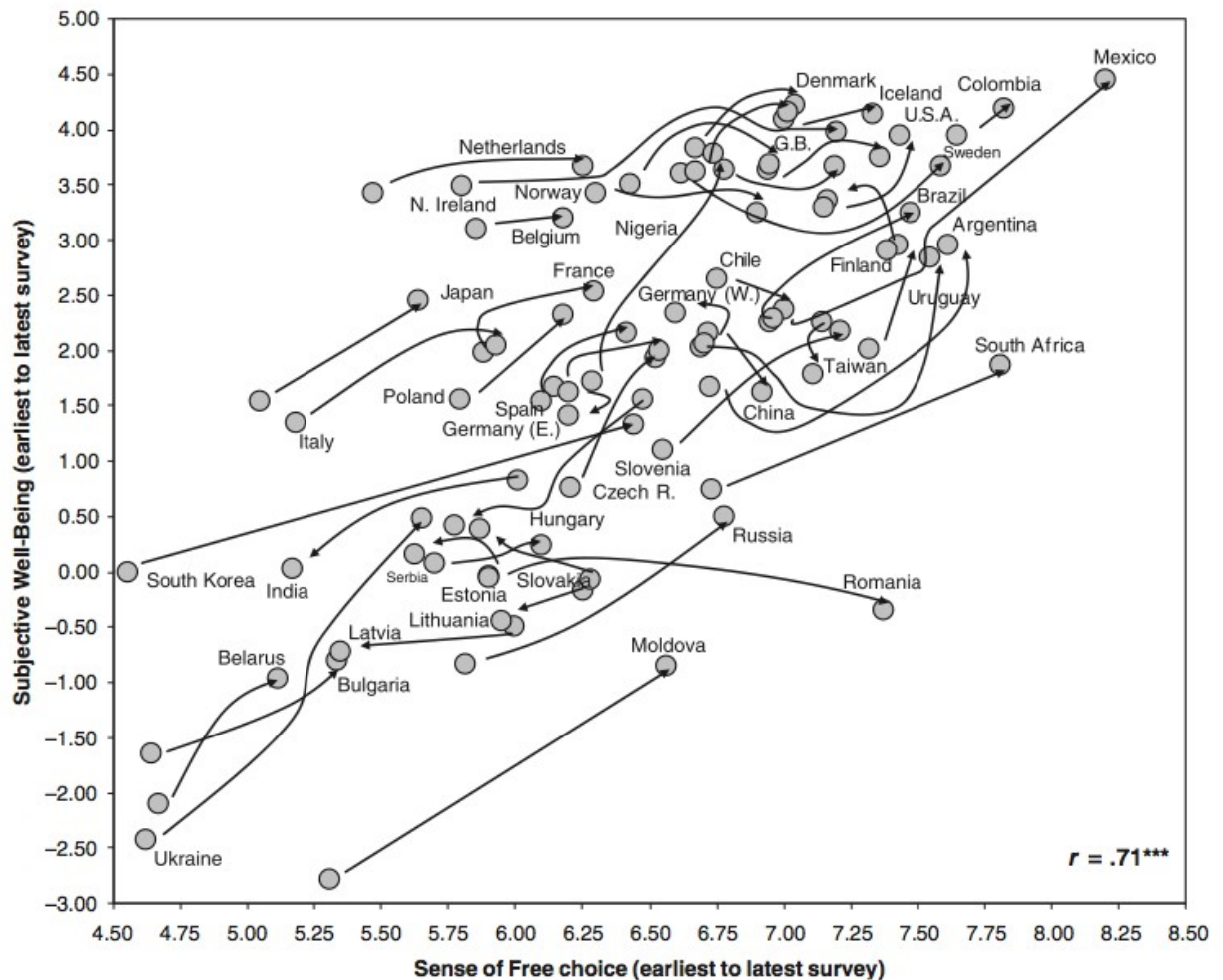


Figure 2: Relationship of Sense of Free Choice and Subjective Well-being, 1981 to 2007 (Inglehart et al. 2008: 275)

The figure shows how a greater sense of free choice almost always leads to a rise in reported subjective well-being. The question is though whether all countries put equal emphasis on the importance of freedom for happiness.

Kitayama and Markus (2000: 113ff) argue that while in many American cultural contexts, the personal pursuit of happiness is regarded as most important, in many East Asian cultures, happiness derives from taking a “critical and disciplined stance to the personal self” and “engaging the sympathy of others”. In this sense, in a Euro-American cultural context, a person is regarded as an active, independent agent that pursues one’s own happiness. In an

East Asian cultural context, the person is also regarded as active and independent, but adjusting to others, therefore well-being is not as much related to self-esteem and optimism but rather to self-criticism and discipline. Autonomy and freedom thus seem to play a minor role in those contexts.

This argument is also used in the context of Bhutan, as Prime Minister Jigme Y. Thinley is quoted saying:

“To the people of Bhutan, what is most important is the process of development, the means by which the collective needs for the society can be met expeditiously in a fair and equitable manner. To this end, health care, education, transportation and above all, hope for a better and more secure future are more important than anything else. Individual freedom and liberty on which western concepts of human rights is founded has little relevance to these aspirations”

(Thinley 1993: n.p.).

The importance of freedom often propagated by the so-called “West” therefore may be seen as a distortion of “traditional” values. This problem will be addressed in the following chapters as well, but it is worth noting here that there are numerous examples of movements and people in Asia fighting for more Freedom: Gandhi’s fight in India, the protests on Tienanmen square in China, the Dalai Lama’s efforts to help freeing Tibet etc. Certainly those are different notions of freedom – the type of freedom sought after is not always about the individual. Nevertheless these examples show that there is great stress on the idea of freedom in Asia as well and the above arguments have to be examined critically.

What appears to be a good indicator for the impact of freedom on happiness on a national level is the form of the state. Frey and Stutzer (2000: 925) report that direct democracy leads to higher reported well-being because it grants the individuals greater autonomy in the political process. Democratic countries are also happier countries, but the causal relation (whether democracy makes people happy or whether happy people tend to engage more with the political progress) is not entirely clear (Veenhoven in McDonald 2010: 41).

One could argue though that democracies allow for a more open society and more tolerance of outgroups, conditions, which are strong predictors of subsequent levels of subjective well-being, controlling even for economic development (Inglehart et al. 2008: 267f).

The institutional setting of a nation influences the individual as well in the sense that it shapes their preferences: *“A country that forms its educational system around values such as obedience evidently produces pupils who are different from those of a country that*

encourages independence and creativity” (Verme 2009: 159).

These issues are important for the effects institutions have on well-being. I want to mention a study by Lelkes (2005) though, which found that in post-communist Hungary, increasing institutional freedom for churches did not lead to increasing happiness among believers. These findings may indicate firstly that institutional freedom does not always increase individual happiness, but rather that a sense of religious freedom and belonging can be strong (and thus influencing happiness) even under oppressive circumstances (Lelkes 2005: 189ff).

We know that happiness exists even under circumstances that could objectively be described as undesirable, partly due to adaption processes (Sen 1999: 62), and under these conditions, the utility of freedom is relatively low (Sen argues in this case with the intrinsic value of freedom, see Chapter 2.3). When people lack resources to fulfill their basic needs, they give less importance to free choice and self-expression than people of wealthier societies. It could be argued therefore that the utility of freedom for a sense of well-being is relevant only after a certain point of income. As societies become wealthier, the individual-level importance shifts equally, from giving top priority to economic and physical security towards higher priority of self-expression values that attach greater importance to freedom and participation (Inglehart et al. 2008: 266ff).

Another change that affects economically transitional societies is the importance of solidarity. While subsistence-level societies show a stronger linkage between happiness and ingroup solidarity, religiosity and national pride, higher levels of economic wealth lead to a shift of values towards greater importance of free choice (Inglehart et al. 2008: 279).

The link between freedom and happiness is also apparent in a study by Welsch (2003). He found that the linkage of (exclusively economic) freedom to happiness is positive in fifty out of fifty-four countries. The four countries with a negative relationship are Azerbaijan, Belarus, China and Nigeria, the first three being post-communist and Nigeria being a post-colonial country, where democracy as a form of state – as limited as it may be even today – has been introduced relatively recent. For comparison, the countries with the strongest linkage are those ones with longer democratic and liberal traditions, like Canada, Denmark and Sweden. Again, I want to stress that this analysis only includes economic freedoms, thus portraying only a limited picture (Welsch 2003: 311).

Welsch (2003: 296) argues however, that correlations of happiness, especially with some kinds of freedom, are frequently found to become insignificant in general, when income is controlled for. He thus claims that income, taken on its own, is a more powerful predictor of differences in cross-national happiness and suggests that freedom may only serve as a proxy

and indeed it is higher income levels that generate greater happiness.

This hypothesis is partly supported by Veenhoven (1999), who found that the factor “opportunity to choose” (which he differentiates from “capability to choose”) has a positive correlation with wealthy countries, but a negative one in poor countries. This may also be related to another form of societies though, since Veenhoven’s study explicitly focuses on individualistic societies. Welsch (2003: 310ff) puts his findings into perspective, explaining that the relationship between freedom and happiness is stronger, the richer a country is, but there are many more poor countries in which the linkage between freedom and happiness is positive than ones where it is negative. Nevertheless, he believes that freedom is linked to happiness only indirectly, via income, but he argues that in this perspective the relationship is positive at high levels of freedom.

Inglehart et al. (2008: 267) on the other hand argue that while economic development is strongly linked to high levels of development, it is only one of multiple factors. They attribute greater importance to a sense of free choice, but point out that this is more important as a property of a society than on an individual level. To quote the authors: “*A person’s SWB [subjective well-being, author’s note] is as [sic!] more affected by the general atmosphere of freedom in the society in which one lives than by one’s individual sense of freedom*” (Inglehart et al. 2008: 271).

Another hypothesis is that maybe only certain freedoms matter for happiness. A study by Veenhoven (2000) found that in poor nations, economic freedom is a main condition for happiness, whereas in rich countries it is political freedom. These findings suggest that different freedoms matter according to different circumstances. Lelkes (2005) found that while more economic freedom led to a rise in happiness levels among entrepreneurs in post-communist Hungary, more institutional freedom for the churches did not lead to more happiness among its followers, as mentioned above. Nevertheless, post-communist countries in general, although more liberal now, show lower levels of happiness. It seems that the increase of freedom had less impact than the negative economic consequences of transition (see Halliwell/Layard/Sachs 2012: 70; Lelkes 2005: 181).

That does not mean that communist rule per se is linked with low levels of subjective well-being. China and Vietnam show higher rates of happiness than the ex-Soviet states, which may partly be rooted in the greater economic success of the Asian countries (Inglehart et al. 2008: 268).

The last issue I want to discuss in this chapter breaks the question of freedom and happiness down to an individual level. Related to whether somebody feels they have the

freedom to act in a certain way is the question of perceived control.

In order for a person to be in control of certain affairs, two preconditions are necessary. For one, there have to be real causal relations between specific means and goals. Second, in order for this causal relation to even exist, means have to be available to the person in question in the first place. Control is often measured by control belief, meaning the subjective belief about one's capability of exercising control. Numerous studies show that people typically overestimate their control competencies (Grob 2000: 319f).

Control expectancy and control appraisal are the two correlating components that constitute perceived control. A study conducted by Grob suggests that control appraisal has a low relationship with well-being, whereas control expectancy is significantly higher related to well-being (Grob 2000: 332ff).

Verme (2009: 146) hypothesizes that it is the "locus of control" that decides whether freedom of choice is seen as contributing positively to happiness for the individual:

"A variable that measures freedom of choice and the locus of control is found to predict life satisfaction better than any other known factor such as health, employment, income, marriage or religion, across countries and within countries. We show that this variable is not a proxy of happiness and measures well both freedom of choice and the locus of control."

The locus of control refers to a concept that rates people according to the level on which they believe to be able to influence outcomes. Some people believe that the outcomes of their actions depend more on internal factors (like skills and efforts), while others believe that the outcomes rather depend on external factors (like fate or destiny). Verme (2009: 147) argues that the former have a greater appreciation of freedom of choice than the latter and thus for them the impact of freedom on happiness is stronger.

An empirical investigation covering more than 260,000 individuals from 84 countries over a period of 25 years constitutes the basis for Verme's thesis that a measure combining freedom of choice with the locus of control predicts happiness better than any measure of freedom alone (Verme 2009: 147).

The concept of the locus of control explains why some individuals attribute greater importance to freedom and an increase in choices than others. It gives greater room for individual personalities, rather than trying to find unifying elements in happiness research.

In this regard it differs from the neoclassical decision utility framework, where all individuals are considered equal in terms of personal characteristics. Even Sen's capabilities approach does not explicitly stress personality, merely measurable characteristics such as

education. Verme's work is closer associated with psychology and it may also be a supplement to a theory of thoughts like Inglehart et al.'s thesis that society has to be tolerant to facilitate happiness. On the individual level, one could argue, a balanced locus of control is necessary in addition to a free society, in order for freedom to be able to contribute positively to happiness (see Verme 2009; Inglehart et al. 2008).

The connection of Verme's hypothesis from an individual to a national level is that countries shape their citizen's preferences and values and thus play a role as well (Verme 2009: 150).

One question remains though – are freedom (or happiness for that matter) values that are shared globally? Is it even desirable to strive towards greater freedom or greater happiness? Oishi (2000: 95) suggests that this is a matter of the universality of values. While universalist thinking predicts that autonomy and well-being are strongly related in any culture, culturalists argue that autonomy plays a minor role in collectivist cultures. I want to address this issue in the following chapters.

2.5 The Universality of Values

I want to explore the universality of values not only because I regard this question as important in general, but also in relation to this paper. Writing a thesis about Bhutan inevitably means that statements I make are also value judgements, considering that “neutrality” in science can only exist in the form of transparency but not in the form that a scientist is completely detached from their own experience and value systems. Discussing a subject that is highly related to value attributions, one has to deal with this on a meta-level before the actual analysis can begin. I think it is legitimate to make evaluative statements, because it broadens the discussion field, contributing to more possibilities. Still, I want to discuss the question of universality of values before I can make an attempt to examine value-related topics in a country that does not share the culture I was raised in. The question is whether values such as freedom or happiness are indeed universal or whether their value differs according to tradition and practice among nations, regions and people.

The discourse on the universality of values has been led in the context of the concept and ultimately the formulation of human rights for a long time. Human Rights are, by their very definition, rights that one has, simply because one is human. In that sense, they would have to be equal, and thus, universal rights, because all human beings inherit the basic applicability criteria. Another important aspect is the indivisibility of Human Rights, meaning that all Human Rights are equally important and no category of rights or even any single right can be excluded (Brems 2001: 14; Donnelly 2007: 282).

When the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was discussed at the General Assembly of the United Nations, several members of the institution challenged the universality of the declaration by questioning whether all human beings were actually born free and equal in dignity and rights or whether equality and freedom derived from other sources, such as for example man’s relationship with god, as suggested by a representative from Iraq (Rhee 2001: 53).

When the declaration was adopted by the General Assembly, no state voted against it, but Byelorussian SSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Ukrainian SSR, USSR and Yugoslavia abstained. The abstaining countries were either under communist rule or authoritarian regimes, showing that various forms of state organizations had a problem with the formulation of the declaration and its implications. Moreover the remaining 48 states who adopted the declaration can hardly be held representative for the rest of the world (Brems 2001: 7).

Those challenges were brought up again with the preparations for the 1993 United Nations Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, in which the members of the UN were supposed to renew their commitment to human rights. The global political scene in the years surrounding the conference was defined by the Cold War and a deadlock for Human Rights, raising differences concerning the importance of various sets of rights. In the Asian regional preparation meeting for the Vienna conference, that took place in Bangkok from 29th of March to 2nd of April 1993, the universality of the Declaration of Human Rights was seriously challenged (Brems 2001: 55).

In the Bangkok Declaration, representatives of Asian states dismissed certain political and civil rights as not compatible with what they called “Asian values”. The argument put forward in the declaration dismissed the use of Human Rights as an instrument of political pressure and insisted upon non-interference with internal affairs of a State as part of the concept of national sovereignty (Follesdal 2005: 265).

This issue of citizenship is still important in relationship to Human Rights. Even though the declaration is meant to be universal, and an internationalization has been tried to accomplish by various actors, the nation state still is the central actor when it comes to the guarantee and provision of rights (Stoisits 2002: 322).

The Bangkok Declaration, which was signed by Bhutan, specifically mentions globally different values: “*Recognizing that the promotion of human rights should be encouraged by cooperation and consensus, and not through confrontation and the imposition of incompatible values (...)*” (Bangkok Declaration 1993).

Some countries, especially Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, stressed in their statements the relationship between the rights of the individual and responsibilities towards the community, and the subordination of the individual for the sake not only of the community but also general order and economic growth (Brems 2001: 59ff).

The declaration met criticism and concern not only on an international level but also within the rows of its drafters. Parallel to the declaration of the Asian governments, a second “Bangkok Declaration” was drafted by the representatives of 110 non-governmental organizations of the Asia-Pacific region. The declaration shared some concerns with the official document, but clarified that “*cultural differences must not be used to justify violations of human rights.*” (Brems 2001: 71)

An argument that unites the two declarations is the idea of an equilibrium between individual and the community. This reflects concern about the importance of the individual versus the community and will be discussed further in chapter 2.6. The NGO declaration did

make a difference between the community and the state though:

“The interests of the community however should not be confused with those of the state, and equilibrium is distinct from a bias to collective interests. In that sense, the NGOs do not accept the idea that the maintenance of law and order justifies strong limitations of individual rights” (Brems 2001: 87).

The Vienna Conference on Human Rights saw a continuation of the arguments brought forward in the Bangkok Declaration, as delegates from several countries spoke out against general endorsement of basic civil and political rights in the Third World. Their argument was that economic rights, and therefore economic development, should be in the center of attention instead (Sen 1999: 147).

The conference sparked what is known as the “Asian Values debate”. Before I go into detail, I want to stress that this is not about the question whether Asian values exist or not. The term “Asian Values” indicates that there is such a thing as a homogenous value system that spans a whole continent with more than half of the world’s population. Furthermore, culture is not static, it is subject to constant change. I do not ignore that there are differences in value systems across cultures, but for the above mentioned reasons I want to make clear that I do not regard “Asian Values” per se as valid. Nevertheless, the argument of “Asian Values “ has been used by a variety of actors, so I want to explore the nature of the arguments put forward.

The “Asian values” debate came up in the post Cold War period, when leaders in the region started to challenge the universality of the concept of human rights. It is noteworthy that none of the major supporters of the Asian Values argument denies human rights per se in any official statement, but as will be shown, some Asian governments have utilized the concept of Asian Values to justify repressive actions on a socio-political level (Amarsaikhan 2003: 38ff; Sen 1999: 231).

Cultural relativists advanced the view that the concept of Human Rights is peculiar to the West and therefore alien to third world countries. The argument put forward is that individual-centered “Western” human rights are supposedly conflicting the values of respect for community, consensus and authorities that are said to be of more importance in Asia. Asian governments opposed in their articulation of these rights what they feel is an encroachment upon national sovereignty and imposition of Western neo-imperialism in the form of value sets like the Human Rights (Amarsaikhan 2003: 10).

The idea of “Asian Values” has been used mainly in relationship with economic growth. It is assumed that a retrenchment of political and social freedoms benefits economic growth and

development – and is therefore justifiable. Sen (1999: 149) argues though that the rapid economic growth of China or South Korea for example cannot be seen as definite proof of the thesis that authoritarianism leads to bigger economic growth.

Amarsaikhan (2003: 330) takes the view that the argument of “Asian Values” is being misused by authoritarian regimes “(...) *with the purpose of declaring irrelevance of civil and political liberties in Asia, hence ultimate opportunity to exercise power over their citizens.*”

Saul (2000: 348) argues that “[l]ike many developing countries, Bhutan has argued a version of the “benevolent dictatorship” thesis. Social, cultural and economic rights (...) must be given priority before civil and political rights can be realised [sic!]”.

Usage of the “Asian values” argument is not restricted to Asia. It has also been endorsed by modes of thought in the “West” - there seems to be a tendency in America and Europe to assume that their countries inherit the primacy of political freedom and democracy due to their history. Asian countries and societies are in this regard seen as lacking this historically predetermined feature (Sen 1999: 232f).

Fact is that even before the existence of a codex or even the idea of Human Rights, various Asian systems of philosophy and religion made reference to ideas similar to Human Rights. Justice, equality, mutual respect and other values that are implied in the human rights catalogue, can be found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and other belief systems. Equally, there are examples from Asia, like the historical thought of confucianism, that prove a critical stance towards state authority (Amarsaikhan 2003: 16; Sen 1999: 234f).

I want to make the remark that not only “Asian Values” constitute a threat to the idea of Human Rights though. The concept of a universally applicable set of rights valid on a global level poses not only the risk of being rejected by regimes that feel threatened, but also the risk of countries and governments trying to instrumentalize those universal rights in order to pursue own interests that interfere with the interests of others.

If one moves the debate about universalism and culturalism away from the issue of human rights, it is quite legitimate to ask about other values. Since values play a major role in the Gross National Happiness concept, which is strongly influenced by Buddhism, I want to discuss briefly Buddhist perspectives on happiness to show that there are indeed differences to “Western” values in that matter.

Happiness from a buddhist perspective comes from the mind, not from external conditions:

“In order to have happiness, one has to analyse [sic!] and study the causes in one’s own mind and look inward to see how happiness originates from the mind and not from outside of the mind. (...) To understand happiness, then, we need to

recognise [sic!] the internal dynamics and this may take many lifetimes which is why we believe in reincarnation” (Tashi in McDonald 2010: 24).

Happiness in a Euro-American sense is rooted in the belief of linear progress. Many Asian belief systems are grounded in a more cyclic and holistic worldview, causing differences in what is regarded as “desirable”. It is taught that happiness and unhappiness stem from the same root and therefore one should not celebrate one’s own happiness excessively but rather be satisfied with the current state of life. To be fair, this idea seems to become weaker for younger generations though (Kitayama/Markus 2000: 153; Suh 2000: 74).

Critics of the universalist utilitarian paradigm (that propagates the greatest happiness for the greatest number) challenge its notion that all individuals derive pain and pleasure from the same sources. Johnson (2004: 462) argues that sources of pleasure and pain are in fact different for every person. Putting this into a context of Buddhism, one may argue that an ascetic may derive pain from the same source a hedonist derives pleasure from.

This is linked to Buddhist views of the values of development, which is in so far important as GNH is a concept for the development of a society (towards greater happiness). Progress in a Buddhist sense is not linear. It can go up or down depending on causality and responsibility. Progress thus is seen (from a religious point of view) as an inward journey towards realization of the true nature of mind (Ura in McDonald 2010: 58).

Buddhism advocates the idea of centering private and public action around nonmaterial outcomes. Instead of defining wealth as stemming from materialistic or financial capital, it puts the focus on values such as contentedness and mindfulness (Johnson 2004: 463).

The question is whether there is a conflict between Buddhist understandings of development and happiness, such as identifying the roots causes of suffering etc., which are rather intuitive concepts, and the Westernized standardized concept that claims to objectively measure those issues (McDonald 2010: 54).

One thing that is safe to say is that the values of a neo-classical or neo-liberal economy are certainly different from the ones constituting GNH, nevertheless, they are not neutral. Economic theories always presuppose different ideas on what is valuable or good (Grenholm 2011: 43).

Coming back to the previous arguments raised in relation to the value of freedom (and Human Rights) in Asian societies, I want to argue that there is room for these values in any society. The link between free choice and the feeling of having control over one’s life and happiness seems to be universally applicable across all major culture zones. Especially Buddhist thought gives great importance to freedom and allows much room for volition and

free choice (Inglehart et al. 2008: 266; Sen 1999: 234)

Even though Bhutanese history did not give rise to the formation of a rights-based philosophy, it has largely accepted the regime of international human rights law (Saul 2000: 339).

Furthermore, there is an interesting ambivalence in Bhutan's relationship with Human Rights. While some argue that Bhutan is using the "Asian Values" argument in a sense that they put authority before freedom, Ura (Interview 2011) states that Human Rights are central in any society. He puts this view in perspective by saying that while Human Rights it is a legitimate concept, it is not enough, and therefore he advocates a concept like Gross National Happiness that should go further than Human Rights. Nevertheless, he argues that ultimate freedom is not desirable and stresses that Bhutanese still have faith in the government.

This argument falls within the relativist position, which would argue that cultures are successful to the extent that they produce people they find worth valuing (Ahuvia 2002: 31). Thus, even though in Bhutan, Human Rights are seen as a valid concept, it is argued that an adaption to national values would be preferable.

The concept of Human Rights in practice deals with the balance between individual and collective rights. The question of the universality of Human Rights and ultimately, the accordant values, is particularly important for the related question of the role of individualism in different societies.

2.6 Individualism and Collectivism

In a paper about individual freedom in an Asian society, one cannot ignore an argument that has been made repeatedly by researchers and scholars: It is argued that in Asian societies the collective takes precedence over the individual. GNH by its very nature is about “collective happiness” and thus relates to the question whether collectivist societies derive happiness from other sources than individualist societies. While the discussion about whether one can universalize values has been led in the previous chapter, I want to examine the above argument separately.

The question is whether Bhutan can be described as a “collectivist” society. The prime minister Jigme Y. Thinley (1999: n.p.) describes the Bhutanese as “highly individualistic” people, but he does so mainly to distinguish the northern Bhutanese from the southern Nepali inhabitants in Bhutan, which he calls “susceptible to group influence”. Simultaneously, one could argue that in comparison to most European societies, Bhutan has a rather collectivist society. Commenting on the development Bhutan has undergone in the past decades, the fifth king Jigme Jigme Wangchuck said: *“Modernisation [sic!] and political change have raised the individual’s freedom, but it has also led to a less desirable and unconscious freeing of the individual from its obligations to society and the greater good”* (Wangchuck quoted in Ura 2010: 159f). The statement supports the classification of Bhutan as a collectivist country.

A general problem that arises when defining characteristics of societies is the legitimacy of this classification. For one, the notion of individualistic versus collectivistic societies implicates that one has to choose between one or the other. Also, there is a danger of ignoring various sub-groups within societies, that may define themselves along a variety of characteristics, resulting in a person belonging to more than one group. Having mentioned this, it becomes clear that when we talk about “societies”, it is a constructed group that is made up of individuals who again are members of several sub-groups, making society as such a highly heterogeneous construct. Nevertheless, it is a construct one can work with in order to explain certain developments, especially regarding the fact that the terms “individualistic” and “collectivistic societies” have been widely used and therefore are an important part of the discourses revolving around the various related issues.

In the political sphere, the terms “individualism” and “collectivism” are closely related to the “Asian values” debate, examined in the previous chapter. *“In a sovereign state, it is ultimately the state which grants individuals all legal rights, powers and immunities. So the state is the source of benefits and legal rights enjoyed by the individual”* (Follesdal 2005:

269). Governments provide both collective services, such as security, and individual services, like education, and with these influence the lives of individuals. The state therefore inherits an important position in pondering the interests of individuals and the collective that is the population of a state (Stiglitz/Sen/Fitoussi 2010: 9).

The importance of the collective has been used by some countries as an argument to abridge individual freedoms. Governments like those of Singapore, China and Malaysia not only stress the duties the individual has towards the community, individual rights are sometimes even devalued because they are said to promote selfish, antisocial behavior (Amarsaikhan 2003: 24f; Brems 2001: 476).

Skepticism towards the dominance of the individual over the collective in a society does not exclusively have to stem from the aim to pursue certain policies. Ahuvia (2002: 25ff) argues that societies tend to shift from collectivist to being individualist with positive economic growth. He sees collectivism as a survival mechanism in poor countries, that becomes less important once more wealth is acquired. Economic development transforms values in the sense that individuals emphasize their happiness rather than strive for acceptance in the form of meeting social obligations. As collectivist societies become more individualistic, social relationships tend to become less stable, leading to feelings of insecurity.

This hypothesis is backed by Ura (2006: 53), who cautions that diversity may threaten solidarity in Bhutan, if diversity is developing too fast. Chophel (2012: 85) takes on the argument and puts it into the perspective of multiculturalism in Bhutan. The author suggests that even though multiculturalism widens individual's freedoms, it could cause disagreement among the community of immigrants and non-immigrants over what norms and cultural practices to value.

Veenhoven (1999) finds that individualism indeed is positively connected with happiness in richer countries, whereas in poor countries the relationship is negative. I want to shift now from the question, why some societies are found to be more individualistic than others, to the relationship between individualism/collectivism and happiness.

Cross-cultural research shows that happiness seems to be higher in individualistic societies than in communitarian societies. *“Individualistic social philosophy stresses the possible positive effects. It is typically assumed that people themselves know best what will make them happy, and hence that they will enjoy life more if they can follow their own preferences”* (Veenhoven 2000: 258).

Individualistic societies allow people to focus more on themselves and the happiness they

enjoy. Collectivistic societies tend more to emphasize values like social recognition and public image. That being said, individualization has to go together with an awareness of dependence. While in collectivist societies the group is generally regarded as more important than the individual, people in individualist societies must not forget that eventually even this form of society is a collective in which people depend on each other (Ahuvia 2002: 31; Veenhoven in McDonald 2010: 39; 46).

Ahuvia (2002: 32) stresses that the category “individualistic” can be found in several shapes. He distinguishes “individualistic,” meaning free from social coercion, and “individualistic,” meaning self-interested and socially competitive. While Denmark, Iceland and Switzerland fall under the first category, he puts the United States of America in the second category and argues that countries from the first one tend to have on average the happiest populations. These “very happy” cultures combine a sense solidarity with a high degree of freedom, thus allowing people to autonomously make their own decisions without putting too much pressure (to be rich or beautiful) on its members.

If subjective well-being indeed is higher in individualistic societies, it may be because the social pressure of “fitting in” may be stronger in collectivist societies, leading to anxiety of not behaving “properly”. In general, well-being is optimized, when people adhere to the script that is central to their culture. In individualist cultures, children are brought up with the idea that autonomy is favorable while in collectivist cultures, responsibility and cooperation are central. That means also that in collectivist cultures, people tend to be allocentric, not distinguishing between their own goals and the demands of society, while individualists tend to be idiocentric. Individualist cultures also allow people to choose for themselves the way they want to be from a greater variety of options (Oishi 2000: 104; Triandis 2000: 24ff).

Kitayama and Markus (2000: 144) found in a study that while “(...) *general good feelings are associated with interpersonal engagement and interdependence in Japan(...)[,] in American cultural context, the general good feelings are associated primarily with interpersonal disengagement and independence.*”

What is interesting is that while autonomy is not positively related with life satisfaction in most collectivist nations, like China or Taiwan, conformity is negatively correlated with well-being in a greater number of rather collectivist nations. This may indicate that happiness itself is not the most important goal, but collectivist societies tend to emphasize values of obedience instead (Oishi 2000: 97).

Another factor is that in individualist societies, happiness seems to depend more on internal factors while members collectivist cultures tend to equally base their judgements

about subjective well-being on emotions and norms:

“(…) [I]ndividualists’ global self-evaluations tend to be based chiefly on private experiences (e.g., emotions) because the culture constantly directs the person’s attention to the unique, individuated aspects of his or her identity. Collectivists, on the other hand, base their self-judgements heavily on external references (e.g., norms) because diverse cultural mechanisms perpetually highlight the relational and interdependent aspects of self” (Suh 2000: 71).

This refers also to the motivation of actions, which influences subjective well-being. While intrinsic motivations make a person *want* to take action, extrinsic motivations often are the result of social norms, resulting in a feeling that one *ought* to behave in a certain way (Ahuvia 2002: 28).

This phenomenon is not restricted to any particular form of society. Achieving intrinsic goals like personal growth and personal relationships is strongly related with subjective well-being while extrinsic goals do not necessarily have to be peer pressure. Financial success and social recognition as extrinsic goals do put pressure on people from collectivist societies as well as from individualistic societies (Ahuvia 2002: 27).

Individualism may lead to higher levels of well-being also in relationship with perceived control. Grob (2000: 323) argues that a situation is perceived as a challenge rather than a threat if the person confronted with it feels that the situation is personally controllable. The feeling of control leads to lower stress levels and therefore enhances subjective well-being. This feeling of being able to control a situation may be higher in individualistic societies where emphasis on the self is part of the cultural code.

On the other hand, Zam (in McDonald 2010: 135) argues that a stronger focus on the collective may also lead to a sense of being able to rely more on one's surroundings and one's peers. A holistic view therefore needs to take into account that even an autonomous person is always part of a structural environment that can be influenced by their actions (Ura in McDonald 2010: 59f).

Suh (2000: 63) suggests that culture cannot predict happiness anyway. Culture may form the way the self of a person is shaped, but the self is the crucial point. How individuals feel and think may be influenced by culture, but in the end it is the transformation and form of culture that takes place in the self which determines well-being.

From a GNH perspective, again Buddhism relativizes the differences between individualism and collectivism. More important than this difference is the differentiation between two kinds of happiness, according to *Khenpo* Phuntsok Tashi. One he calls

conventional happiness, or temporary happiness, the other he calls continual happiness. For Tashi, both individual and collective happiness are relative and temporary, as is GNH. True happiness thus can only come from within and is strongly related to Buddhist thought and practice (Tashi in McDonald 2010: 24f).

3 Overview Bhutan

This chapter aims to give an overview over Bhutan, as background knowledge will lead to a better understanding of the concept of Gross National Happiness as well.

3.1 Geography

Bhutan is a small landlocked country with an area of 38,394 km² and a population of about 700.000. Bhutan's landscape is very diverse. While the south lies 160 meters above sea level, the northern mountain ranges reach a height of about 7500 meters. Valleys and mountain ranges running north-south shape the country and make overland travel from east to west utterly difficult (OCC 2005: 3; 17; ADA 2012: 1).

The geographical situation determines many of the developmental issues. Due to the mountainous terrain, costs for electrification are very high for example. In order to facilitate development of rural areas, Bhutan keeps the tariffs for the individual households among the lowest in the world though (Obrecht 2010: 85).

Bhutan's landscape of valleys and mountain ranges also means that only about 7.7 per cent of the total area can be used as agricultural and economical space. Considering that a majority of Bhutanese lives from farming this is a challenge for the country (ADA 2012: 1ff).

The country can be roughly divided into three zones that have distinct climatic characteristics and landscapes. The north is a range of glaciated mountain peaks with arctic climate at the highest elevations. Central Bhutan is shaped by mountain ranges and valleys with two major river systems. Most fertile and cultivated land lies in the west of Bhutan, while there are large areas of forest in the east. The three zones are also differently affected by monsoons. In the southern plains, the climate is subtropical and humid, the inner Himalayan valleys in south and central Bhutan are characterized by a temperate climate and the north, with its glaciers and Himalayan summits, is cold (OCC 2005: 3).

Bhutan shares approximately 600 kilometers of border with India in the south and east and about 470 kilometers of border with the Tibetan part of China in the north. Being located between two giant countries and having witnessed the fate of other states in the area – the annexation of Tibet by China in 1951 and Sikkims annexation to India in 1975 – influenced the Bhutanese identity (Saul 2000: 334). Dorji (in McDonald 2010: 103) says that Bhutan's major challenge is mere survival and its geographical situation has led to a strong sense of

vulnerability among its population.

Also Bhutan's inner politics have been shaped by its geography. In medieval Bhutan, the landscape of the country shaped the form of governmental organization. Considering the topography of Bhutan, high passes alternating with valleys from east to west, the valley communities, which were hard to reach from the mountains and vice versa, faced hardly any intervention from the government (Ura 1994: 28).

Originally, Choskhor Valley in Bumthang was the capital of Bhutan but during the reign of the third king, he transferred the capital to Thimphu, which is Bhutan's largest city with about 80.000 inhabitants. Almost 70 per cent of the population lives in rural areas (Ura 2010: 88; OCC 2005: 20).

Fifty-six per cent of the population were below age 24 in 2005, but OCC (2005: 19) attributes Bhutan a declining birth rate.

3.2 History

Karma Ura (1994: 25), Bhutan's best-known historian and intellectual, considers Bhutan's history up until the 1950s to be of "medieval" character. Therefore he divides the history of the country into "medieval" and "modern". He describes the medieval period as characterized by non-market organizations and a government based on the Buddhist ideology of religion and religiously-inspired secular powers. Considering the focus on tradition and culture in modern Bhutan, describing some of the medieval history contributes to a better understanding of "modern" Bhutan.

Before the tenth century, Bhutan's history seems diffuse, in the literature it is mainly mentioned in relation to its northern neighbor Tibet. From there, Buddhism was introduced to Bhutan around the eighth century and Songsten Gampo, King of Tibet (c. 627-649) is credited not only for founding the *Nyingma* school of Mahayana-Buddhism but also for founding temples in Bhutan and concealing Tantric teachings (Hutt 2003: 16).

In the 17th century, Ngawang Namgyel, the *Drukpa* hierarch called *Zhabdrung*, established several *dzongs* across Bhutan. The first *dzong* was built at Simtokha in 1629, followed by Punakha in 1637, Wangdi Phodrang in 1638, the future capital Thimphu in 1641, Paro in 1645 and Daga in 1650. The *dzongs* were, and remain today, central for Bhutan's political system. In the early days of Ngawang Namgyel's regency, all high-ranking officials were monks. The monk body was headed by an abbot, the *Je Khenpo*, and cared for the spiritual well-being of the community. The names and property of the lay people were registered at the *dzong* and they had to pay an "initiation fee" in the form of taxes, labour and transport. In the last years of Ngawang Namgyel's regency, the administration of political affairs was entrusted to civic leaders, the so-called *Druk Desis*, and a dual system of government, that split power between secular and religious institutions under the rule of a single leader, developed (Hutt 2003: 18f).

By the late 19th century, the political rule of the *Druk Desis* had become an established system. It was not a position to be accessed systematically; there were no clear rules on how to become a *Druk Desi*, a fact that led to conflicts and ambiguities quite frequently. In the era of theocracy, between 1616 and the establishment of the monarchy in 1907, more than fifty *Druk Desis* held office (Ura 2010: 8f; Gallenkamp 2010: 4).

Apart from internal civil wars, Bhutan had to deal with conflicts with Tibet and the British colonial forces in India. Britain replaced Tibet as major external threat for Bhutan when it drove Bhutan out of Cooch Behar and invaded Bhutanese territory in 1772. The tensions culminated in the Anglo-Bhutanese Duar Wars 1864-1865, which ended with Bhutan giving up territories in the Assam and Bengal Duars that fell to the British colonial forces (Collister

1987: 9ff; 119ff).

In the early 19th century, two *Penlops* (“lord-teachers”), who ruled over the regions of Tongsa, respectively Paro, dominated the power spheres of what would later be Bhutan. The governorship of Tongsa was in the hands of the Wangchuck family, who would later become the royal family. Between 1668 and 1885, three civil wars took place in Bhutan and as a result the Tongsa *Penlop* emerged as the strongest force in 1885. Since Jigme Namgyel, the father of the first king, provided military assistance to the succeeding party of two *Druk Desi* aspirants, he ensured himself greater political influence (Hutt 2003: 20; Ura 2010: 16ff).

The Wangchuck family also took the side of the British colonial power when British troops marched into Tibet. They emerged as the single dominant family to rule Bhutan after negotiations between the British and Tibet in 1905. Ugyen Wangchuck (1862-1926) became the first king of Bhutan (*Druk Gyalpo*) in 1907, even though he had been the de facto ruler for more than a decade before his coronation. His coronation officially established the institution of hereditary monarchy in Bhutan and abolished the office of *Druk Desis* (Ura 2010: 29; Hutt 2003: 20f).

A main strategic aim for the first king was to ensure Bhutan’s long-term independence. Due to its geographical situation, Bhutan’s foreign relations were mostly aimed at defending its sovereignty against the Tibetans in the north and the British colonial forces in India in the south. Bhutan focused on the relationship with its southern neighbor and in order to protect his country, the first king ensured a good relationship with India, for example by raising money to assist Britain in the First World War (Ura 2010: 29; 39f).

Under the reign of the first king, there was a first attempt at improving education. Several schools were built, even though at that time, very few students benefited from these measures. The education system was built around spiritual and religious questions but included a form of western education as well (Ura 2010: 43).

The second king, Jigme Wangchuck (1905-1952), reigned the country from 1926 until his death. His regency was influenced by the changes occurring in the neighboring countries – the Sino-Tibetan conflict and the struggle of independence in India (Ura 2010: 45ff).

The royal family maintained cordial relations with the British colonial power present in India. When India gained independence in 1947 and China occupied Tibet a few years later, the ties between Bhutan and its southern neighbor, India, became stronger. As a result of the Sino-Indian dispute, that erupted in the 1962 military clash, Bhutan became gradually aware of its vulnerability. In order to establish international presence and maintain sovereignty, it had virtually no choice but to align with India. The newly independent state offered

development aid to Bhutan, built a road that linked Bhutan's capital Thimphu with India and began training the Royal Bhutanese Army. Bhutan and India signed a "Treaty of Friendship" in 1949, which gave India the prerogative over Bhutan's external policy, while granting the small country independence and sovereignty on internal matters until the treaty was revised in 2007 (Hutt 2003: 21; Mathou 1994: 54; Gallenkamp 2010: 6; 11).

The first road construction started in 1958, and is often said to have initiated Bhutan's "modernization", but a systematic approach to develop a road network was only started with the beginning of the first Five Year Plan in 1961. By 1966, the roads built in Bhutan were connecting Thimphu, Paro, Samtse and several other western Bhutanese cities (Ura 2010: 68f).

"Modernization" of Bhutan was expedited during the rule of the third king, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck (1928-1972). The king, who was educated in a British manner, ordered a fixed ceiling on land holdings, established a police force, a National Assembly (*Tshogdu*) in 1953 and a Royal Advisory, abolished serfdom and initiated Bhutan's development plans, the Five Year Plans. He also established a free health care system. Bhutan intensified efforts to receive foreign aid by joining the Colombo Plan in 1962 (Ura 2010: 63ff; Hutt 2003: 21; Sinpeng 2007: 38).

The third king differentiated the political system by separating the legislative and judiciary from the executive. Apart from creating the *Tshogdu*, he also created a High Court, but the king remained the highest appellate authority and appointed about a fifth of the *Tshogdu* members. In 1958, the position of Prime Minister (*Lonchen*) was created, but later temporarily abolished. In 1968, the executive branch of government was further differentiated by creating the Council of Ministers as consultative body for the royalty (Gallenkamp 2010: 6f).

The fourth king has a special role in the history of Bhutan. Jigme Singye Wangchuck has been honored as the "jewel of men" (Ura 2010: 87ff) and has shaped Bhutan's present state significantly. It was him who coined the term "Gross National Happiness" and who established democracy in Bhutan by royal decree.

Jigme Singye Wangchuck was born in 1955 and was educated in Bhutan, Darjeeling and England, where he completed his studies in 1969. When he was still Crown Prince, Jigme Singye Wangchuck was appointed chairman of the Planning Commission, the development agency of Bhutan. Only one year after his appointment, in 1972, when his father died, he became king of Bhutan at the age of sixteen (Ura 2010: 90).

During the regency of the fourth king, Bhutan underwent a major transformation. The

development plans had only started about ten years before his coronation, but by the end of his reign, Bhutan had established a development concept that received attention all over the world. In his coronation address, Jigme Singye Wangchuck stressed the need for self-reliance and preservation of Bhutan's independence, a continuum in politics until today. His reign saw decentralization of governmental affairs, the development of industries, the hydro-energy sector and tourism. The rapid socio-economic development of Bhutan changed the life for the Bhutanese population in many ways (Ura 2010: 96ff; 113ff).

Bhutan became the 125th member of the United Nations in 1971 and according to Mathou (1994: 52), this step of opening up to the field international politics challenged Bhutan's ability to adapt to foreign cultural values “(...) *imposed by Western countries through international institutions*”.

Bhutan had chosen isolation for a long time; only the kings frequently met other state leaders abroad. Following the accession to the United Nations though, Bhutan gradually opened up to other countries from the 1990s onwards and strengthened its diplomatic efforts. Bhutan joined other international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank (Obrecht 2010: 16; Ura 2010).

On the other hand, under the fourth king, Bhutan began projecting itself as a *Drukpa* country, which – among other reasons - led to severe ethnic tension in the South and eventually to the mass-exodus of ethnic Nepalis from Bhutan to Nepal. Bhutan's immigrant levels had risen since the late 1940s, with ethnic Nepalis coming as labor migrants. During the early decades of the 20th century, Nepalis concentrated in the districts of Samchi and Tsirang and there was an estimated population of 60.000 Nepalis, also called *Lhotshampas*³, in Bhutan (Ura 2010: 54ff; Mathew 1999: 47).

Apart from the Nepali migration to Bhutan, the country experienced an influx of refugees from Tibet, after the Chinese suppression of the *Khampa* revolt in 1959. Bhutan officially closed its northern borders and banned trade with China, actions that harmed Bhutan's sparse northern areas (Mathou 1994: 53).

In 1958, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck granted Bhutanese citizenship to the Nepali immigrants under the Nationality Act, after Nepali activists had pressed for democratic reform and had protested against discriminatory practice against Nepalis in Bhutan. The act gave citizenship to those people, who had resided in Bhutan for ten years and owned agricultural land or had served the government for five years. After the 1958 Nationality Act, immigration

3 The term „*Lhotshampa*“ translates into „Southerner“, but has often been used as a synonym for the Nepali population.

to Bhutan started to decline, among other reasons due to tighter border security (Mathew 1999: 69f; Saul 2000: 326).

Citizen laws were tightened as well in the 1970s, in the light of developments in the neighboring kingdom Sikkim. The Nepali population in Sikkim had pressed for the merger of the kingdom with India, which indeed happened in 1975. Bhutan responded by amending the eligibility criteria for citizenship with the 1977 Citizenship Act. The required period of government service was raised to fifteen years and the period of residence to twenty years. Additionally, applicants were now required to speak and write Dzongkha – despite widespread illiteracy – and have some knowledge of Bhutan (Saul 2000: 326).

In 1985, Bhutan exacerbated the Citizenship Act once more by fixing 1958 as the cut-off date for immigrants to southern Bhutan, which effectively evicted those who could not provide documentary evidence of legal residence before that date. The *Lhotshampa* population started protesting against what they regarded as discriminatory laws and mass demonstrations took place in the latter half of 1990. The demonstrations were accompanied by a print leaflet campaign criticizing the alleged imposture of northern Bhutanese culture on the people of the south. The Bhutanese government responded with force and by mid-1991, a mass exodus was underway (Saul 2000: 335ff; Ura 2010: 137f).

For Saul (2000: 336), this was also caused by a legal problem:

“The National Security Act 1992 (NSA) augmented the Tsa-Wa Sum [law on treason and anti-nationals, author’s note] by making “anti-national” activities into criminal offences [sic!]. (...) Enforcement of the Act has resulted in the contravention of human rights to liberty, security of person, a fair trial and freedom of expression, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention.”

The so-called “Southern Problem” is strongly related to the existence of northern Indian rebellion groups in Bhutan that entered the country across the porous border between India and Bhutan. According to Ura (2010: 132f), militants of the United Liberation Front of Asom and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland established camps in southern Bhutan. Bhutan eventually took military action against the groups in 2003, supposedly after attempts to peaceful talks had failed.

The official Bhutanese narrative admits tensions and problems in the 1990s, but frames the events differently. In this narrative, violent and terroristic attacks challenged the efforts of the king to unify the country despite the tensions between “separatist” movements and the “rest” of the population. Karma Ura said in an interview (2011), the king appealed to the Nepali population not to leave, but they did so nevertheless due to “attractions from the outside”.

Still the question of what exactly happened in Bhutan in the 1990s, has not been answered completely. *“The closer one comes to the present, the more contentious all history inevitably becomes, and when the recent past is characterized by conflict, its history splinters into contradictory narratives”* (Hutt 2003: 13).

Up to this date, more than 50.000 people still live in refugee camps in eastern Nepal, out of an original number of more than 100.000. The inhabitants of the refugee camps will mostly be resettled in third countries, since several Joint Ministerial Level meetings between Nepal and Bhutan took place, but failed to solve the problems effectively. The joint verification attempt ended after the Bhutanese team felt treated badly at Khundunabari. The Bhutanese government criticized the administration of the camp for not checking properly the nationalities of the people coming to the camps, rejecting the demands of return by the camp inhabitants as not justified (Saul 2000: 323; UNHCR 2012; Ura 2010: 140f).

Many Nepali immigrants came to Bhutan as contracted laborers and so Bhutan argues that the people in the refugee camps in Nepal are not actually refugees, but illegal immigrants who overstayed their contracts and/or left Bhutan voluntarily (Saul 2000: 325f).

Certain Nepalese historians counter that Nepalis first migrated to Bhutan during the seventeenth century – a narrative that refugee leaders in the camps later picked up because it validated their perception of a Nepali presence in Bhutan that dates back a long time before the recent problems arose (Hutt 2003: 11; 24).

Today, most immigrants come to Bhutan from India, to work as low-skilled laborers on streets and other construction sites. They also only get temporary visas, but often stay for a long time on different contracts (Interview Ura 2011).

Apart from dealing with these internal problems, the fourth king also advanced decentralization by dividing the country into twenty *dzongkhags* and setting up District Development Committees to increase political participation of citizens. The *dzongkhags* later were further subdivided into *gewogs* (blocks). In 1998, Wangchuck devolved his executive powers to the Council of Ministers, further indicating a change in the political hierarchy (Sinpeng 2007: 39; Gallenkamp 2010: 9).

In 2008, Bhutan completed the transition from a monarchy to a democracy by holding the first elections. It was the king who announced that Bhutan would transform its political system in order to make it more viable. Opposition leader Tshering Tobgay (2011) said in an interview, that most of the people did not welcome the idea of democracy at that time, because they felt that their king had represented their interests well enough. One must not forget the pro-democracy movements of the 1990s though, which led to tensions and the

emigration of *Lhotshampas*.

The fourth king abdicated the throne in 2006 and his son, Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck (*1980) became the fifth king of Bhutan. He was officially inaugurated in 2008, but de facto ascended the throne already in 2006. The fifth king received education in Bhutan and higher education at Oxford University, Harvard University and the Indian Defense Academy in New Delhi among others (Ura 2010: 154ff).

3.3 Political System

This chapter gives an overview over the political system of Bhutan since the establishment of democracy. The earlier political system has been described in the previous chapter. A description of the official decision making processes and the political system in Bhutan is important because it shows the degree of participation available for people.

Since 2008, Bhutan has been a constitutional monarchy. The fourth king Jigme Singye Wangchuck had already devolved his executive powers in 1998 by royal decree and had reintroduced the principle of his own responsibility, which had already been introduced by the third king, but later been abolished temporarily. So not only was he not head of government any more, it was also possible for the National Assembly to initiate a vote of no-confidence against the king (Gallenkamp 2010: 10).

In 2006, the king stepped down, handing over the kingdom to his son, Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, who at that time was 27 years old. He did so after proclaiming democratic elections in 2005, determining the transition of the political system from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy (Obrecht 2010: 16).

According to Obrecht (2010: 16ff), this makes Bhutan the only country in the world in which democracy was introduced by an autocratic royal decree and not by civil pressure. Bhutan turns around the European historical perception of an unreliable absolute sovereign. Instead of a society revolting against the ruler, the king himself broke with the traditionally positively connoted structure of power. For many Bhutanese, this change of power led to a feeling of insecurity, for the absolute monarchy of Bhutan's kings historically was favored by most of them. From a point of view of political science, Bhutan therefore is an interesting case of the voluntarist approach in terms of transition to democracy (Sinpeng 2007: 22).

The first elections were preceded by several activities that should prepare the citizens of Bhutan for the change to democracy. The King and other high representatives traveled the whole country in order to explain to the people the planned constituency reform and the upcoming elections. In spring 2007 Bhutan held a "rehearsal" for the actual elections. The Bhutanese population had to elect colors instead of actual political parties and the majority elected the color yellow, the color of the king. This outcome of the rehearsal signified the rejection of democracy through a democratic process in the eyes of some observers (Walter 2009: 47; Interview Tobgay 2011; Priesner in Moser 2010: 216).

The first democratic elections in Bhutan finally took place in late 2007 for the Upper Chamber of Parliament and early 2008 for the National Assembly. In the elections, no parties

based on religion, race or ethnicity were allowed to contest. This led to only three parties registering, but even one of them was rejected on the basis of the restrictions. In order to encourage voting, the king issued a Royal Decree (*Kasho*) to participate. The voting turnout was high at 80 per cent. The DPT (*Druk Phuensum Tshogpa*) emerged as the winner, casting 66 per cent of the votes and the PDP (People's Democratic Party) became the only opposing party in the National Assembly with 33 per cent of the votes. Due to the majority-based voting system, this meant that only two members of the opposition received seats in the 47-seat National Assembly (Ura 2010: 169f; Sinpeng 2007: 21; Gallenkamp 2010: 11).

In the same year as the elections for the National Assembly took place, the constitution of Bhutan was signed and passed, defining the political system of Bhutan. Bhutan officially became a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy (Art. 1.2.), but the power is to be with the people of Bhutan (Art. 1.1.).

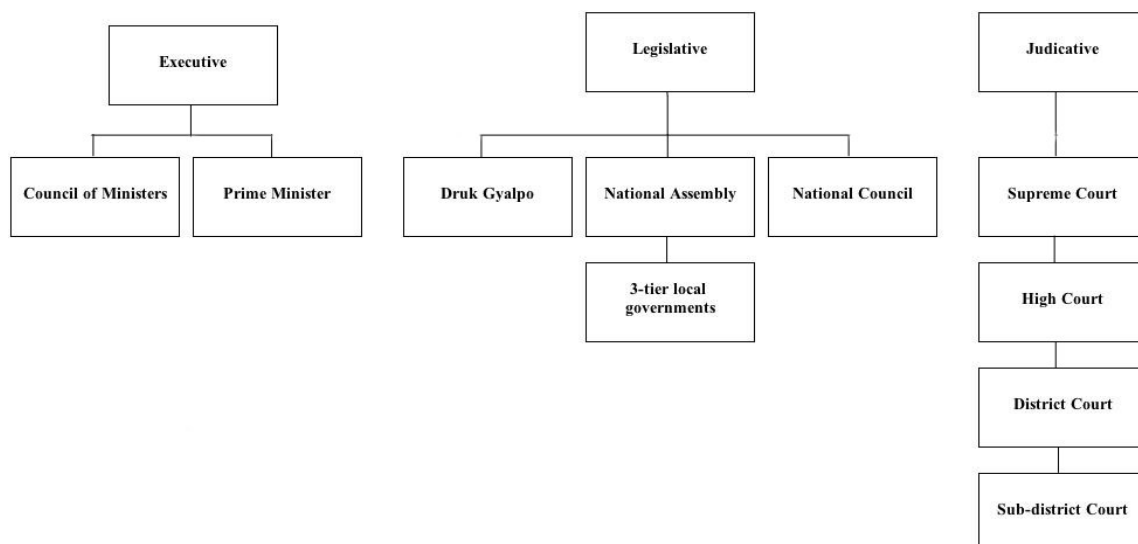


Figure 3: Political System of Bhutan, based on Gallenkamp (2010: 14)

The constitution states a separation of the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary (Art. 1.13.). Even though the *Druk Gyalpo* formally remains head of state (Art. 2.1.), he shares legislative powers with the National Council and the National Assembly (Art. 10.1.), whose acting periods are both five years (Art. 10.24.). Members of the National Council and the National Assembly are elected by the citizens of Bhutan, but five members of the National Council are appointed by the *Druk Gyalpo* (Art. 11.1.; Art. 12.1.).

The Executive powers lie with the Council of Ministers, which is led by the Prime Minister (Art. 201.1.). The Prime minister himself is the leader of the governing party in the National Assembly (Gallenkamp 2010: 14).

The Judicial system consists of several levels of courts, with the Supreme Court being the highest appellate authority, which previously had been the king (Art. 21.7.).

The transition to democracy may have changed Bhutan's political system, but the king will still play a major role in politics in the foreseeable future. Sinpeng (2007: 41f) points out that both the DPT and the PDP party had similar political orientations – a continuation of the monarch's policies. Furthermore, important positions in the government will probably be occupied by royalist bureaucrats and civil servants in the future, creating only little diversity in the political landscape.

Another issue may be suppression of fragmenting elements. Gallenkamp (2010: 14) mentions that Articles 15 and 16 of the constitution, which deal with the regulations for parties and campaign financing, may effectively deny political representation of ethnic Nepalis. As mentioned above, political parties will only be allowed to contest in the elections if they are not based on religion, race or ethnicity.

A novelty of the constitution is that while Buddhism is explicitly mentioned as “spiritual heritage of Bhutan” (Art. 3.1.), religious institutions and personalities “shall remain above politics” (Art. 3.3.). This section is noteworthy because until recently, the clergy made up a large proportion of the administration staff (Obrecht 2010: 53).

The federal structure of the administration has been simplified systematically already before the introduction of democracy. The country is divided into 20 *dzongkhags* and 201 *gewogs*. In the earlier years of its existence, the system was more complicated, with the lowest level of administration being *gewogs*, upon which were *dungkhags*, then *dzongkhags* and finally central entities like the Punakha *dratshang* (Ura 2010: 49; Gallenkamp 2010: 9).

Bhutan's appearance as an independent actor on the field of international politics has been a relatively recent one, since the country's foreign policy up to 2007 was bound to advice and approval from India. Mathou (1994: 62ff) describes Bhutan's foreign policy up until the 1990s as pragmatic, utilitarian, neutral and traditional. Pragmatism refers to Bhutan not adopting any foreign ideology to guide its policies, utilitarianism can mainly be found in relation to Bhutan's aim to remain a sovereign and independent state. This has also been a reason for Bhutan's neutrality in the sphere of international politics, where it pursued a policy of non-alignment with the then most important players on a global scale, the United States and the Soviet Union. Mathou sees traditionalism mainly in the fact that Bhutan's foreign policy has mostly operated on a minimal basis, which led to a very personal form of diplomacy, the key figures being members of the royal family.

Today, Bhutan is a member of various international organizations such as the United

Nations, the World Bank and the World Health Organization. It has established embassies in India, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Thailand, the United States and Switzerland and has recently intensified the establishment of diplomatic relations with countries all over the world (National Portal of Bhutan 2012).

3.4 Culture and Religion

Culture plays an important role in Bhutan. It is not only seen as a key component of Gross National Happiness, but also as a means to maintain a specific Bhutanese identity. The fact that Bhutan, up until the 1960s, was quite an isolated country in terms of politics, economics and tourism, contributed to the establishment of a very distinct notion of culture. The refusal of mass tourism, the late introduction of TV and promotion of specific aspects of culture by the government contributed to this development.

“With large movements of people around the Himalayan region, there is a chance that the Bhutanese identity could disappear. That is why there is such an emphasis on culture in GNH thinking, on dress, on architecture, on language, on values and other aspects of our identity” (Dorji in McDonald 2010: 104).

In 1961, Dzongkha became the official language of Bhutan, a step that was taken in order to strengthen the cohesion of Bhutanese identities. Bhutan is a multilingual country, with about 19 different languages. Dzongkha is originated from Chöke, the liturgical classical Tibetan language. It was originally spoken mainly by a minority of the country’s population, the ruling elite of ethnic Ngalongs. Dzongkha has traditionally served as the language of the military elite, the government and administration and other high institutions since the twelfth century (Hutt 2003: 4f; Driem 1994: 93; Ura et al. 2012: 145).

According to Driem (1994: 87f), Dzongkha is the only language with a native literary tradition in Bhutan, while the other languages like Sarchop or Nepali, are mainly spoken languages in the country.

The establishment of Dzongkha as a national language brought forth criticism. The question was what role the other languages would play if Dzongkha were to be the only official language of Bhutan. Driem (1994: 98ff) mentions a quote by Bhutan’s then Minister of Foreign Affairs ‘Lönpo Dawa Tsering: *“It is a misconception to think that the promotion of Dzongkha means the suppression of other languages.”* He actually mentions an active interest in the diversity of languages as that diversification is in accordance with the policy of preserving Bhutan’s cultural heritage.

Apart from Dzongkha, English and Nepali are the most commonly used languages in Bhutan. English serves as the language of diplomacy, but all three mentioned languages are used as languages of administration. With Bhutan’s rich diversity of languages it comes as no surprise that most Bhutanese are bi- or trilingual (Driem 1994: 99; Rizal 2001: 20).

Bhutan’s culture is inseparable from religion. The king in Bhutan is honored as a

reincarnation of Buddha, and Bhutanese history constitutes a narrative of facts interwoven with religious and fantastic stories. Most houses have a separate prayer room or at least a small portable shrine where rituals are hosted (see Collister 1987; Obrecht 2010: 27; Kowalewski 1994: 127).

Bhutan is the only country in the world that practices tantric Buddhism, the so-called Mahayana Buddhism. The transformation of Bhutan will probably lead to a transformation of the role of the clergy as well. Before the separation of religion and state matters, members of the cleric were prominent both in the National Assembly as well as in the king's advisory group. The highest religious leader is the *Je Khenpo*. He, like the king, has a large political and spiritual influence in the country (Walter 2009: 25f; Ura 2010: 156).

Mahayana-Buddhism aims to educate people to be self-responsible and free of fear while maintaining high ethical standards. Obrecht (2010: 29; 53) points to the fact that Western interpretations of Buddhism often focus on universalistic values and concepts of holistic harmony while negating the strict hierarchies and behavior codes that are part of practical Buddhism.

Besides the Buddhist majority, there are also practitioners of Hinduism, mostly in southern Bhutan. The majority of southerners speak the Nepali language, but the identification of a person as being "ethnic Nepali" is not unproblematic (Hutt 2003: 5).

Religion is visible in the Bhutanese landscape in the form of stupas, temples and *Dzongs*, the latter having dual functions. On the one hand, they were bases of administration, but also where the clergy was based. This is due to the fact that the administration in Bhutan was a duty of the monks for a long time (Schicklgruber 1997: 198f, in Walter 2009: 31).

Culture in the form of arts and crafts has a long tradition in Bhutan: "*Traditionally, the concept of culture was constructed around rignas (shepar ja wi nas), which were divided into five major and five minor cultural sciences. The traditional concept of the literate and cultured was constructed around these notions*" (Ura 2010: 117).

The minor cultural sciences are grammar (*dra*) poetics (*nyan ngag*), metrics (*deb jor*), dance-drama (*doe gar*) and lexicography (*ngon joed*). The major ones are the sciences of language (*dra rigpa*), science of logic (*tan tsig rigpa*), science of healing (*so wa rig pa*), science of construction (*zo rigpa* including physics, engineering, painting, sculpture) and science of meaning (*nang don rig pa* or Buddhism). Ura (2010: 117ff) also includes *zorig chusum*⁴ as one of the five major cultural science classified as *zo rigpa*.

4 Zorig Chusum are thirteen traditional artisan skills. The arts and crafts are: weaving (*Thagzo*), embroidery (*Tshemzo*), painting (*Lhazo*), carpentry (*Shingzo*), carving (*Parzo*), sculpture (*Jinzo*), casting (*Lugzo*), blacksmithing (*Garzo*), bamboo works (*Tszharzo*), goldsmithing and silversmithing (*Serzo* and *Nguelzo*),

The most popular sport in Bhutan is archery. Other national sports are *degor* (round stone is thrown at a target), *kenshey* (wrestling), *khuru* (dart-like game), but in modern Bhutan, soccer, basketball etc. are also very common (Rizal 2001: 23).

The introduction of TV to Bhutan happened as late as 1999. Until then, Bhutan was exposed very little to foreign media. By introducing television, the Bhutanese people had a better view of what happened outside their borders, particularly in the neighboring countries of China and India (Pek in McDonald 2010: 90f).

Like other aspects of Bhutanese culture, television is seen as an important way to maintain a particular form of culture and traditions. Bhutan tries to counter the Indian, Chinese and Korean influence on television by producing its own content (Dorji 2010: 108).

While the government used to control the media, freedom of the press is developing. In 2006, the king gave permission for the establishment of independent media. Pek (in McDonald 2010: 99) points out that people have now become used to having greater freedom. She sees the development of the media landscape as continuous, emphasizing that values like press freedom, once given, cannot be taken back.

Another important aspect of culture in Bhutan is *Driglam Namzha*, a code of conduct dating back to the times of *Zhabdrung* Ngawang Namgyal. *Driglam Namzha* includes “outward behavior”, such as dress and “inner attitudes” such as respect for one’s elders (Hutt 2003: 165).

Hutt (2003: 165f) quotes an undated government circular on the topic:

“The essence of Driglam Namsha [sic!] is to follow a code of conduct that will promote a well ordered society where every individual member is a proud and responsible citizen of the country. Driglam Namsha inculcates the following values.

- Respect for authority and a hierarchy that promotes the interest of the society and the nation.*
- Respect for elders.*
- Respect for each other as members of society and fellow citizens.*
- A sense of discipline.*
- A sense of responsibility.”*

The most visible aspect of *Driglam Namzha* is the national dress. The issue of a “traditional Bhutanese dress-code” exemplifies the tension between different groups in Bhutan. Those tensions have often been described as “ethnic” conflict, but one may also see masonry (*Dozo*), leather works (*Kozo*) and papermaking (*Dezo*) (Ura et al. 2012: 146).

conflict lines between regional groups or interest groups. Bhutan defines the traditional national dress as *gho* for men and *kira* for women. Both dresses were commonly worn by people from the higher situated areas of Bhutan, so *gho* and *kira* are designed to be warm. In an attempt to promote “Bhutanese” culture, the National Assembly passed a resolution that required all Bhutanese citizens to wear the national dress, with very few exceptions, such as operators of modern machinery and Bhutanese traveling abroad. The penalty for those caught not wearing the national dress was imprisonment for one month, but apparently it was not enforced (Hutt 2003: 170f; Rizal 2001: 23).

The promotion of national dress was furthered by a *kasho* (decree) by the fourth king Jigme Singye Wangchuck in 1989, during the period of the sixth Five Year Plan (1987-1992), which adopted “preservation and promotion of national identity” as one of its nine policy objectives (Hutt 2003: 172; Planning Commission 1989).

The mandatory wearing of the national dress caused tension and conflict mostly in the South, where the dress was not only unsuitable due to the different climate but also seen as an imposition of “northern” Bhutanese culture on the Lhotshampa population. There are reports of disproportionately strong enforcements of the law and of violent disputes between officials and members of the southern Bhutanese population during those times (Hutt 2003: 172ff).

Nowadays, wearing of the national dress is not compulsory on the streets, but for officials during their work time, and for any Bhutanese visiting official or holy sites.

These incidents show how trying to impose a dominant culture onto all members of a multicultural society can lead to state-induced violence. The preservation and promotion of traditional culture was consistently sponsored by the government, through programs concerning arts, crafts and sports but there were also reports on occasional enforcements of use of the national language, wearing not only of traditional dress but also hairstyle and discriminatory marriage practices. Measures like these have repeatedly led to partly violent conflicts. (Saul 2000: 332; Obrecht 2010: 66).

3.5 Society

Bhutanese society is constituted of three major ethnic groups – Ngalongs, Sarchops and Lhotshampas. Together with a fourth group, the Khengs, these ethnic groups account for about 98% of the population. While the terms “*Sarchop*” (“Easterner”) and “*Lhotshampa*” (“Southern Borderlander”) assign the ethnic categories to particular parts of the country, the term “*Ngalong*” (“First Risen”) is commonly thought to derive from the fact that Ngalongs were the first Bhutanese community to adopt Buddhism (Hutt 2003: 4; Mathew 1999: 23).

Sarchops are considered to have been the earliest settlers of Bhutan, their ancestors coming from an indo-mongolian background. The language of the Sarchops is Tsangla and they were traditionally situated in eastern Bhutan (Mathew 1999: 23; ADA 2012: 1)

The Ngalongs form the ruling elite in Bhutan, it is the ethnic group the king belongs to. Ngalongs are people of Tibetan origin who migrated to Bhutan since the beginning of the 17th century. They follow the Drukpa Kagyuppa sect of Mahayana Buddhism and speak Dzongkha, which was defined as the national language of Bhutan. Geographically, Ngalongs dominate the western part of the country (ibid.).

The third major ethnic group in Bhutan are Lhotshampas or Nepalis, inhabitants of southern Bhutan whose ancestors have been settling in Bhutan since the end of the 19th century. People from this ethnic group are considered the most recent immigrants to the area – not counting the Indian labor workers who work in Bhutan on time-bound contracts but are not considered part of the population. The Nepalis form a group with different caste and ethnic backgrounds, they are bound together by their language, Nepali, but may be both Hindu and/or Buddhist, combining those religions with locally varying forms of Shamanism (ibid.)

Describing “ethnic” groups in Bhutan is a sensitive task, since there exists no clear definition for the meaning of “ethnic groups” in Bhutan. The term therefore mostly identifies group membership according to geographical space and/or language. One should nevertheless keep in mind, that individual group characteristics may overlap and that there can never be any static definitions when it comes to culture.

The localization of groups in particular areas is also not static. Resettlement programs were initiated from the 1970s on. If the land was too poor or acreage too small for the farmers, they would be resettled in a different part of the country, leading to commingling of the population. Nowadays it is not uncommon for children to be sent to school in a different town or district (Ura 2010: 99f)

Saul (2000: 324) states: “*Over time, Bhutan’s demographic and ethnic composition has been relatively fluid, despite the isolationist foreign policy pursued by successive Bhutanese kings.*”

The actual ethnic composition of the population is uncertain, no current data on this subject is available since the 2005 census did not survey ethnic affiliation. Another contested issue is the number of total population. Upon joining the United Nations in 1971, the official estimation accounted for 1.2 million people, but in the 2005 census, Bhutan accounted its population with only 634,982 people. A country information report by the Austrian Development Agency estimates the population at about 730.000 people. The high number used with the UN is said to have been announced in order for Bhutan to be eligible as a member (Saul 2000: 325; NSB 2008: 9; ADA 2012: 1).

Refugee leaders in the camps situated in eastern Nepal and the Bhutanese government claim different proportions of ethnic composition in Bhutan. The government’s figures estimate the Ngalongs to be 20 per cent, Sarchops to be 37 per cent and Lhotshampas to be 30 per cent, whereas refugee leaders put the number of Lhotshampas much higher, at 53 per cent (Saul 2000: 325).

Bhutan’s social structure is changing due to modernization, rural-urban migration and education. Once the society was divided into aristocracy, administration, clerics and farmers, nowadays a small middle class starts to develop mostly in the urban area of Thimphu. Nevertheless, about 70 per cent of the population live in rural areas, most of them as subsistence farmers (Obrecht 2010: 24; OCC 2005: 20).

The Bhutanese government tries to counteract rural depopulation, for example by providing electricity. Bhutan’s efforts towards better supply with electrification contribute to more youth wanting to stay in their villages. In 2003, 71 per cent of the youth wanted to move to urban areas, whereas in 2006, the number dropped to 66,4 per cent (Obrecht 2010: 38).

Bhutan’s society has had to deal with significant changes over the past fifty years. Nevertheless, the transition of society has been a mostly peaceful one so far. Bhutan’s unconventional pattern of modernization is characterized by several factors. For one, the country has experienced fast economic growth but with minimal industrialization (see chapter 3.6). This has also led to growing wealth disparities, but unlike other countries, Bhutan still has low levels of class struggle. This may in part be rooted in the still high numbers of uneducated citizens and relative isolation of the country (Sinpeng 2007: 27).

The gradual modernization of Bhutan without accompanying industrialization meant that the existing class structure of the society has remained largely unchanged and only in recent

years a middle class has developed – though not on a broad scale. For a long time, the Bhutanese elite acted according to a moral code that benefited also the less-privileged members of the society (Priesner in Moser 2010: 212f; Sinpeng 2007: 28)

One of the problems Bhutan has been facing for about five years is youth unemployment. Although there are still comparatively few university graduates in Bhutan, unemployment is expected to become a bigger problem in the near future. Compulsory school education leads to a change in the structure of the society and many young adults do not want to return to their family's farms after graduation. It will be a challenge for Bhutan to create enough jobs in the service sector for those young adults. As a reaction, Bhutan has decided to allow more tourists into the country, for the government believes this will create new job opportunities (Interview Priesner 2011).

The modernization of Bhutan in the recent decades has not been perceived as exclusively beneficial. Some Bhutanese are critical towards the components of a “modern” lifestyle, like superficiality, television etc. (Tashi in McDonald 2010: 26).

Obrecht (2010: 28) makes a case that modernization, diversification of lifestyles, liberalization of the market, privatization of media and democratization constitute a possible threat for societal fundamental consensus based on Buddhist traditions. He argues that transformations towards a “modern way of life” always cause dramatic changes in epistemological and religious-cultural perceptions and lead to processes of individualization, which may have been unknown before. This in turn may cause destruction of ancient and traditional norms, values and belief-systems.

One can argue that Bhutan tries to counteract these threats because the government has become aware of these problems and, as mentioned in Chapter 3.4., is putting an emphasis on culture for example.

Though modernization is taking place, many aspects of traditional lifestyles still prevail. Most marriages in Bhutan are still arranged. Monogamy, polyandry and polygyny exist in Bhutan and are accepted lifestyles. The fourth king, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, for example is married to four sisters (Obrecht 2010: 56).

I want to mention another characteristic of the population that is relevant for the focus of this paper. It is the description of the Bhutanese population as being traditionally apolitically. This is also signified by Bhutan's transition to democracy, which was initiated by the king, not by the people. The fear of sacrificing cohesiveness for democracy was strong. Some intellectuals feared that the process of voting for one party or another might “(...) *fracture communities during electoral cycles*” (Ura 2010: xiv; Gallenkamp 2010: 9).

3.6 Economy

Bhutan's economic development has only begun quite recently. When Bhutan's first king ruled the country in the beginning of the 20th century, a formal economy was basically non-existent. The economic situation had not changed much since medieval times and Bhutan was mostly a subsistence economy. The people cultivated what they needed for their day to day life themselves, only a few goods such as soap, salt or clothes were imported. Bhutan exported rice, musk and textiles, both to Tibet and India (Ura 2010: 34). Even though Bhutan was a subsistence economy, Ura (2010: 35) claims, that “(...)deaths due to famine and starvation on a wide scale seemed not to have occurred in our [Bhutan's] history(...)”.

Even today everyone is entitled to a minimum amount of agricultural land. The state provides the land for free and gives away enough timber for everyone to build houses. The basic needs of the Bhutanese population therefore are met. So even though a third of the population can be categorized as “poor”, the country by and large enjoys a comparatively high level of human development (Sinpeng 2007: 31).

When the king of Bhutan proclaimed Gross National Happiness in the 1970s, Bhutan's economy was primarily based on barter trade. Therefore, its economical performance could not be measured with the common tools. A GNP of 50 US-Dollars therefore does not portray the financial situation of the country adequately. (Rutland, quoted in Walter 2009: 71).

Economic development in Bhutan started after the country gradually opened up in the 1960s. Between 1961 and 1973, Bhutan's economy was concentrated mainly on road construction and internationalization of relations. The first Five Year Plan in 1961 and the following two plans were financed mainly by India, who remains Bhutan's biggest donor today (Ura 1994: 35; Ura 2004: 4; ADA 2010: 23).

The following decade saw an expansion of health, education and agricultural services. The basic needs of the Bhutanese people were the main focus of Bhutan's economical and social transformations for a long time. Access to water, sanitation and electricity were seen as more important than developing industries per se. From 1983 to 1987, hydro-electric and mineral based projects were advanced (Ura 2004: 4, Sinpeng 2007: 29).

In the 1990s, Bhutan opened up by expanding its air-links, establishing digital telecommunication networks and allowing the distribution of faxes, telephones, TV and the Internet. Bhutan's economy is not a very globalized one, apart from tourism. India is the country's most important trade partner. Trade with India accounts for about 92% of Bhutan's imports and exports. Bhutan imports capital machinery and equipment, fuel, vehicles, food

and consumer goods from India. Exports are predominantly hydro-electricity, which accounts for more than half of all exports, and mineral products. Economic alignment with India is also signified by Bhutan's currency, Ngultrum, which is bound to the Indian Rupee (GNHC 2009: 7).

Bhutan has experienced a steady growth of economic wealth, real GDP grew at an average of 9.6 per cent between the years 2003 to 2007, with an extraordinary estimated peak of 21.4 per cent growth in 2007. In the past twenty years, Bhutan managed to quadruple its GDP, but one has to consider the low importance of a formal nation-wide economy in the past. The main impetus for the growth was the hydro energy sector, with the Chukha Hydroelectricity power plant solemnly accounting for most of the revenue (GNHC 2009: 4; Sinpeng 2007: 30)

Like many developing countries, Bhutan has to deal with the problems that accompany economical transformation. The tertiary and secondary sectors are growing more rapidly than the primary sector, but this shift has not been involving market improvements in the manufacturing and industrial base of Bhutan. Furthermore, as mentioned in chapter 3.5., youth unemployment will certainly become an issue in the next couple of years (GNHC 2009: 5).

One measure to counteract possible problems is a stronger focus on the tourism sector. High value tourism has been pursued as a concept since the first tourists entered Bhutan in the early 1970s. With minimum tariffs between 200 and 250 US-Dollar per person per day Bhutan tries to promote itself as a high class tourism destination and at the same time tries to counteract possible cultural threats from outside by limiting the numbers of tourists coming in. With these measures, tourism has become a major service industry, is one of the largest generators of convertible currency and usually one of the top revenue earners in Bhutan (GNHC 2009: 106; Ura 2010: 101).

The government itself is still a major employer, Sinpeng (2007: 30) points out that the economic well-being of the small middle class is almost entirely dependent upon the public service sector. Working as a government employee does not only guarantee financial security but is also seen as an honorary position.

In terms of the development of the country, Bhutan aims to become self-sufficient and therefore not be in need of development assistance any more. The total amount of official development assistance (ODA) in the form of external grants and loans has increased more than 45 per cent during 2003 and 2007 though. Nevertheless, the Tenth Five Year Plan (2008-2013) states that ODA funding only accounted for half of the total Ninth Plan outlay, while the Seventh Plan still was financed by ODA by around 70 per cent. ODA now accounts for

about a fifth of the total GDP (GNHC 2009: 7).

Other than many developing countries, Bhutan does not put its main emphasis on economic development though, but follows the principles of its own concept: Gross National Happiness.

4 Gross National Happiness

There are many ways to describe Gross National Happiness. It is a philosophy, a political program, a development idea and a guide towards a “better” society. *“GNH aims to create a society in which the collective happiness of the people is the ultimate desired outcome”* (Ura et al. 2012: 16).

GNH also constitutes an attempt to mitigate the consequences of relatively fast social and economic development. The isolation of Bhutan only fifty years ago certainly made it easier to achieve relative contentment. Analogous to the Buddhist teachings, not many wishes were unfulfilled. With increasing interconnectedness, Bhutanese society and values change and thus it is necessary to develop new ideas (Rutland, in Walter 2009: 72).

These were found in the early 1970s, when GNH was first mentioned and over the past decades have been transformed into an index that allows to measure the progress of GNH in Bhutan. The index comprises social, political, economical and ecological factors and can be seen as a multi-dimensional approach to development.

The following chapter gives an overview of the development and component of the GNH Index and discusses some of the outcomes of the first GNH survey of 2010. Describing how GNH was developed is of importance in order to evaluate what kind of concept it is. By looking at the development process, one can see who was involved in creating it and whether it was an inclusive or exclusive process.

One remark is necessary at this point: The GNH Index in its current form has been published in detail only in 2012. There is only one publication by Ura et al. (2012) that gives an extensive analysis of the GNH Index and it is an official document. Similarly, most publications that deal with GNH have been published in the Journal for Bhutan Studies, which in turn is published by the Center for Bhutan Studies, associated with official government bodies. Even though I tried to find alternative sources and compare aspects of the GNH Index with other concepts, an imbalance of literature exists when it comes to GNH and the reader should keep this in mind.

4.1 Development

Bhutan entered the “aid business” comparatively late, in the 1960s, and this way it had the chance to learn from mistakes that had been made elsewhere. Even though the country was

strongly depending on foreign aid, it was eager not to lose track of its own values and tried to find a different style of development from the beginning (Mathou 1994: 55).

Development in the Bhutanese context meant education in the traditions of Buddhism, striving for enlightenment, respecting ethics and wisdom and guiding the population towards happiness (Ura 2004: 1f).

The concept of Gross National Happiness was promulgated by the fourth king of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, when he began ruling the country in 1972. When the king first spoke about GNH, what influenced him was mostly the mere assumption that GDP alone could not make the people of Bhutan happy and bring well-being to society at large. Instead of focussing on economic development, the king of Bhutan wanted to make the happiness of the people the guiding goal of development and ultimately, his rule. Back then it was a clear break with the dominant growth paradigm focussing on economic aspects such as GDP (Ura 2010: 143; GNHC 2011: 16).

Bhutan's efforts to redefine development started at the same time that saw a challenging of the then dominant development concepts. Several initiatives started criticizing growth-based development and sought to find alternative approaches. Those ranged from attempts to adjust the Gross National Product for unaccounted costs in terms of negative external effects to various concepts of self-reliance like the dependency theories. None of those efforts became accepted as an alternative to the growth-based approach on a global scale though (Whitehouse/Winderl 2004: 392; Hirata 2003: 115).

What may be the major difference between those approaches and GNH is the fact that Bhutan had a long tradition of happiness being a guiding policy factor. It was even mentioned in the 1729 legal code by *Zhabdrung* Rinpoche, which stated that there was no purpose for a government to exist if it could not create happiness (Ura et al. 2012: 6).

Bhutan also contradicted another dominant development paradigm by not aiming at modernizing the country as fast as possible. On the contrary, Bhutan was eager to pursue its own philosophy rather than trying to copy economic – and often cultural - success models of other countries. The policies that Bhutan established tried to counterbalance the development-bias that many other developing countries experienced, seeing only the positive outcomes of “modernization”, like time-saving appliances, but not the negative consequences and externalities, like increasing speed of life or deterioration of social relationships (Hirata 2003: 124).

After the king announced that Gross National Happiness was more important than the Gross National Product, the concept of GNH remained a philosophical guiding principle for

several years. There was no clear definition of what it was, nor rules how to apply or increase it. The development strategy of Bhutan was in the hands of the newly founded Planning Commission, which in 2008 became the Gross National Happiness Commission. The fourth king of Bhutan, then crown prince, was appointed chairman of the commission in its founding year 1971 and remained in that position until 1991 (GNHC 2012: n.p.).

Considering that in the 1970s, Bhutan was still an absolute monarchy, GNH in its beginning phase could be described as a top-down approach. Even though the planning commission was established and other political institutions existed as well, the king always had the authority to overrule any decision made by any other government body. The late operationalization of GNH may have been caused merely because it was not necessary for an absolute monarch to establish written guidelines for his rule, if he could follow his personal judgement anyway (see Priesner in Moser 2010: 211).

So for quite a long time Bhutan did not achieve to operationalize GNH, a fact the country received criticism for as well. The concept was also not discussed broadly in public during the 1980s. Only in the 1990s it became more widely known and international interest in the concept started as well (Whitehouse/Winderl 2004: 392; Zangmo in McDonald 2010: 115).

Eventually, four priority areas were identified that became known as the four pillars of GNH. Sustainable and equitable socio-economic development, the conservation of the environment, the preservation and promotion of culture and the promotion of good governance were meant to create conditions under which the people of Bhutan would be able to pursue happiness (GNHC 2011: 16).

The efforts to operationalize GNH have been advanced since the mid-2000s. In 2005, the government of Bhutan decided to develop indicators for Gross National Happiness to be able to evaluate whether its policies and programs were consistent with the values of the concept. The government assigned the Center for Bhutan Studies (CBS) with the development of the index. According to Ura et al. (2012: 13), in order to develop the indicators, CBS hosted extensive consultations in private conversations with government officials, civil servants and in focus group discussions with Bhutanese citizens.

The idea of a GNH Index required a definition of what this index should contain and what purposes it should be used for. Since GNH was always meant to define development as a holistic matter, it was important that it met more than the mere fulfillment of material satisfaction. Therefore, the index should *set an alternative framework of development*. In order to operationalize the idea of GNH it was necessary to *provide indicators to sectors to guide development*. The GNH Index therefore must contain indicators that monitor activities

by the public sector or inherit the flexibility to change if sector priorities are realized. Even though the index itself cannot be sufficient to guide policy alone, an analysis of how different dimensions vary over time, space and group (e.g. age, gender, district) can point out the achievements and shortfalls of policy measures and thus provide key information for policy design. *Allocating resources in accordance with targets and GNH screening tools* therefore constitutes another criteria of the index. Since the goal of a GNH-oriented policy is to generate collective happiness, *measuring people's happiness and well-being* is of uttermost importance. In accordance with the ambition to create a holistic approach towards development, the GNH Index aims to “*capture human wellbeing in a fuller and more profound way than traditional socio-economic measures of economic development, human development or social progress have done*” (Ura et al. 2012: 11). As GNH is a long-term policy, *measuring progress over time* in order to be able to identify changes and adapt tools and activities is another characteristic. The last requirement was to design the index in a way that makes it possible to *compare progress across the country*. Since Bhutan is a diverse country concerning climate, culture, livelihood and access to services, the creators had to make sure the index was universal enough to be used in the whole country (Ura et al. 2012: 10ff).

Nine key areas were developed (see chapter 4.2) and a first pilot survey was carried out in 2006. The first pilot demonstrated shortcomings and problems of the first questionnaire, for example, that it took four to seven hours to complete. The findings of the pilot survey were used to design the actual questionnaire and redesign the survey administration. The evaluation process included discussions with national leaders and academics (GNHC 2009: 18; Ura et al. 2012: 13).

The first GNH Index was designed in 2008, after the first real GNH survey based on the preliminary questionnaire had been carried out in 2007. Like the currently used 2010 index, the 2008 version was based on the multidimensional poverty measurement by Alkire and Foster (2007). The 2008 index identified a person as happy if they had achieved sufficiency in each of the 72 indicators that made up the index. The result was that no Bhutanese achieved sufficiency and the questionnaire was revised again (Ura et al. 2012: 14).

After extensive literature review and a participatory consultation process, the 2010 index was developed. CBS set up focus group discussions with members of decision-making bodies in Bhutan in order to identify key values and prioritize the indicators. The final GNH survey was conducted from April to December 2010 (Ura et al. 2012: 15).

The concept of GNH has received widespread attention as an indigenous development

concept and a new approach at measuring national well-being. In 2011, the United Nations General Assembly even passed a non-binding resolution acknowledging the pursuit of happiness as a valuable aspiration. One last remark on the concept is, that even though it is an indigenous concept, it is based on the Alkire-Foster approach and Karma Ura, who had major responsibilities in developing it, was educated in Oxford, which could be interpreted as “Western” influence (GNHC 2011: 16; Wangchuk 2010: xi).

4.2 Definition and Components

Gross National Happiness is a complex idea, therefore no single definition exists. It consists of a set of values that promote collective happiness as the desirable outcome of any development strategy. Ura et al. (2012: 7) describe the concept as holistic, balanced, collective, sustainable and equitable. The aim is to create enabling conditions in which people are able to pursue well-being in sustainable ways – which at the same time reflects the components of “happiness” used in the concept.

Even though the name of the concept includes the word “happiness”, GNH is not about happiness in the way Western literature describes it very often – a subjective feeling associated often with hedonic pleasure (see Layard 2005). GNH is strongly influenced and shaped by Buddhist beliefs: *“The objectives of Bhutan and Buddhist understandings of happiness are much broader than what is referred to as ‘happiness’ in Western literature”* (CBS n.y.: n.p.).

This also relates to another characteristic of GNH – it is “objective” happiness, which could be described as living in good conditions (Veenhoven 2000: 267), and not to be confused with subjective well-being (SWB), a standard dimension in contemporary happiness research. I will later discuss the relationship between GNH and SWB.

The collective component of GNH means that happiness is being moved from a highly personalized form to a form that is produced by contributing to the happiness of others (McDonald 2010: 40). Ura (in McDonald 2010: 51) believes that happiness has both a non-self-transcendent quality and one that transcends the self, the latter being influenced by fulfilling ones social and sociological needs.

GNH is an extensive concept that is used not only as overarching objective in almost all official documents in Bhutan, the government also promotes GNH to be a guiding principle for individuals (Ura et al. 2012: 7).

As mentioned above, the complex idea of collective happiness was translated into four core

objectives to ensure a more focused long-term development of the country into the desired direction. Those objectives are called the “pillars” of GNH and are

- 1) sustainable and equitable socio-economic development,
- 2) environmental conservation,
- 3) preservation and promotion of culture and
- 4) good governance (GNHC 2009: 18).

Apart from the philosophical component of GNH, several tools and institutions have been created to work towards the aim of creating conditions under which every Bhutanese citizen should be able to pursue happiness in a way they find to be appropriate. In terms of tools, maybe the most important one is the Gross National Happiness Index.

The index itself does not claim to include all different aspects that constitute GNH, nor is it in itself sufficient to guide public policy. Therefore it must be not only promoted by a large number of institutions, it also needs to be complemented by other policies and programs design to fit the specific needs of local realities (Ura et al. 2012: 8).

The categories of the GNH Index were partly developed specifically developed for the index, but it also incorporates elements of other indices, such as the disability indicator of the US Department of Health and Human Services (Ura et al. 2012: 135).

The Gross National Happiness Index is built upon the Alkire-Foster Method for measuring multidimensional poverty. In this method, a set of indicator cutoffs reflect sufficiency, rather than focussing on poverty. Sabina Alkire was also involved in analyzing the GNH Index in a recent publication (Ura et al. 2012; Alkire/Foster 2007).

The GNH Index consists of nine core domains, that are constructed of 33 indicators that draw on 124 variables. The domains are equally weighted and were selected on normative and statistical grounds. The nine domains are:

1. Psychological well-being
2. Health
3. Education
4. Culture
5. Time use
6. Good Governance
7. Community vitality
8. Ecological diversity and resilience
9. Living standard (CBS n.y.: n.p.)

In order to understand what GNH is about and also to make sure the relationship between

Gross National Happiness and individual freedom can be examined better, it is important to give at least an overview of what those dimensions include. An in-depth analysis as well as a detailed description of the indicators is too extensive to be given here, so for a detailed explanation see Ura et al. (2012).

Psychological Well-being

The GNH Index uses indicators of emotional well-being, satisfaction and spirituality. The last component reflects the particularity of the concept to Bhutanese culture, whereas the first two components have been used extensively in other well-being indices (Ura et al. 2012: 124; Stiglitz/Sen/Fitoussi 2010: 18).

The four indicators of the domain “Psychological Well-being” are: **Life satisfaction**, **positive emotions**, **negative emotions** and **spirituality**; all of them again divided into sub-categories and correspondent questions. Psychological well-being is measured through subjective and self-reported data (Ura et al. 2012: 124).

Health

The “Health” domain consists of four different indicators: **number of healthy days in a month**, **self-reported health status**, **activity limitation** (disability) and **mental health** (Ura et al. 2012: 134).

The GNH understanding of health goes in line with the WHO’s definition of health being “(...) *a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*” (WHO 1948:1; Ura et al. 2012: 134).

The GNH Index measures health by mixing subjective accounts (e.g. self-reported health status) and established questionnaires (e.g. mental health), thus trying to balance out the shortcomings of either method of collecting data (see Ura 2012: 134ff).

Education

Two of the four “Education” indicators, **literacy** and **educational qualifications**, are standard indicators, whereas the other two, **knowledge** and **values**, represent more profound and in case of the last indicator, country-specific belief.

A person is said to be literate if they are able to read and write in Dzongkha or Nepali or English and is said to be sufficiently qualified if they have completed at least six years of formal education, non-secular education or non-formal education (Ura et al. 2012: 140).

The knowledge indicator features five diverse questions, three relating to knowledge of

Bhutanese traditions, one to the constitution and one to the transmission of HIV/AIDS (ibid:141).

The values indicator is an interesting one as it implies a certain set of values is said to be adding more to happiness in Bhutan than other sets of values. Nevertheless, the claim of Bhutanese values is that they should be “(...) *universal values that develop the capacity of our young people to distinguish right from wrong, good from evil, and to lead lives that are guided by moral and ethical choices*” (Planning Commission 1999: 19).

Values play a crucial role not only in GNH but also Bhutan’s national philosophy. According to Ura (2010: 159), a sense of lacking values is leading to negative consequences in the country.

Reflecting upon this sensitive indicator, Ura et al. (2012: 143) mention that the “Values” indicator may be revised in future GHN surveys, but nevertheless provides preliminary insight into the prevailing values in Bhutan, by asking the respondents whether five “destructive” actions were justifiable.

Culture

Culture has been accorded a high priority by the Bhutanese government due to its importance in facilitating sovereignty of a small country with big neighbors and providing identity. Preserving the culture of Bhutan has been an important objective under the rule of the fourth king as well. The idea was that if a culture was not strong enough, also peoples’ cohesion and confidence in their own society could possibly be undermined (Ura 2010: 114)

Ura et al. (2012: 144) acknowledge that culture is a dynamic concept, thus changing permanently, but they conclude that “(...) *sustaining these cultural aspects requires continuous promotion and progress towards developing adequate resilience.*”

To evaluate the strength of various aspects of culture, the GNH Index includes **language, artisan skills, cultural participation** and **Driglam Namzha**. While the language diversity of Bhutan is reflected by the question of whether one speaks one’s mother tongue fluently, the preferred artisan skills are defined by being *Zorig Chusum*, a rather traditional set of arts. Cultural participation is measured by the number of cultural festivals and social gatherings a person attended in the past year. *Driglam Namzha* again is a very specific indicator. The GNH Index measures both perceived importance and perceived change of “the Way of Harmony”, aiming to promote it (Ura et al. 2012: 144ff).

The fear of excessive influence by “foreign” cultures is quite common in a globalized world. Sen (1999: 240f) writes about the “overwhelming power of Western culture and

lifestyle” that threatens to undermine traditions and local values. He points out though that developments, that may lead to an undermining of culture, also have the possibility to revive it. With communication possibilities like the internet it is possible to preserve culture as well.

Time use

As the balance between leisure, paid work and unpaid work is considered important for well-being, the GNH Index collects data about the activities people spend their days with. The research used a time diary, in which respondents had to record their activities during the previous day. Each activity was recorded including the duration it lasted and later regrouped into 60 different categories. In the end, the indicators used in the GNH Index were **working hours** and **sleeping hours** (Ura et al. 2012: 148ff).

Good Governance

In Bhutan, good governance in terms of the GNH Index consists of four sub-criteria. First, **government performance** is measured by asking the respondents about their subjective evaluation in fields such as creating jobs and fighting corruption. Second, **political participation** in the form of possibilities of voting and taking part in community meetings is asked. The third component is **service delivery**, such as distance from the nearest health station and water supply. Fourth, **political freedoms** are evaluated by asking whether the respondents felt they had the rights to basic freedoms and conditions (Ura et al. 2012: 155ff).

In GNH thought, good governance is the reflection of traditional Buddhist thought, based on a broad traditional-cultural consensus (Obrecht 2010: 27).

Community vitality

The concept of GNH defines a vital community as “(...) *a group of people who support and interact positively with other individuals and is based on a sense of cohesion amongst the members providing social support to one another*” (Ura et al. 2012: 160).

In Bhutan, the social capital of the country is considered as very important and the concept above reflects local moral beliefs and the values of GNH. The indicators of the “community vitality”-domain include **social support**, which depicts volunteering or donating within the community. **Community relationship** is reflected by a sense of belonging and trust in neighbors, **family** relationship is also one indicator. The last component of community vitality is **safety**, which is measured by whether the respondent has been a victim of crime in the past year (Ura et al. 2012: 160ff).

Social capital plays a vital role for well-being. Societies in which people can trust other people and national institutions tend to be happier. Related to that is the issue of individual values, that need to be in accord with the societal values (Verme 2009: 152).

Ecological diversity and resilience

For this domain, subjective indicators were used as proxy measures for environmental issues and changes. Because subjective indicators lack the potential to fully portrait the complexity of the ecological system, future GNH surveys may be redesigned to include more objective data from studies. The elements of this domain are **concern with environmental issues** such as air pollution and floods, feelings of **responsibility towards the environment**, crop constraint and damage by **wildlife** and **urban issues** such as traffic congestion and lack of pedestrian streets (Ura et al. 2012: 165ff).

Living standards

Even though GNH is designed to measure well-being through more than mere economic data, material well-being is also included in the index through the domain “living standards”. It is measured with three indicators: **Household per capita income**, **assets** and **housing quality**. Assets have been included into the domain because they give a more comprehensive overview of the material possessions than mere valuation of monetary income. In the case of Bhutan, it was obvious to include not only appliances but also livestock ownership and land ownership as assets, since those are major components in rural and agricultural economies (Ura et al. 2012: 168ff).

The GNH Index consists of eight subjective and 25 objective indicators, but subjective indicators account for 17% of the GNH Index weighted indicators. A person is considered unhappy if they have not attained sufficiency in six domains (Ura et al. 2012: 20ff).

The classification draws upon two kinds of thresholds: variable sufficiency thresholds and one happiness threshold. The sufficiency threshold is different for every variable and assigns how much per cent of an indicator a person needs in order to be qualified as “enjoying sufficiency”. Since no set of thresholds will be accurate across all people in Bhutan, a second happiness threshold was established, that allows diversity (Ura et al. 2012: 22f).

To report on the status of GNH, Ura et al. (2012: 23) divided the population into four sub-groups by using three different cutoffs. People are defined as unhappy, narrowly happy, extensively happy or deeply happy depending on the sufficiency level they achieve across

indicators. The thresholds are set at 50%, 66% and 77% of the weighted indicators. People who are defined as “narrowly happy” and “unhappy” are summarized as being “not yet happy”, while the other two are defined as happy.

The reason for setting the sufficiency cutoff at a middle percentage was to allow diversity. A person does not have to achieve sufficiency in all indicators to be qualified as “happy” (Ura et al. 2012: 29) .

A possible limit for the validity of the index is that it is based on subjective evaluation. Sen (1999: 62) mentions that the human mind by its very nature adapts to external circumstances. Thus, a person can evaluate themselves as healthy or happy, even though their condition might suggest otherwise.

On the other hand, while the data is based on subjective evaluations, the methodology is perfectly objective. The whole questionnaire requires that people answer the questions honestly – and it is always subject to interpretations. But within those limitations it is valid (see Hirata 2003: 102).

4.3 Implementation and Survey Results

The final GNH survey was conducted between April and December 2010. Around 60 conductors, who had been specifically trained, went to interview about one person a day. Due to funding and the scattered nature of settlements in Bhutan, it was not possible to execute the survey any faster. Interviews were conducted in the households of the selected designated interview partners with assistance from local government leaders (Ura et al. 2012: 15). Ura et al (2012: 163) claim that the setting of the interviews included only the interviewed and the interviewer in order to avoid biased answers, but a recent documentary movie shows that this was not always the case (Friedl 2012).

The survey contains 7142 respondents out of a targeted sample of 8700, covering all 20 dzongkhags in Bhutan. The survey is representative on a national level, on a dzongkhag level and by rural and urban areas. Respondents were between 15 and 98 years old and gender equality was almost achieved (Ura et al. 2012: 15).

The results of the 2010 Gross National Happiness Survey were published in late 2011. The findings conclude that according to the GNH Index, 8.3% of Bhutanese are “deeply happy”, 32.6% are “extensively happy”, 48.7% fall under the category “narrowly happy” and 10.4% are qualified as “unhappy”. Taking into account the thresholds, this means that 40.9% of Bhutanese are counted as sufficiently “happy” (Ura et al. 2012: 4).

The regional differences across Bhutan show that Haa is the happiest district, with a mean happiness of 64.9 per cent and Pema Gathsel is the unhappiest one with 56.1 per cent (CBS 2011: 16).

Most Bhutanese were found to enjoy sufficiency in the categories value, safety, native language, family, mental health, urbanization issues, responsibility towards environment, satisfaction in life, government performance, healthy days and assets. The categories in which less than half of the Bhutanese enjoy sufficiency are literacy, housing, donations, work, services, schooling, cultural participation and knowledge (Ura et al. 2012: 39).

On a related matter, education is the highest contributor to unhappiness (15.6%), followed by living standard, time use and good governance with each 13.5% (Ura et al. 2012: 56f). The insufficiency in the good governance category is therefore relevant, as the indicator “political freedoms” is part of it.

In terms of the freedom component of GNH, the election process was rated as “free and fair” by 97 per cent (CBS 2011: 388). Freedom of the media from government influences showed lower trust levels, with 15 per cent rating the media as “not free”, but still a majority

of 73 per cent rated the media as being either “completely free” or “quite free” (ibid 390). These positive findings should nevertheless be viewed with the knowledge of the results of two other questions. Knowledge and understanding of the constitution was found to be “very poor” for 33.4 per cent and “poor” for 28.9 per cent (ibid 335). Equally, the knowledge and understanding of the role of the members of parliament was “poor” for 27.6 per cent and “very poor” for 30.9 per cent (ibid 341).

This shows that while there is an opinion about the election process for example, there might not be sufficient background knowledge in order to make an *informed* decision about it.

I do not want to go into detail about the survey results here, so I refer those who are interested in them to Ura et al. (2012) and CBS (2011). Nevertheless, some specific survey results will be used to back my research findings in chapter 5.

In order to increase happiness, Ura et al. (2012: 64) suggest that it needs a joint effort of Bhutan’s government, the communities and individual citizens. Each sector has to focus on a different aspect of GNH – for example, government policies must address political participation and fundamental rights. On the community level the focus would be on Driglam Namzha and safety and on an individual level the emotions-factor and time use can be influenced. Figure 4 shows the responsibility levels for increasing happiness.

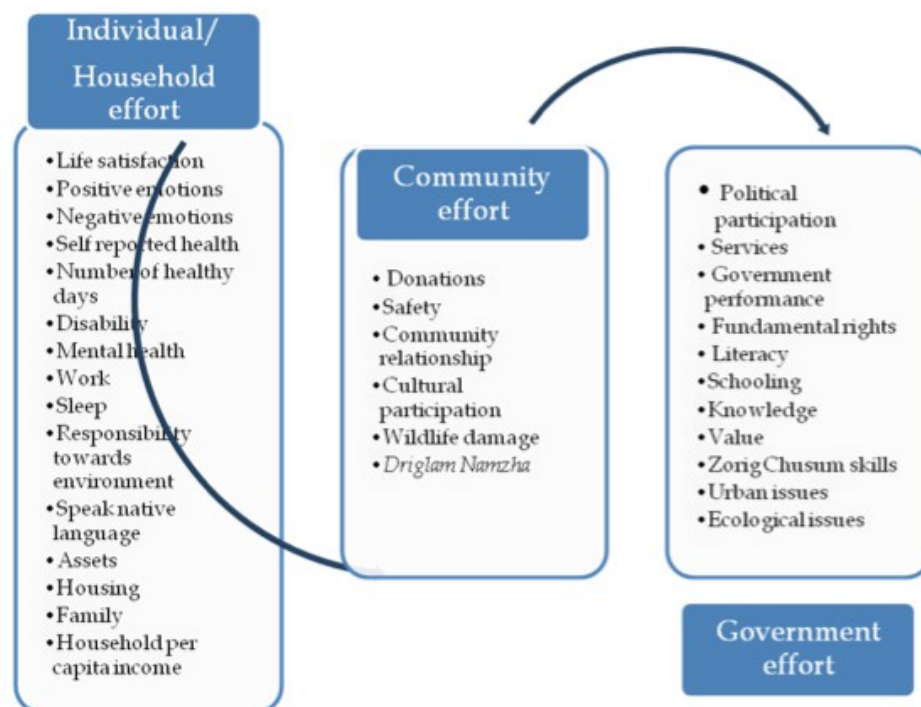


Figure 4: Responsibility levels for promoting GNH (Ura et al. 2012: 85)

As mentioned earlier, there are several tools and institutions that contribute to the

implementation of GNH. On a government level, the most important institution is the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC).

Monitoring the implementation of GNH is the responsibility of the GNHC. The commission was established in 2008, with the transformation of the Planning Commission, which was renamed GNHC. According to its mandate, the GNHC is responsible for ensuring that GNH is mainstreamed into the planning, policy making and implementation process of government activities and thus has to evaluate their relevance to the GNH framework. The GNHC thus is the intersection between government bodies and between them and the GNH framework (GNHC 2013: n.p; GNHC 2012: n.p.).

The problem arising from such great responsibilities though is that the screening process is prone to permeability sometimes. When the controversial Tobacco Control Act (see Chapter 5) was implemented in Bhutan, the law was based on discussions in the parliament, rather than an in-depth screening by the GNHC (Interview Tshiteem 2011).

In order to allow decentralized screening of policy processes, the Center for Bhutan Studies has developed a GNH screening tool. With this tool, government bodies, but also private institutions, shall be able to systematically assess the impacts that individual policies and projects have on GNH. This tool consists of a questionnaire, on which one can rank the impact, which the examined policy or project has on each of the nine domains of GNH. The ranking should be done by a *“heterogeneous group comprising of qualified experts and professionals from different occupational background”*. One example is the effect a policy will probably have on the stress level of people. Each question can be answered on a four-pointer scale ranging from one to four, four being the most positive score. In our example the scale is ranging from “Will increase levels of stress in the population” (1) to “Will decrease levels of stress in the population” (4). Other possible answers are “Do not know the effects on levels of stress in population” (2) and “Will not have any appreciable effects on levels of stress in population” (3). An overall positive score is achieved if the outcome equals four times the number of screening question – since four is the most positive score. A neutral score is achieved if the outcome equals at least three times the number of screening questions. Everything below calls for a revision of the policy (Official Website for Gross National Happiness 2012).

The problem with the GNH screening tool is the question of feasibility. First, a heterogenous group of independent experts and professionals would have to be found, thus constituting an organizational effort. Second, this measure requires sufficient financial support to conduct research in order to make informed decisions about the ranking. Third, the question

remains which policies and project will be screened, as from a practical point of view it will not be possible to screen every single one.

I want to pick up another point here that has been made previously in this work and by other authors. There exists some criticism towards happiness research due to the question whether subjective appraisals are valid – for the already mentioned psychological habit of adjusting to circumstances (see Sen 1999; Veenhoven 2000).

As a first step it needs to be pointed out that GNH and subjective well-being are not the same – they do not even correlate. On the contrary, if one compares GNH and subjective happiness levels, they differ (Ura et al. 2012: 52ff).

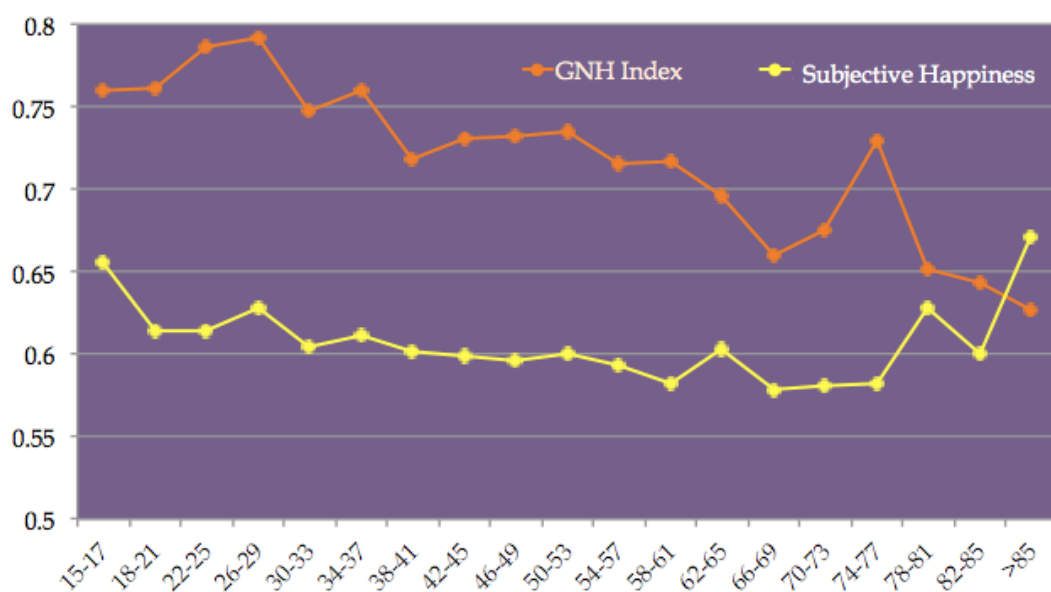


Figure 5: Comparison of GNH-level and level of Subjective Well-being (Ura et al. 2012: 52)

Figure 5 shows the disparities between subjective happiness and GNH. On a side note it also shows how, while older people enjoy less GNH, they rate their subjective well-being significantly higher.

Even subjective well-being evaluations contain similar criteria like GNH though, with the difference that these criteria are individually constructed:

“When we appraise how much we appreciate the life we live, we seem to use two sources of information: we estimate our typical affective experience to assess how well we feel generally, and at the cognitive level we compare life as it is with standards of how life should be” (Veenhoven 2000: 268).

GNH is a concept that is by its very definition aiming at the collective. Veenhoven (in

McDonald 2010: 40) argues that collective happiness is not pre-programmed naturally. Rather it is a cultural construct and as such both a possible government objective and something that will possibly change its meaning over time.

Contrary to many current development projects elsewhere, that are defined to last for a period of only a few years, GNH is targeting a significantly longer period:

“National happiness is not to be achieved within a range of 20 years, it is a long-term project in the true sense of the word. It is not only a national but also an individual responsibility to refrain from harming others, because from a Bhutanese perspective, as long as there are conflicts within a community, happiness cannot be achieved” (Tashi in McDonald 2010: 31).

The question is then, how is the current state of individual freedom and collective happiness in Bhutan. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

5 Individual Freedom in Gross National Happiness

In an official description of GNH, the GNH Commission (2011:16) states that “*GNH and human development advocate the creation of an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accordance with their needs and interests.*”

This definition suggests firstly that the state plays a vital role in enabling individuals to pursue happiness and secondly that GNH leaves the choice, what shape happiness has for oneself, to the individual. The question is whether rhetoric and practice are consistent or divergent in this case.

For this thesis I combined a content analysis of postings in a Facebook group related to the controversial Tobacco Control Act (TCA) of 2010 with a brief critique of the GNH Index and interviews with Bhutanese officials. As all laws are required in theory to be in line with GNH, the TCA can be seen as a policy related to GNH and therefore as a proxy for other measures. A more detailed explanation of the methodology can be found in the following chapter.

In the 2010 conducted GNH survey, 95.4 per cent of respondents said they were not currently smokers, only 4.6% answered the question with “yes” (CBS 2011: 159). Considering such low official numbers, the controversy that followed the 2010 Tobacco Control Act must have come as a surprise for the members of parliament, who enacted the law. Bhutan has a long history of tobacco control, establishing its first tobacco control law in 1729. This law led to decrease of tobacco consumption, but also led to the distribution of other stimulants, such as *doma* (betel nut), which about 60 per cent of Bhutanese chew regularly (Ugen 2003: 431; CBS 2011: 177).

The Tobacco Control Act of 2010 was an intensification of existing tobacco laws and it banned smoking in most public places, including commercial centers like shopping-malls and restaurants, recreational centers like playing fields and discotheques, institutions like *dzongs* and educational centers, public spaces like taxi stands and airports and *tsechus* and public transportation (TCA 2010: Art. 3).

Cultivation, harvest, manufacturing, supply and distribution of tobacco and tobacco products, including selling and buying of tobacco and tobacco products was banned within Bhutan (TCA 2010: Art. 11).

Thus the only way of consuming tobacco products for personal use for the Bhutanese remained to import it from another country and pay a tax for the products. Proof of tax and

duty payments had to be provided in order to be able to consume tobacco products legally, but was only valid for one month after paying the tax (TCA 2010: Art. 12, 13, 14; TCB 2011: 3).

This legislation de facto was a strong limitation of access to tobacco products for Bhutanese, since the access to India, the only neighboring country Bhutanese can enter legally, remains time-consuming and costly for Bhutanese living in other parts than the South. Tobacco products could only be imported through five designated points of entry. Furthermore, the tax that had to be paid for legally importing tobacco products and tobacco could not be provided for easily by all Bhutanese, considering the low income most Bhutanese enjoy. Tax for products imported from India was a hundred per cent and from third countries another hundred per cent customs duty had to be paid additionally (TCB 2011: 4).

The responsibility of controlling the compliance with the law was with a person in charge or the proprietor of the space in question, who would be fined 10,000 Ngultrum if they failed to keep the place smoke-free. For smokers, the initial penalty for smoking in a non-smoking area was a fine of 500 Ngultrum. If they failed to provide proof of taxation and duty payments the offense was extended to be declared „smuggling“. Persons found guilty of smuggling tobacco or tobacco products within the limits of the permitted quantity were fined 10,000 Ngultrum, and those who exceeded the permitted quantity were punishable with a minimum sentence of felony of fourth degree, corresponding to a minimum of three and a maximum of five years in prison. The same penalty applied to persons found with more than the permitted quantity for personal consumption, which at the time was 200 sticks of cigarettes or bidis or 30 pieces of cigars or 150 grams of other tobacco products (TCA 2010: Art. 48-54; Choden 2013; Wangmo 2013; TCB 2011: 15ff; Penal Code of Bhutan 2004: Art. 3).

The first person to be charged under the TCA 2010 was Sonam Tshering, a 23-year-old monk, who was arrested at the checkpoint Chuzom on January 24th, 2011. He carried 480 grams of chewing tobacco worth 120 Ngultrum (about 2 Euro), which led to a sentence of three years imprisonment on March 3rd, 2011 (BBS 2011).

The case of Tshering led to the establishment of an online discussion board in the form of a Facebook group, called “Amend the Tobacco Control Act”. The group’s aim is stated as follows:

“Understanding the ill effects and health hazards of tobacco use, in no uncertain terms does this group endorse tobacco consumption. This is a group meant for discussing issues related to the Tobacco Control Act. As a forum for public discourse, the group welcomes people both for and against the Act and expects that every one will engage in mature and fruitful debates and

discussions” (“Amend the Tobacco Control Act” 2013).

As of the present day (March 2013), the group has about 3.000 members and has been a place for online discussions about the topic that enabled a national and international debate. As an „open group“, anyone with a Facebook profile can see the group, its members and what members post.

As the TCA 2010 constitutes an intervention in personal freedom of the Bhutanese, I was interested in analyzing how the issue was discussed in the Facebook group and whether freedom was used as an argument in the discussion about the TCA 2010.

5.1 Methodology and Research Design

Before I go into detail about the methodology I want to explain the background for my choice of method, which also indicates the state of freedom for independent research in Bhutan. In order to examine the relationship between individual freedom and collective happiness, the initial plan for this thesis was to conduct research in Bhutan. Narrative-biographical interviews should have been the basis for the analysis, examining how individuals in Bhutan perceive allocation of chances and capabilities through GNH policies. Conducting research in Bhutan is restricted in so far, as entrance to the country as a tourist is very expensive and there is no formal research visa. Even though I tried to get an entry for several months and via different channels, I was not granted a visa.

As an alternative approach of research I chose to combine different methods and work with triangulation, thus achieving valid and reliable results despite the limitations of the research process. This methodological chapter thus comprises elements of an empirically based critique. Eclectic voices represent a more encompassing aspect of the relationship of individual freedom and collective happiness.

Triangulation combines different perspectives on a single phenomenon. Those perspectives could be different methods or different theoretical approaches that should be linked in order to answer research questions. Triangulation also can include different forms of data, for example open interviews and standardized questionnaires. Different perspectives should be used equally in order to create a balanced outcome. By combining methods, the deficiencies of each individual method can be overcome, and the outcome can be more extensive (Flick 2011: 12ff; Schmid 1995: 305).

For this thesis I complemented the content analysis of postings in the Facebook group “Amend the Tobacco Control Act” with a brief critique of the GNH Index and interviews with

Bhutanese officials. I spent two weeks in Bhutan in 2011, as a journalist, and conducted interviews with government officials, representatives of NGOs and citizens of Bhutan.

For this paper I used interviews with Neten Zangmo, Karma Ura and Karma Tshiteem. Zangmo is the chairperson of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and one of few Bhutanese women in a high-ranking government position. Ura is the president of the Center for Bhutan Studies (CBS) and was significantly involved in designing the GNH Index. Tshiteem is the secretary of the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC). Due to the journalistic nature of the interviews, they do not qualify as expert interviews, strictly speaking. Nevertheless, the interviewees were experts in their field and thus qualify as a source of information for this thesis. Though the interviews did not concentrate on the question of individual freedom, the issue was discussed in interviews explicitly several times and is implicit to other topics that were discussed as well.

The interviews are meant to give an impression of an official side of the relationship between freedom and GNH. Even though the analysis concerns supra-personal institutions, these organizations are made up of human beings and therefore information about those institutions can only be accessed via individual people (see Schmid 1995: 303).

Considering the form of this paper, I chose to put an emphasis on the content analysis and complement the findings with the other elements.

The analysis of the Facebook group is based on Philipp Mayring's content analysis. Mayring (1995: 43) starts with the definition of the material, and an analysis of the circumstances of origin of the content and its formal characteristics. In order to answer my research questions, I chose to analyze one week of posts and comments, following the arrest of Sonam Tshering in 2011. The sample period is 3rd to 9th of March 2011 and includes all original posts and comments to original posts that were published in this period. Other activities in the group, mainly notifications about new members and corresponding comments, are excluded from the analysis.

The first step of the analysis was to formally record all relevant contributions in a coding sheet. All contributions are collected, stating date, time and author of the contribution, the form of contribution (original post or comment) and the number of "likes". For original posts, the number of comments was recorded and for comments, a reference number to the original post. This data exists for all contributions in the sample period. All contributions that were related to the Tobacco Control Act, GNH or freedom were analyzed in detail. The abbreviation TCA in the following chapters always refers to the Tobacco Control Act of 2010, in differentiation to the Tobacco Control (Amendment) Act of 2012.

For all contributions that qualified for detailed analysis I recorded their length in words and evaluated their attitude towards the TCA, GNH and freedom with the help of a numerical code. If freedom was used as an argument, I also analyzed whether it was implicitly or explicitly used. During the coding process, I developed keywords and key phrases for the identification of attitudes. „Negative“ attitudes towards the TCA were for example if it was described as „draconian law“, if the user called for an amendment or abolishment of the act, if they thought it was too strict by questioning whether a three year sentence for Sonam Tshering was justified. The possible values for these variables were “positive”, “negative”, “neutral”, “unclear” and “not mentioned”.

In case a contribution was linked to content on other websites, the links were analyzed briefly about whether they endorsed TCA or criticized it. But the arguments used in the content on third websites was not analyzed, because usage of links requires additional effort of the user and it can not be guaranteed that a link to a third content has the same impact as a comment on Facebook. Furthermore, the content that users linked to were almost always pieces written by other authors than themselves. If I had used those contents extensively, it would have distorted the findings.

In a second step, I paraphrased the arguments in the contributions and finally abstracted the statements to construct more general categories to identify recurring topics. This step abolished the use of a numerical coding system and used content analysis of written pieces instead. Some postings are included as illustrative examples in the presentation of the findings below. For better readability, lexical and grammar mistakes are not indicated, but the postings are presented as they were written by their respective authors. The numbers in brackets in the following chapter refer to the coded number of contribution. The coding sheets and codebook can be found in the annex.

The interpretation of the findings again follows Mayring’s technique. I summarized the findings and thus reduced the material as much as possible, while still maintaining the essential arguments. This allows to create a compact text body that still portrays the original material adequately (Mayring 1995: 54).

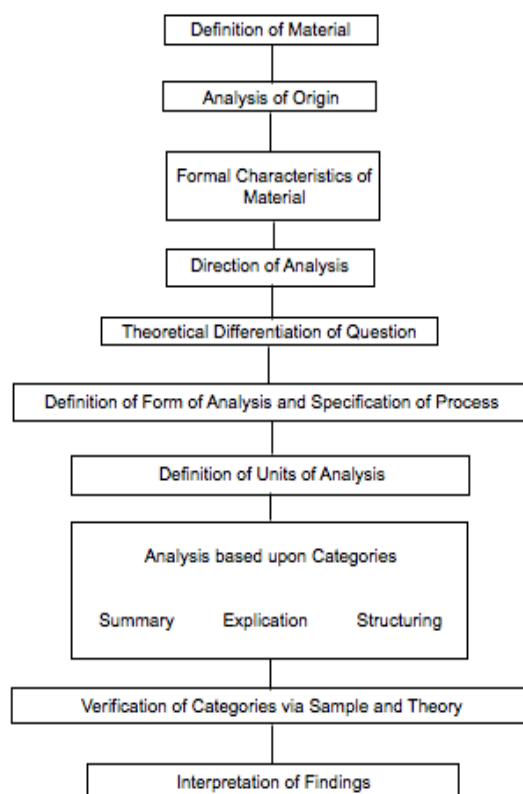


Figure 6: Content Analysis based on Mayring (1995: 50)

The analysis approximates Mayring's content analysis, as shown in figure 6 but I used a simplified approach explained above since the sample period included 413 contributions, of which 312 qualified for detailed analysis.

5.2 Findings of the Research

The Facebook group was created by a young adult Bhutanese citizen and in its first weeks of existence apparently had only a few hundred members. A superficial analysis of all the contents shows, that while in its earlier stages, the Facebook group was a place of discussion mainly about the Tobacco Control Act, it has become a platform for a more diverse range of topics that are of concern for the Bhutanese.

Remarkable about the formal characteristics of the material is on the one hand the length of contributions and on the other hand the tone of the discussions. Generally, the discussion is polite and respectful, few people are using swearwords and serious insults do not exist in the group. Only in two cases, vulgar language can be found (196, 311). Some of the arguments are polemic, but equally, there are comments that look into the subject of the TCA in a very

sophisticated manner. The length of the contributions varies between one word statements (such as “Democracy”, 373) and the longest contribution reaching 980 words. About half of the contributions were longer than 20 words, and 43 contributions had a hundred words or more. While not the majority, still a significant number of contributions show that the discussions were led with a level of seriousness, judging from the amount of time the contributors had to invest in order to produce such extensive comments.

For the interpretation of the findings, one has to keep in mind that there are limits to the level of representativity of the data. The discussions on Facebook are led by an elite, which is a fact that the members of the group sometimes refer to explicitly (113; 114). They are aware that their opinion may not be representative for the majority of Bhutanese:

“(...) everyone on this page knows that they'll never be checked for cigarettes nor chewing tobacco, its elitist. I recently came on druk air, and saw certain VIP people who had been smoking in the airport lounge with me earlier breeze right through customs. I had dumped my few cigs before I got off the plane. if we're going to be vigilant about following laws, it should affect all of us. how often can an average person who likes to smoke go out of bhutan to get a cig anyway? all of us on this page have "connections"-- money to go to phuntsoling, take a flight to bangkok, enough to drive the kind of car that will never be checked at posts. its a law that has been designed to push a certain class (the majority) down... down... down..” (49).

In the 2010 GNH Survey (CBS 2011: 394), only 23 per cent stated that they had access to internet. Even though we can assume that this figure has risen, it is still very likely that the majority of Bhutanese does not have access to internet.

This limitation is also portrayed by the number of authors in the sample period. From 3rd to 9th of March, 2011, 72 different authors produced original posts or comments, but only 15 of them contributed 10 or more postings. In the initial coding process, the names of the contributors were listed, but for data privacy reasons, they were later anonymized.

The first important result of the analysis was that while the TCA was discussed in detail, GNH and freedom hardly ever were used in arguments. Out of 312 contributions qualified for detailed analysis, only 31 related to GNH and 76 used freedom as an argument.

The reasons behind these low numbers can be assumed to be diverse. Talking about freedom and furthermore, a right to individual freedom, requires a philosophical understanding of these issues and awareness of individual rights. People without an education might frame the problems they experience in a different way than arguing with their personal rights or with a concept like freedom. On the other hand, it may well be that freedom and the

relation of TCA with GNH is not of high importance to the members of the Facebook group.

Kitayama and Markus (2000: 153) bring up an important point that relates to this issue:

“Often as innocuous and well-intended as they are, various attempts to apply theories of happiness that are implicitly grounded in Western ideas of progress, liberalism, egalitarianism, and freedom to other cultural contexts may not reveal but distort lived experiences of the people in those cultures.”

Nevertheless, I was interested how freedom was used as an argument. One variable of the analysis therefore was whether freedom was implicitly or explicitly used, in case the reference was made at all. More than two thirds of the contributions to freedom used it as an implicit argument, it was only used as an explicit argument in a few cases.

Looking at the attitudes towards TCA, GNH and freedom, the only topic that was significantly attributed as positive was freedom. GNH was mentioned in a positive and negative way almost equally often, but mostly the attitude of the contribution towards the concept was unclear. The overall attitude of the contributors towards TCA is significantly negative, but there is also a high number of contributions where a clear attribution of attitudes was not possible. In order to overcome this imprecision of data, I analyzed the overall attitudes of the author. When an author contributed had more negative posts than other posts, their attitude was regrouped as “negative”. Reinterpreting the data in this way shows that the majority of posters have a clearly negative attitude towards the TCA. Since the group is called “Amend the Tobacco Control Act”, finding more contributions with negative attitudes towards the TCA is not surprising.

Figure 7 gives an overview over the attitudes towards TCA, GNH and freedom.

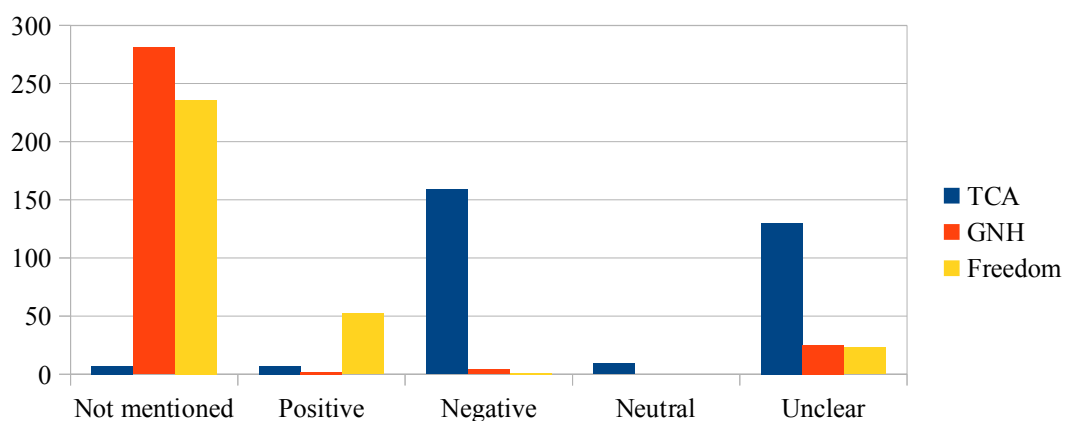


Figure 7: Attitude towards TCA, GNH and Freedom in "Amend the Tobacco Control Act", 3rd to 9th of March, 2011

Contributions in Facebook allow the users to express their support for original posts and comments via the “like” function. Including the amount of “likes” in an analysis is important because this function allows people to express their support without having to actually bring forward any arguments. The analysis of this element shows an even clearer support for negative contributions about the TCA, and significant support of positive contributions about freedom.

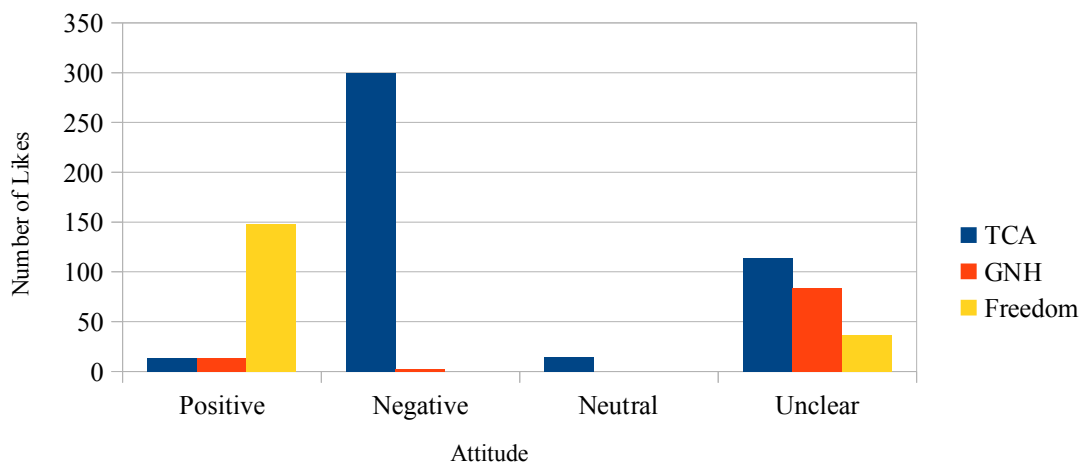


Figure 8: "Likes" related to Contributions in "Amend the Tobacco Control Act", 3rd to 9th of March, 2011

Focusing on the descriptive aspects of the analysis, three topics determine a majority of the postings. The first major argument of the discussion is related to the case of Sonam Tshering. The members of the Facebook group find that Tshering’s verdict is too strict (1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 18, 22, 32, 41, 53, 56, 63, 69, 64, 66, 81, 116, 124, 126, 141, 143, 144, 149, 150, 158, 172, 252, 260, 261, 262, 299, 336, 352, 360). They argue that the sentence for the monk is out of proportion and that he is innocent, even if convicted (78, 135).

Also, they feel that the TCA is less important than other problems, like alcoholism or physical abuse, and thus the TCA should be amended (96, 101, 125, 231, 289, 338).

Sonam Tshering is portrayed as a scapegoat (3, 31, 147, 148) who will suffer unnecessarily from the verdict and should be granted amnesty (67, 68). Other contributions do not go into detail, but just demand to free Sonam Tshering in short slogans (128, 132, 133, 134, 136, 158, 336, 347).

A minority of the posters defend the TCA and the verdict, stating that Sonam Tshering deserves the sentence because it was his own responsibility to comply with the law (212, 230,

238, 257). An argument that comes up in this relation is religion. Sonam Tshering's position as a monk may have sparked a more active discussion than the conviction of a farmer might have, but religion is used as an argument both for and against the TCA (101, 113, 339, 349, 353-355).

The feeling that the TCA is disproportionately strict and unjustified leads to criticism of the government, respectively the ruling party DPT (23, 25, 30, 32, 36, 48, 50, 53, 64, 84, 103, 118, 121, 147, 148, 154, 195, 212, 263, 302, 324, 327, 337, 341, 359, 360). In negative comments about the government, the members of parliament are called arrogant (23, 35) and they are criticized for being hypocrites, as they themselves are members of the privileged class and thus can afford to smoke legally while others can not (327, 380).

In fact, the perceived inequality of the law is the third big issue discussed in the Facebook group. The feeling of the members is that especially the TCA is unequal. On the one hand, they criticize that only "rich" people can afford to pay the custom fees and tax, which in their opinion leads to the establishment of a black market and the criminalization of poor people. On the other hand, they claim that enforcement of the law is also unequal, mentioning that high-ranking officials would not be sentenced because of their connections to the judiciary and that at the borders, only buses and taxis are controlled while expensive-looking cars are not (1, 17, 31, 35, 47, 49, 64, 142, 147, 173, 178, 183, 187, 188, 189, 198, 200, 201, 204, 207, 208, 210, 221, 271, 272, 287, 299, 301, 347, 348, 364, 366).

An example is a case that stirred discussion in the group about a member of the high class who was found bringing tobacco into the country illegally, but was not charged:

"Uniformed personnel and an senior engineer involved in smuggling tobacco in Paro air port but police remain silent in the case.....Rich has the power and poor go to prison..." (173).

What is interesting is that the members of the Facebook group clearly belong to the nationwide elite in the way that they are mostly educated, have knowledge of English and access to internet. But they do not identify themselves as "rich", because they distinguish themselves from what they perceive as the elite of the country, namely members of parliament, *dashos* and the extremely rich.

As in theory all policies of the government should be in line with GNH, one could argue that criticism of the government in a way also constitutes a critique on the realization of the concept itself. I would argue that the members of the Facebook protest distinguish between those two points of reference though, as GNH is explicitly mentioned in some posts.

GNH is referred to in 31 posts, and the attitude of the author towards the concept is not

clearly identifiable most of the time. It is mentioned several times that the TCA is bad for GNH, harms the image of Bhutan or that it contradicts GNH (124, 213, 223, 228, 266, 267). GNH is referred to as a concept that is only meant to improve the image of Bhutan without actually improving the life of the citizens. Partly polemic comments criticize that Bhutan cares too much about its image to the outside world as a nation of happiness (7, 96, 101, 116, 232, 252). One post actually claims that GNH harasses the Bhutanese:

“For those who made this ACT.. please know that there is 2 Big Giant neighbors who manufactures cigarettes and it is not possible for RGOB to make "Tobacco Free Country" in reality.. it is basically becoming like GROSS NATIONAL HARASSMENT -GNH-..NOW....” (209).

A certain degree of polemic exists in a number of contributions, with one form being the comparison of Bhutan to totalitarian states or regimes because of the TCA. Bhutan is put in line with Afghanistan and the Hitler, Al Qaeda and Taliban regimes by a few posters (107, 222, 246, 268, 357).

One post that uses totalitarian states as an argument for the power of freedom is actually one of the few examples where GNH and freedom are mentioned in one statement:

„We sure did hog the headlines and boy did it excite them! People abroad assume nobody smokes in Bhutan. Couple that with the Shangri-La and GNH make-up and you get the picture perfect postcard- a fairytale smoke-free kingdom you can write about and broadcast to admirers the world over. Four years later and the number of smokers have not decreased. It's just how things are. Human nature cannot be banned. Even totalitarian states with cold blooded dictators with all their armies and their gulags failed to ban what their citizens desired“ (103).

For the role of freedom within the Facebook discussion group, one has to distinguish between the content/argument aspect and the role of the mere existence of a discussion and the establishment of a platform for criticism.

In their contributions, the members of the group have a significantly positive attitude towards freedom – even though it is not mentioned as often as the TCA for example. When freedom is mentioned, it is often in reference to Sonam Tshering, with an appeal that he should be freed (128, 132, 133, 134, 136, 158, 336, 347). Some argue that the strict TCA limits the freedom of the people (19, 40, 116, 334), but there is also one post that promotes a different form of freedom and states that the ban enables freedom by improving the health of Bhutanese citizens (349).

A topic in relationship with freedom is the question of democracy, and the opinions of the

value of democracy vary in the group. One poster believes that the TCA is due to democracy and claims that under the absolute monarchy, life was better (205), a comment to the post states that democracy is better because it enables the participation of the citizens and guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press (206).

The contributors see the existence of the Facebook group as enabling democracy and discussions (304, 316, 331, 333, 343, 373) and they actually seize their democratic rights by voicing their concerns. They discuss on how to contribute to an amendment of the TCA and directly appeal to the members of parliament in their posts (79, 81, 110, 150, 161). The idea that the public should take action is mentioned several times (24, 25, 78, 85, 90, 151, 209, 338, 346) and shows that there is awareness about protest among the members of the group. They even started an online petition, asking the members of parliament to abolish or amend the TCA (158, 382, 384-396, 405, 407-410, 413).

The group itself can be interpreted as representing the awareness of the rights of citizens, respectively the execution of democratic and fundamental rights. Contributions and statements by members of parliament, who explicitly respond to the Facebook group protests can also be found on the page and show that the lawmakers are aware of the critical potential in the group. That the government and lawmakers listen to the Facebook discussion is actively demanded by the members of the group several times (172, 250, 340).

At the same time, one has to keep in mind that Facebook may be a safer place for the people to discuss, because here they have the ability to use pseudonyms and may feel more secure and anonymous than in the “offline” world.

Furthermore, a statement by Prime Minister Jigme Y. Thinley that was posted in the group is less favorable of the discussions: “(...) *the government will not respond to any attempts to create hysteria on the issue through any forum including the social media*” (159).

Freedom House (2013) states in its analysis of Bhutan’s state of freedom that the authorities restrict freedom of expression, prohibiting criticism of the king and the political system. The internet is also monitored by the government, which supposedly does block material, but mostly such content that is seen as pornographic and rarely blocks political content. In March 2013, The Bhutan Media Authority (BICMA) blocked a partly satirical website about Bhutan’s politics and economics, though (Dorji 2013). The Facebook group shows that it is possible for critical citizens to find a platform for discussions, but it also shows that there may be a lack of provision of such possibilities by the government.

What is interesting is that while the Facebook protests seem to be tolerated by the government, the mentioning of other forms of protest receives rather reluctant reactions

within the discussion. Some members of the group explicitly argue against demonstrations as a means of protest (110, 111, 112, 157, 302).

The Prime Minister's statement reflects this attitude:

"(...) street demonstrations and movements in such cases are unpredictable in their outcomes and are necessary only in countries where the rule of law is undermined by authorities; where democracy has failed and where there is no other way to draw the attention of those in power.

We must avoid bringing in practices that are foreign to Bhutan and go against the interests of true democracy. In a country that is committed to establishing a unique democracy, we must find ways and means to express our will and opinions in the most civilized and effective ways using means that are democratic, relevant and peaceful" (159).

As a "proper" way of protest, the members view talking to their respective members of parliament, as in their opinion, Bhutan is a small enough country to enable that form of direct contact (110, 111, 112).

An interesting example that is mentioned twice (114, 154) is Singapore. The posts portray Bhutan as a country with too strict laws and Singapore as a ideal of how the law should be enforced. This has to be put in context by mentioning that Singapore is ranked as "not free" by Freedom House (2012) and thus as worse than Bhutan.

That the increase of freedom is not seen as desirable by all member is visible in this post:

"I don't believe in too much of this 'freedom' jazz, that's made a almighty mess in so-called developed countries ... the results is loss of family values, corroding culture and so on ... what if next, they want freedom to be 'fascist', pornography and so on i'm just stretching it here, lol)..." (350).

It shows that for some, an increase of liberty is associated with fear. This may be due to the fact that the political system of Bhutan changed significantly in a comparatively short amount of time. Equally, Bhutan only gave up its voluntary isolation about fifty years ago. The disappearance of "old" ways of living can cause anxiety, and to prevent this, it is crucial that people are able to participate in decision-making processes (see Sen 1999: 241f). It may be that a part of the population feels uncertain due to those changes and thus rejects the increase of freedom.

Zam (in McDonald 2010: 130ff) explains that the changes in Bhutan bear a possibility that the role of the individual is becoming more important. She argues that this is regarded as a

problem in Bhutan and supports a comment in the Facebook discussion, that with more freedom, people may regard traditions as imposing and overbearing.

Another example is the attitude towards democracy/monarch that was mentioned above:

“OMG! wats happening In Bhutan?? Monarchy was the Best thing for Bhutan.we never HAd this Many Problems.and also innocent people Never did suffer this much .Is It Because of the ELECTED PARTY'S IDOLOGY or the Fault Of The Citizen Keeping Quiet” (205).

The outcomes of the analysis presented here show a compressed image of the discussions being led in the Facebook group during the sample period. What makes the Facebook initiative noteworthy, apart from the fact, that it enabled an online discourse about a controversial topic, is the fact that on January 19th, 2011, the TCA 2010 was actually amended in the 8th Session of Parliament. The legal text states that the amendment was enacted “[t]o remove the ambiguities of offence [sic!] and penalties under the Tobacco Control Act 2010 (...)“ (TCA 2012: 1).

This shows that while the discourse on the online platform might not be representative for the whole Bhutanese population, it was without doubt influential for politics in Bhutan, as it sparked a public debate about the TCA.

While the amendment showed that the public debate had been recognized in parliamentary circles, the form of the new regulations differs only marginally from the original TCA. The permissible quantity for the import of tobacco and tobacco products per month was raised to 300 sticks of cigarettes or 400 sticks of bidis or 50 pieces of cigars or 250 grams of other tobacco products (TCA 2012: 7).

The controversial penalty of fourth degree felony, corresponding to a minimum of three years imprisonment, was not abolished. The amended act graduates the penalties for “smuggling” tobacco and tobacco products and penalizes smaller amounts with misdemeanor (one to three years imprisonment or petty misdemeanor (one month to one year imprisonment), but if the confiscated amount tobacco products exceed four times the legal amount, the fourth degree felony still stands (TCA 2012: Art. 14-16; Penal Code of Bhutan 2004: Art. 3).

Moving the analysis away from the perceptions of the public towards the institutional level, the design and content of the GNH Index provides another aspect of individual freedom and collective happiness in Bhutan. For approximation to a triangulation analysis, I want to give a short critique on the GNH Index. In the index, the question of individual freedom does not exist explicitly. The category “Political Freedom” provides a similar approach though. In

an overview over the indicators, it is referred to as “Fundamental Rights”. The seven questions related to fundamental rights are:

- Freedom of speech (Do you feel that you have a right to the freedom of speech and opinion?)
- Vote (... have a right to vote?)
- Join political party (... have a right to join political party of your choice?)
- Form *tshogpa* (association) (...have a right to form *tshogpa*?)
- Equal access to join public service (...have a right to equal access and opportunity to join public service?)
- To equal pay for equal work (...have a right to equal pay for work of equal value?)
- Free from discrimination (...have a right to the freedom from discrimination?)

(Ura et al. 2012: 117).

These questions ask for subjective evaluations, but does not capture whether the respondents actually have the opportunity to do those things. This again brings up the argument made by Sen (1999: 62) about the limitations of subjective evaluations. Adaption to circumstances may distort the evaluation of individuals. Thus, even if the “objective” level of freedom may be low, individuals may attest themselves a higher level of subjective freedom. As a point of reference I want to mention the freedom rankings by Freedom House. Bhutan is classified as “partly free” with an average freedom rating of 4.5, civil liberties rating 5 and political rights rating 4, out of a possible score between 1 (best) and 7 (worst) (Freedom House 2013).

The findings of the 2010 GNH survey related to the freedom indicators can be found in the previous chapter, but comparing the findings with the questions of the current GNH Index, it is noteworthy that they use different questions. While the 2010 survey results show ratings of the election process and perceived freedom of media from government influences (CBS 2011: 288; 390), the current GNH Index asks different questions, as seen above.

Furthermore, asking about the right to freedom from discrimination does not automatically imply that the respondent does not suffer from discrimination.

The design of the index enables freedom of choice up to a certain point. On the one hand, it does prescribe a certain set of indicators for “happiness”, on the other hand, it is not necessary to meet the cutoff in every dimension. Freedom of choice is explicitly mentioned in a paper by Ura et al. (2012: 40), explaining the GNH Index in detail: *“People have freedom of choice in which ways they can make life fulfilling, so not all variables have universal applicability”*.

From a point of view of Amartya Sen's concept of capabilities, this allows people to decide how to live a life that is meaningful for themselves up to a certain point within the frame of GNH. If a person chooses to live their life according to principles contradicting GNH, they may be able to do so in practice, but they would not be rated as "happy" by the index and their style of life would therefore not be seen as desirable.

GNH is strongly oriented towards the community and collective responsibilities. Underlying the concept is the belief that true happiness can not exist while others suffer. The happiness of others is seen as the responsibility of every person. This shows that the collective and the individual responsibilities in a GNH sense are intertwined (see Ura et al. 2012: 8).

Coleman (in McDonald 2010: 23) states that while happiness ultimately depends on the individuals, in reality *"(...) there is no distinction between individual, national and universal happiness. If interdependence is a reality, then compassion is not a feel-good thing – it is simply (...) the reality that you cannot be happy unless other people are happy."*

This brings up the question whether the discussion about freedom in GNH on a meta level related to the question whether the goal of national happiness maximization itself bears a danger of limiting personal freedom. I want to point to the arguments of Frey on this matter and put them in a Bhutanese context.

Frey sees the policy of "Happiness Maximization" in the tradition of the "benevolent dictatorship". He points out that this approach disregards the incentives in the political process and assumes that the people responsible for happiness maximization, i.e. politicians and public officials, act in the interest of the public rather than their own. He also criticizes that this approach does not allow enough diversity in lifestyles, supposing that individuals may consider other values like freedom or equality more important than happiness (Frey 2011: 400).

He discusses the concept of the "Manipulation Principle" which argues that governments and decision makers will manipulate important targets as well as their respective indicators for their own benefit and that they are generally not benevolent. He argues that if a government declares a goal as important, it will make an effort to reach it, but also possibly to distort statistics in order to do so (Frey 2011: 400f.).

Frey's (2011: 402) argument is that happiness indicators are vulnerable to manipulation because they are based on subjective evaluations. Therefore, he argues, the respondents may have been influenced by propaganda or threats in order to achieve the desired outcome. Sen (1999: 152) also stresses in his work, that the formation of values should occur in an informed and unregimented way, in order to contribute to freedom.

Bhutan has involved GNH in school education and makes an effort to educate people about the concept, but from my point of research it is unclear whether these dangers actually exist in Bhutan. Other dangers that Frey lists like only including people with above average happiness, denouncing the existence of unhappy people or making up the survey results seem highly unlikely in the context of Bhutan.

What is likely though is that contrary to Sen's (1999: xxi) belief that the expansion of freedom should be the ends and means of development, GNH treats freedom as a means of development, but collective happiness is seen as the ultimate end.

This becomes apparent when comparing the interviews I conducted in 2011 with Neten Zangmo (Chairperson of the Anti Corruption Commission), Karma Ura (President of the Center for Bhutan Studies) and Karma Tshiteem (Secretary of the GNHC).

Zangmo stresses that freedom is not the ultimate goal of Bhutanese politics:

"Whose freedom are we talking about? The individual freedom has to be responsible. Talking about personal freedom and human rights is nice. But if this human rights and freedom is going to impact on the larger societies well-being, then no. I cannot understand this international concept of human rights and freedom. Freedom, how nice. But I think we need to see the larger context of the general societies' well-being."

Ura's argument concerning freedom goes into a similar direction:

"We may think we are autonomous and free. But the present situation has been determined by policy regulations. So if they are not pro-happiness you have very little chance to fulfill [these regulations]. (...) I do not believe – eventually freedom too, a lot of people say freedom should be had for its own sake, full stop. Freedom from Buddhist perspective is defined slightly [different]. Of course no one wants oppression, no one wants coercion, that is too obvious. It is freedom from your own negative emotions. We have potential to liberate ourselves. We have to realize that potential."

The statements by Zangmo and Ura show that freedom as an independent value is of minor importance in GNH. The importance of the collective does not mean that individual's rights have to be compromised, according to Ura, though:

"(...) in GNH, the idea of a collective happiness is in-built. So everything that goes against that grain is self-contradictory. I don't see that risk of authoritarian prescription in your daily life. It is impossible. The values of GNH are much deeper universal values. (...) It is the widest spectrum of the individual wellbeing of the

people.”

Commenting on the TCA of 2010, Tshiteem argues that freedom should have been more important than health in this matter. He also describes the flaws in the development process of the law:

“This recent law did not come through a process that did come through a process of deep consultation, it was based on some discussions in the parliament. Obviously freedom will be paramount, there is no question. And I think we have just recently become a democracy and we are going through some learning like with the Tobacco law. Obviously you cannot force things, you have to find other things to incentivise [sic!] the right behavior.”

Both Zangmo and Tshiteem stress that Bhutan is a country in transition. They admit that some of the rules passed since the introduction of democracy are not fully contributing to the well-being of the people.

Zangmo states:

“The last five years, so many regulations have been passed. Necessarily and unnecessarily. So here it is not an issue vis-a-vis Human Rights. We might have more regulations than we actually require but at the end of the day enforcement is just too weak.”

Tshiteem makes a similar argument, saying:

“I think we are going through dealing with being a legal society, a society with a lot of laws. Before we didn’t have many, now we are getting into it. Sometimes it doesn’t make sense.”

Judging from the arguments of the Bhutanese officials, problems related to individual freedom and GNH are partly founded in the transition of Bhutan from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy. Civic consciousness is just beginning to be formed, independent media has only been established in 2006 and thus it is possible that awareness about freedom also only starts to form. The question is whether and how the implementation of GNH in the future will take on the issue of freedom (see Sinpeng 2007: 43ff).

One should also keep in mind that the happiness in a GNH sense is very much related to internal factors. While the government shall create conditions for achieving happiness, GNH stresses also the internal conditions for creating happiness. Freedom from a GNH perspective thus has a different meaning than definitions that focus on freedom from external influences and restrictions (Dorji in McDonald 2010: 105; Hirata 2003: 121; Interview Ura 2011).

6 Conclusion

The relation between Gross National Happiness as a manifestation of the strive towards collective happiness and the individual freedom of the Bhutanese citizens takes on different shapes.

GNH as a concept has the opportunity to enhance the freedom of the Bhutanese population, but it could also be used to limit individual freedom. Bhutan is a young democracy, a country in transition and it is apparent that some of the measures that are meant to increase happiness in fact limit individual freedom. The balance between rights of the individual and the collective is an issue not only important for Bhutan, but for the whole world. It is a philosophical question and the shape of this balance will be manifold according to the underlying paradigms.

The state plays a vital role for shaping the concept of GNH and for enabling its citizens with opportunities to lead a life of their choice. The Bhutanese state and the GNH concept enhance the capabilities of individuals in some cases, but restrict their individual freedoms in others.

Further research on GNH and freedom therefore will have to find a balance between the individual and the collective level. In order to enable freedom within GNH it must be possible for people to live happiness in a variety of different ways of their choice. At the same time, as GNH is a collective concept, it must evolve in a way that it allows diversity, while maintaining accuracy and a full picture.

The discourse on collective happiness and freedom in the case of the TCA shows that these issues play a role at least for the middle class of Bhutan, but that these issues are not necessarily explicitly reflected upon. While in the discourse on the controversial law, freedom and collective happiness were only marginally discussed, the existence of a discussion platform itself shows that Bhutanese find a way to realize their individual freedoms themselves.

This thesis shall not be understood as a critique on GNH as an alternative to existing development concepts – the failures of growth-based economies and development strategies is obvious. Nevertheless, it is an appeal to stay alert. Like any concept guiding state policies, GNH bears within itself opportunities and dangers and only time will tell which outcome will prevail.

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Directory of Bhutanese Terms

Dasho	Honorary title (of senior government officials)
Dratshang	Administrative level, central entity
Driglam Namzha	Bhutanese “code of conduct”, including “outward behavior” such as dress and forms of greeting, and “inner attitudes” such as respect for elders
Druk Desi	Secular rulers of Bhutan between 17 th and 19 th century
Druk Gyalpo	King of Bhutan
Drukpa	Branch of Tibetan Buddhism
Dunkhag	Administrative level
Dzong	Fortress/monastery, administrative center of a district
Dzongkha	National language of Bhutan
Dzongkhag	Administrative district
Gewog	Administrative area consisting of a few villages
Gho	Traditional Bhutanese dress for men
Je Khenpo	Abbot
Kasho	Royal decree
Khenpo	Spiritual degree in Tibetan Buddhism
Kira	Traditional Bhutanese dress for women
Lhotshampa	Literally “Southern Borderlander”, referring to the population of southern Bhutan; often synonymous for “Nepali”
Lonchen	Prime Minister
Ngalong	Ethnic group in Bhutan, elite from the north
Penlop	“Governor” of a district, liable to the Druk Desi
Sarchop	Ethnic group in Bhutan, from the east
Tsa-Wa Sum	Bhutanese law on treason and anti-nationals

Tshogdu

National Assembly

Zhabdrung

In Tibetan Buddhism a title for great lamas, also written as “Shabdrung”; in Bhutan almost always used for Zhabdrung Rinpoche, unifier of Bhutan

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Abbreviations

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
Art.	Article
BBS	Bhutan Broadcasting Service
BICMA	Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority
CBS	Center for Bhutan Studies
DPT	<i>Druk Phuensum Tshogpa</i> , political Party
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNH	Gross National Happiness
GNHC	Gross National Happiness Commission
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OCC	Office of the Census Commissioner (Bhutan)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PDP	People's Democratic Party
RGOB	Royal Government of Bhutan
SWB	Subjective Well-being
TCA	Tobacco Control Act
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WHO	World Health Organization

Abstract

This paper discusses the relationship of individual freedom and collective happiness in the small Himalayan kingdom Bhutan. Bhutan's development concept of „Gross National Happiness“ (GNH) is centered around enhancing the well-being of its population. As a young democracy and a country in transition, some policies followed in the name of collective happiness repeatedly limit the individual freedom of the Bhutanese population though.

The thesis gives an overview over theoretical concept about freedom and happiness research and analyses aspects of GNH towards their relations with individual freedom. Central to the thesis is the question, what is the role of individual freedom in the strive towards collective happiness in Bhutan. Furthermore, the paper deals with the role of the state regarding this relationship and the corresponding public discourse.

While awareness about philosophical questions regarding happiness and freedom exists within a share of the population, the discourse is mainly led by a national educational elite. Responsibility for finding a balance between individual and collective rights therefore lies predominantly with the government.

The question, whether GNH enhances or limits individual freedoms, therefore has to be answered differently according to the corresponding context and only time will tell which outcome will prevail.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit dem Spannungsfeld zwischen dem Streben nach kollektivem Glück und individueller Freiheit im Kontext des kleinen Himalaya-Königreichs Bhutan. Bhutan folgt dem indigen entwickelten Konzept von „Gross National Happiness“ (GNH), welches das Wohlbefinden der Bevölkerung in den Mittelpunkt stellt. Als junge Demokratie und als ein Land, das sich in vielen Bereichen im Umbruch befindet, erschafft Bhutan im Namen des kollektiven Glücks jedoch immer wieder Regeln, die die individuelle Freiheit seiner Bewohner einschränken.

Die Arbeit gibt einen Überblick über theoretische Konzepte zu Freiheit und Glücksforschung und analysiert Aspekte von GNH im Hinblick auf ihre Beziehung mit individueller Freiheit. Im Mittelpunkt steht dabei die Frage, welche Beziehung zwischen GNH und individueller Freiheit besteht. Weiters dreht sich die Arbeit um die Rolle des Staates im Hinblick auf diese Beziehung und den öffentlichen Diskurs in Bhutan dazu.

Obwohl Bewusstsein für philosophische Fragen wie Glück und Freiheit in einem Teil der bhutanischen Bevölkerung existiert, wird der Diskurs darüber bisher vor allem von einer nationalen Bildungselite geführt. Die Verantwortung, eine Balance zwischen individuellen und kollektiven Rechten zu finden, liegt daher vor allem bei der Regierung.

Die Frage, ob GNH individuelle Freiheiten ermöglicht oder einschränkt, muss daher im jeweiligen Kontext neu beleuchtet werden und wird sich in einem größeren Rahmen erst im Laufe der Zeit beantworten.

Codebook

V1: Number of Contribution (NC) Continuous number of coded Contribution

V2: Date Date on which the Contribution was published

V3: Time Time at which the Contribution was published

V4: Author Facebook Name of the Author of Post or Comment

V5: Form of Contribution

1...Original Post 2... Comment

V6: Type of Content (various possible)

1... Text 2...Link 3...Video 4...Audio 5... Image

V7: Number of “Likes”

V8: (For Original Posts Only) Number of Comments

V9: (For Comments Only) Reference to NC of Original Post

V10: Is the contribution related to either the Tobacco Control Act or GNH or freedom?

0... No 1...Yes

Contributions coded with 0 will be automatically excluded from the rest of the Analysis.

V11: Length Length of Contribution in Words

V12: What is the overall attitude of the contribution towards the Tobacco Control Act?

1... Positive

2... Negative

3... Neutral

4... Unclear

5... Not Mentioned

V13: What is the overall attitude of the contribution towards GNH?

- 1... Positive
- 2... Negative
- 3... Neutral
- 4... Unclear
- 5... Not Mentioned

V14: What is the overall attitude of the contribution towards freedom?

- 1... Positive
- 2... Negative
- 3... Neutral
- 4... Unclear
- 5... Not Mentioned

V15: Is „freedom“ used as an explicit or implicit argument?

- 1... Explicit 2... Implicit 0...Not mentioned

V16: What is the argument of the contribution?

Descriptive paraphrasing of Argument and generalization

V17: What is the role of freedom in the contribution?

Descriptive paraphrasing of Argument and generalization

V18: What is the role of GNH in the contribution?

Descriptive paraphrasing of Argument and generalization

Coding Sheets

V1 NC	V2 Date	V3 Time	V4 Author	V5 Form	V6 Type Cont	V7 Likes	V8 Comment	V9 Reference	V10 GNH/TC/V11 Length	V12 TCA	V13 GNH	V 14 freed	V15 implicit
1	03.03.11	11:53	M.W.		1	1	2	0	1	71	2	0	0
2	03.03.11	11:27	T.B.		1	2	0		1	0	4	4	0
3	03.03.11	08:19	J.C.		1	1	0	4	1	19	2	0	0
4	03.03.11	08:26	N.B.		2	1	0	3	1	3	2	0	0
5	03.03.11	08:55	P.T.		2	1	0	3	1	7	2	0	0
6	03.03.11	08:59	P.T.		2	1	0	3	1	9	4	0	4
7	03.03.11	12:07	M.W.		2	1	1	3	1	32	2	4	0
8	03.03.11	12:12	J.C.		1	1	12	10	1	980	2	4	1
9	03.03.11	12:18	V.A.		2	1	0	8	1	14	4	4	4
10	03.03.11	12:32	D.R.		2	1	0	8	0	8			
11	03.03.11	12:37	J.C.		2	1	0	8	0				
12	03.03.11	12:38	J.C.		2	1	0	8	0				
13	03.03.11	12:38	V.A.		2	1	0	8	0				
14	03.03.11	12:39	J.C.		2	1	0	8	0				
15	03.03.11	12:39	V.A.		2	1	0	8	0				
16	03.03.11	12:44	J.C.		2	1	0	8	0				
17	03.03.11	15:55	Y.T.		2	1	0	8	1	53	2	0	0
18	03.03.11	16:10	D.R.		2	1	0	8	0				
19	03.03.11	18:13	L.W.		1	1	6	1	1	55	4	4	4
20	03.03.11	18:18	N.B.		2	1	0	19	1	13	4	4	4
21	03.03.11	09:14	K.S.		1	1	0	28	1	168	3	0	0
22	03.03.11	09:19	G.T.		2	1	0	21	1	2	2	0	0
23	03.03.11	10:39	M.W.		2	1	0	21	1	31	2	0	0
24	03.03.11	10:40	M.W.		2	1	0	21	1	16	2	0	0
25	03.03.11	10:44	N.P.		2	1	0	21	1	43	2	0	0
26	03.03.11	10:55	D.C.		2	1	0	21	1	43	4	0	0
27	03.03.11	10:55	D.C.		2	1	0	21	1	17	4	0	0
28	03.03.11	10:56	D.C.		2	1	0	21	1	22	4	0	0
29	03.03.11	11:00	M.W.		2	1	0	21	1	79	4	0	0
30	03.03.11	11:01	K.S.		2	1	0	21	1	29	4	0	0
31	03.03.11	11:03	M.W.		2	1	0	21	1	32	2	0	0
32	03.03.11	11:04	K.S.		2	1	0	21	1	38	2	0	0
33	03.03.11	11:05	D.C.		2	1	0	21	1	60	4	0	0
34	03.03.11	11:07	D.C.		2	1	0	21	1	41	4	0	0
35	03.03.11	11:12	M.W.		2	1	0	21	1	109	2	0	0
36	03.03.11	11:14	K.S.		2	1	0	21	1	73	2	0	0
37	03.03.11	11:16	M.W.		2	1	1	21	1	19	2	0	0
38	03.03.11	11:17	D.C.		2	1	0	21	1	60	4	0	0
39	03.03.11	11:20	D.C.		2	1	0	21	0				
40	03.03.11	11:20	M.W.		2	1	0	21	1	40	2	0	1
41	03.03.11	11:20	K.S.		2	1	0	21	1	46	2	0	0
42	03.03.11	11:21	M.W.		2	1	0	21	0				
43	03.03.11	11:23	D.C.		2	1	0	21	1	28	3	0	0
44	03.03.11	11:25	K.S.		2	1	2	21	1	75	4	0	4
45	03.03.11	11:26	K.S.		2	1	0	21	0				
46	03.03.11	11:31	K.W.		2	1	1	21	1	6	4	0	0
47	03.03.11	11:32	M.W.		2	1	0	21	1	76	2	0	0
48	03.03.11	11:39	N.P.		2	1	1	21	1	52	4	4	0
49	03.03.11	11:47	D.R.		2	1	3	21	1	177	2	0	0
50	03.03.11	19:20	K.Y.		1	1	4	0	1	196	2	4	0
51	03.03.11	19:29	C.H.		1	1	4	1	1	64	4	0	0
52	03.03.11	19:31	C.C.		2	1	0	51	1	2	4	0	0
53	03.03.11	18:31	C.C.		1	1	1	2	1	40	2	0	0
54	03.03.11	19:17	I.G.		2	1	0	53	1	11	4	0	0

V1 NC	V2 Date	V3 Time	V4 Author	V5 Form	V6 Type Con	V7 Likes	V8 Comment	V9 Reference	V10 GNH/TCA	V11 Length	V12 TCA	V13 GNH	V14 freed	V15 implicit
55	04.03.11	04:03	P.T.		2	1	1		53	1	11	4	0	0
56	03.03.11	14:53	P.K.		1	1,2	2	2		1	31	2	0	0
57	03.03.11	20:40	K.N.		2	1	0		56	1	19	1	0	0
58	04.03.11	04:10	J.I.		2	1	0		56	1	8	2	0	0
59	04.03.11	03:12	K.A.		1	1	9	4		1		2	4	0
60	04.03.11	03:23	K.A.		2	1	0		59	0				
61	04.03.11	04:02	K.A.		2	1	0		59	0				
62	04.03.11	04:34	L.C.		2	1	0		59	1	9	4	0	0
63	04.03.11	05:25	P.T.		2	1	0		59	1	35	2	0	4
64	04.03.11	05:47	N.E.		1	1	2	0		1	124	2	4	0
65	04.03.11	05:59	P.T.		1	1,2	0	0		1	13	4	0	0
66	04.03.11	05:52	P.K.		1	1	3	2		1	45	2	0	0
67	04.03.11	05:57	J.I.		2	1	0		66	1	18	2	0	0
68	04.03.11	05:59	P.K.		2	1	0		66	1	9	4	0	0
69	04.03.11	07:18	T.B.		1	1	0	0		1	30	2	0	0
70	04.03.11	05:30	J.C.		1	1	0	4		0				
71	04.03.11	07:46	T.G.		2	1	1	0	70	0				
72	04.03.11	07:47	J.C.		2	1	0	0	70	0				
73	04.03.11	07:50	K.S.		2	1	0	0	70	0				
74	04.03.11	07:51	J.C.		2	1	0	0	70	0				
75	04.03.11	08:38	T.G.		1	2	0	0		1	0	4	0	0
76	04.03.11	06:50	J.C.		1	1	1	1		0				
77	04.03.11	08:52	T.G.		2	1	0	0	76	0				
78	04.03.11	09:53	T.T.		1	1	1	0		1	31	2	0	0
79	04.03.11	10:12	T.B.		1	1	0	0		1	13	4	0	0
80	04.03.11	10:31	K.S.		1	1	2	0		1	212	3	0	0
81	04.03.11	06:36	D.C.		1	1	10	14		1	264	2	0	0
82	04.03.11	06:40	P.K.		2	1	0		81	1	7	4	0	0
83	04.03.11	06:41	D.C.		2	1	0		81	0				
84	04.03.11	07:09	K.S.		2	1	3		81	1	94	2	0	0
85	04.03.11	07:12	P.T.		2	1	4		81	1	41	4	0	0
86	04.03.11	07:28	D.C.		2	1	0		81	1	42	4	0	0
87	04.03.11	07:29	D.C.		2	1	0		81	1	19	4	0	0
88	04.03.11	07:40	K.S.		2	1	0		81	1	8	2	0	0
89	04.03.11	07:43	K.S.		2	1	0		81	1	37	3	0	0
90	04.03.11	09:09	D.C.		2	1	1		81	1	46	4	0	0
91	04.03.11	09:11	D.C.		2	1	0		81	1	23	4	0	0
92	04.03.11	09:20	P.Y.		2	1,2	0		81	1	55	4	0	0
93	04.03.11	09:22	P.Y.		2	1	0		81	1	21	4	0	0
94	04.03.11	09:25	D.C.		2	1	0		81	1	21	4	0	0
95	04.03.11	09:44	P.Y.		2	1	0		81	1	47	4	0	0
96	04.03.11	07:38	U.P.		1	1	8	2		1	153	2	0	0
97	04.03.11	07:45	P.T.		2	1	0		96	1	14	2	0	0
98	04.03.11	07:46	P.T.		2	1	1		96	0				
99	04.03.11	10:52	K.S.		1,1,2,5		0	1		1	6	4	0	0
100	04.03.11	11:36	D.S.		2	1	2		99	1	28	2	0	0
101	04.03.11	08:21	J.C.		1	1	4	7		1	673	2	4	1
102	04.03.11	08:29	P.T.		2	1	0	0	101	1	5	2	0	0
103	04.03.11	08:32	T.G.		2	1	1	0	101	1	8	2	0	0
104	04.03.11	09:34	T.G.		2	1	1	0	101	0				
105	04.03.11	09:35	J.C.		2	1	0	0	101	0				
106	04.03.11	17:10	T.G.		2	1	0	0	101	0				
107	04.03.11	17:25	T.G.		2	1	0	0	101	0				
108	04.03.11	17:35	J.C.		2	1	0	0	101	0				
109	04.03.11	11:10	K.S.		1	2	1	0		1	0	3	0	0

V1 NC	V2 Date	V3 Time	V4 Author	V5 Form	V6 Type Conf	V7 Likes	V8 Comment	V9 Reference	V10 GNH/TCA/V	V11 Length	V12 TCA	V13 GNH	V 14 freed	V15 implicit	
110	04.03.11	18:54	D.I.		1	1	5	0		1	189	2	0	4	2
111	04.03.11	21:25	S.O.		1	1	5	0		1	164	2	0	4	2
112	05.03.11	02:01	L.C.		1	1	2	0		1	99	2	0	4	2
113	04.03.11	15:04	E.L.		1	1	8	2		1	173	4	0	0	0
114	04.03.11	15:17	P.K.		2	1	0		113	1	122	2	0	4	2
115	05.03.11	02:36	D.I.		2	1	1		113	1	55	4	0	0	0
116	05.03.11	03:38	T.G.		1	1	5	0		1	348	2	4	1	1
117	05.03.11	03:39	C.C.		1	1	0	0		1	14	4	0	0	0
118	04.03.11	15:04	V.B.		1	1	1	0		1	41	2	0	0	0
119	04.03.11	18:56	D.C.		2	1	1	0	118	1	15	4	0	0	0
120	04.03.11	19:03	V.B.		2	1	0	0	118	1	53	4	0	0	0
121	05.03.11	05:03	K.S.		2	1	0	0	118	1	81	2	0	0	0
122	05.03.11	05:03	K.S.		2	1	0	0	118	1	2	4	0	0	0
123	05.03.11	05:09	K.S.		1	1	6	0		1	89	2	0	4	2
124	05.03.11	06:00	Y.Y.		1	1	2	0		1	160	2	2	1	2
125	05.03.11	07:48	U.P.		1	1	1	0		1	20	2	0	0	0
126	05.03.11	08:07	T.B.		1	1	0	1		1	16	2	0	0	0
127	05.03.11	08:46	D.D.		2	1	1	0	126	1	12	2	0	0	0
128	04.03.11	10:09	N.B.		1	1,5	12	8		1	9	2	0	1	1
129	04.03.11	10:20	P.K.		2	1	1		128	1	6	2	0	0	0
130	04.03.11	10:21	D.S.		2	1	0		128	1	13	2	0	0	0
131	04.03.11	10:28	N.B.		2	1	0		128	1					
132	04.03.11	11:05	R.V.		2	1	0	0	128	1	2	2	0	1	1
133	04.03.11	11:47	P.T.		2	1	0		128	1	3	2	0	1	1
134	04.03.11	14:09	L.W.		2	1	0	0	128	1	10	2	0	1	1
135	04.03.11	14:27	Q.P.		2	1	0	0	128	1	15	2	0	0	0
136	05.03.11	08:54	D.D.		2	1	0		128	1	16	2	0	1	1
137	05.03.11	09:21	U.P.		1	1	2	2		1	17	2	0	0	0
138	05.03.11	09:22	U.P.		2	1	0		137	1	10	4	0	0	0
139	05.03.11	10:48	P.T.		2	1	0		137	1	1	4	0	0	0
140	05.03.11	14:28	D.C.		1	1	0	0		0					
141	05.03.11	13:52	U.P.		1	1	1	0		1	12	2	0	0	0
142	05.03.11	13:59	J.R.		1	1	9	0		1	98	2	0	0	0
143	05.03.11	14:45	T.B.		1	1	2	0		1	25	4	0	0	0
144	05.03.11	15:30	S.O.		1	2	0	0		1	0	2	0	0	0
145	05.03.11	22:34	K.W.		1	1	6	0		1	184	2	0	0	0
146	06.03.11	00:13	T.G.		1	2	0	0		1	0	4	4	4	0
147	06.03.11	08:36	U.P.		1	1	5	0		1	631	2	1	0	0
148	06.03.11	09:47	V.V.		1	1	2	0		1	34	2	0	0	0
149	06.03.11	17:05	J.C.		1	1	2	0		1	663	4	0	0	0
150	06.03.11	18:59	P.K.		1	1	2	0		1	207	2	0	0	0
151	06.03.11	19:07	Y.T.		1	1	1	0		1	15	4	0	0	0
152	07.03.11	03:06	T.C.		1	2	2	1		1	0	3	0	0	0
153	07.03.11	04:35	Y.T.		2	1	0	0	151	1	2	0	0	0	0
154	07.03.11	06:20	P.K.		1	1	1	0		1	30	2	0	0	0
155	07.03.11	06:48	T.C.		1	2	0	0		1	0	4	0	0	0
156	07.03.11	09:34	T.P.		1	1	1	0		1	50	2	0	0	0
157	07.03.11	09:48	K.S.		1	1	2	0		1	77	4	0	0	0
158	07.03.11	13:36	A.T.		1,2,5		1	0		1	99	2	0	0	0
159	05.03.11	14:06	D.C.		1	1	14	12		1	556	1	0	0	0
160	05.03.11	14:53	L.C.		2	1	2		159	1	24	4	0	0	0
161	05.03.11	15:10	P.T.		2	1	0		159	0					
162	05.03.11	15:11	P.T.		2	1	1		159	1	7	4	0	0	0
163	05.03.11	15:17	P.K.		2	1	1		159	1	36	4	0	0	0
164	05.03.11	17:18	T.Y.		2	1	1		159	1	20	4	0	0	0

V1 NC	V2 Date	V3 Time	V4 Author	V5 Form	V6 Type Cont	V7 Likes	V8 Comment	V9 Reference	V10 GNH/TC	V11 Length	V12 TCA	V13 GNH	V 14 freed	V15 implicate
165	06.03.11	05:51	D.C.	2	1	1		159	1	48	4	0	0	0
166	06.03.11	06:05	K.A.	2	1	0		159	1	10	4	0	0	0
167	06.03.11	09:42	D.R.	2	1	3		159	1	132	4	0	0	0
168	07.03.11	11:39	D.D.	2	1	1		159	1	28	4	0	0	0
169	07.03.11	13:11	K.W.	2	1	0		159	1	64	4	0	0	0
170	07.03.11	13:19	W.G.	2	1	1		159	1	33	2	0	0	0
171	07.03.11	14:04	D.D.	2	1	0		159	1	9	4	0	0	0
172	07.03.11	20:42	N.D.	1	1	6	0		1	282	2	4	0	0
173	08.03.11	04:39	D.J.	1	1	4	3		1	31	2	0	0	0
174	08.03.11	04:59	T.G.	2	1	0		173	1	4	4	0	0	0
175	08.03.11	05:00	D.J.	2	1	1		173	0					
176	08.03.11	05:28	C.C.	2	1	0		173	1	4	4	0	0	0
177	08.03.11	06:45	K.S.	1	1	5	0		1	38	2	0	0	0
178	08.03.11	05:08	Z.Y.	1	1	5	16		1	257	4	0	1	1
179	08.03.11	05:10	C.C.	2	1	0		178	0					
180	08.03.11	05:11	C.C.	2	1	0		178	0					
181	08.03.11	05:13	D.J.	2	1	0		178	1	56	4	0	0	0
182	08.03.11	05:19	G.T.	2	1	0		178	1	32	4	0	0	0
183	08.03.11	05:19	D.J.	2	1	0		178	1	47	2	0	0	0
184	08.03.11	05:21	Z.Y.	2	1	0		178	1	30	2	0	0	0
185	08.03.11	05:22	D.J.	2	1	0		178	1	37	4	0	0	0
186	08.03.11	05:24	G.T.	2	1	0		178	1	42	2	0	0	0
187	08.03.11	05:25	D.J.	2	1	0		178	1	23	4	0	0	0
188	08.03.11	05:27	C.C.	2	1	1		178	1	4	2	0	0	0
189	08.03.11	05:27	G.T.	2	1	0		178	1	13	2	0	0	0
190	08.03.11	05:27	Z.Y.	2	1	0		178	1	14	4	0	0	0
191	08.03.11	05:30	D.J.	2	1	0		178	0					
192	08.03.11	05:31	C.C.	2	1	0		178	0					
193	08.03.11	05:34	D.J.	2	1	0		178	0					
194	08.03.11	07:07	N.O.	2	1	2		178	1	109	2	0	0	0
195	07.03.11	13:37	T.B.	1	1	1	1		1	6	2	0	0	0
196	07.03.11	13:48	A.T.	2	1	1		195	1	12	2	0	0	0
197	07.03.11	16:36	D.C.	1	1	0	11		1	27	4	0	0	0
198	07.03.11	16:38	K.W.	2	1	0	0	197	1	10	4	0	0	0
199	07.03.11	16:38	M.W.	2	1	1	0	197	1	31	4	0	0	0
200	07.03.11	16:47	S.O.	2	1	1		197	1	70	2	0	0	0
201	07.03.11	16:51	P.T.	2	1	6		197	1	8	4	0	0	0
202	07.03.11	16:55	S.O.	2	1	0		197	0					
203	07.03.11	17:00	M.W.	2	1	5		197	1	186	2	4	0	0
204	07.03.11	17:35	W.G.	2	1	2		197	1	54	2	0	0	0
205	07.03.11	18:27	A.T.	2	1	0		197	1	43	4	0	0	0
206	07.03.11	18:41	S.O.	2	1	0		197	1	96	2	0	1	1
207	07.03.11	18:42	T.P.	2	1	0		197	1	53	4	0	0	0
208	08.03.11	07:12	N.O.	2	1	0		197	1	13	4	0	0	0
209	07.03.11	13:30	T.B.	1	1	0	2		1	85	2	2	1	2
210	07.03.11	13:35	D.D.	2	1	2		210	1	30	2	0	0	0
211	08.03.11	07:23	N.O.	2	1	2		210	1	54	3	0	0	0
212	07.03.11	12:55	D.D.	1	1	2	1		1	15	2	0	0	0
213	08.03.11	07:23	N.O.	2	1	0		213	0					
214	05.03.11	13:26	L.W.	1	1	8	5		1	751	2	1	1	2
215	06.03.11	08:55	U.P.	2	1	0		215	1	28	4	0	4	2
216	06.03.11	18:43	M.A.	2	1	0		215	1	15	2	0	4	2
217	07.03.11	20:29	S.O.	2	1	0		215	1	31	2	0	1	2
218	08.03.11	07:28	E.D.	2	1	0		215	1	26	2	0	0	0
219	08.03.11	07:29	E.D.	2	1	1		215	1	29	2	0	0	0

V1 NC	V2 Date	V3 Time	V4 Author	V5 Form	V6 Type Conf	V7 Likes	V8 Comment	V9 Reference	V10 GNH/TC/V11 Length	V12 TCA	V13 GNH	V 14 freed	V15 implicit/6
220	08.03.11	06:37	D.J.	1	1	0	1		1	29	4	0	0
221	08.03.11	06:57	N.O.	2	1	5		221	1	77	4	0	0
222	08.03.11	07:38	T.B.	1	1	0	0		1	25	2	0	0
223	08.03.11	08:21	J.C.	1	1,5	2	0		1	17	2	4	0
224	08.03.11	08:22	K.S.	1	1	2	0		1	24	2	0	0
225	08.03.11	09:28	J.C.	1	1	5	0		1	448	2	4	0
226	08.03.11	10:07	C.S.	1	1	1	1		1	113	4	0	0
227	08.03.11	10:42	C.S.	2	1	1		227	1	29	4	0	0
228	08.03.11	10:55	W.G.	1	1,2	2	0		1	38	2	4	0
229	08.03.11	10:54	N.O.	1	1,5	9	0		1	11	2	0	0
230	08.03.11	11:14	J.C.	1	1	0		230	0				
231	08.03.11	06:53	K.S.	1	1	8	13		1	662	3	4	4
232	08.03.11	07:35	J.C.	2	1	5		232	1	303	2	4	0
233	08.03.11	07:38	J.C.	2	1	0		232	0				
234	08.03.11	08:51	P.T.	2	1	1		232	1	55	2	0	1
235	08.03.11	09:54	O.P.	2	1	1		232	1	20	4	0	0
236	08.03.11	09:57	O.P.	2	1	0		232	0				
237	08.03.11	09:59	D.R.	2	1	6		232	1	290	2	0	1
238	08.03.11	10:27	O.P.	2	1	1		232	1	135	4	0	0
239	08.03.11	10:29	O.P.	2	1	1		232	1	50	0	0	4
240	08.03.11	11:19	J.C.	2	1	0		232	0				
241	08.03.11	11:20	J.C.	2	1	0		232	0				
242	08.03.11	11:22	J.C.	2	1	0		232	0				
243	08.03.11	11:38	J.C.	2	1	0		232	0				
244	08.03.11	11:38	J.C.	2	1	0		232	0				
245	08.03.11	10:17	K.S.	1	2	0	1		1	0	3	0	0
246	08.03.11	11:41	W.G.	2	1	0		245	1	17	2	0	0
247	08.03.11	10:49	K.S.	1	1	0	4		0				
248	08.03.11	10:50	K.S.	2	1	0		247	0				
249	08.03.11	10:55	T.G.	2	1	1		247	0				
250	08.03.11	11:24	T.G.	2	1	0		247	1	21	4	0	0
251	08.03.11	11:45	K.P.	2	1	0		247	1	7	4	0	0
252	08.03.11	12:36	P.K.	1	1	2	0		1	104	2	4	0
253	08.03.11	13:11	D.D.	1	1	2	3		1	55	0	0	1
254	08.03.11	13:16	D.D.	2	1	2		253	1	22	0	0	1
255	08.03.11	13:23	G.K.	2	1	0		253	0				
256	08.03.11	13:28	D.D.	2	1	0		253	0				
257	08.03.11	14:46	T.B.	1	1	0	0		1	40	2	0	0
258	08.03.11	14:55	Y.Y.	1	1	0	0		1	121	1	0	4
259	08.03.11	15:27	S.O.	1	1	3	0		1	178	2	0	0
260	08.03.11	14:21	A.T.	1	1	1	3		1	28	2	0	0
261	08.03.11	14:25	P.K.	2	1	0		261		16	2	0	0
262	08.03.11	14:31	N.B.	2	1	0		261	1	12	2	0	0
263	08.03.11	15:36	N.O.	2	1	0		261	1	34	2	0	0
264	08.03.11	12:16	M.W.	1	1	0	9		1	18	4	0	0
265	08.03.11	12:17	C.C.	2	1	0		265	0				
266	08.03.11	12:17	W.G.	2	1	0		265	1	7	2	2	0
267	08.03.11	12:18	W.G.	2	1	0		256	1	8	4	2	0
268	08.03.11	12:19	J.C.	2	1	0		256	1	17	4	4	4
269	08.03.11	12:20	M.W.	2	1	0		256	1	23	4	0	0
270	08.03.11	12:26	T.G.	2	1	1		256	1	40	2	0	0
271	08.03.11	12:29	C.C.	2	1	0		256	1	22	4	0	0
272	08.03.11	15:40	N.O.	2	1	0		256	1	32	2	0	0
273	08.03.11	15:46	N.O.	2	1	0		256	1	14	4	0	0
274	08.03.11	16:24	S.O.	1	2	1	2		1	0	2	0	0

V1 NC	V2 Date	V3 Time	V4 Author	V5 Form	V6 Type Con	V7 Likes	V8 Comment	V9 Reference	V10 GNH/TCA	V11 Length	V12 TCA	V13 GNH	V 14 freed	V15 implicate
275	08.03.11	16:36	T.G.	2	1	0		275	0					
276	08.03.11	16:39	S.O.	2	1	0		275	0					
277	08.03.11	16:46	P.T.	1	1	4	8		1	163	4	0	0	0
278	08.03.11	16:50	T.G.	2	1	1		277	1	13	4	0	0	0
279	08.03.11	16:51	P.T.	2	1	0		277	0					
280	08.03.11	16:52	P.T.	2	1	0		277	0					
281	08.03.11	17:00	C.C.	2	1	1		277	0					
282	08.03.11	17:03	W.G.	2	1	0		277	0					
283	08.03.11	17:19	T.G.	2	1	0		277	1	17	4	0	0	0
284	08.03.11	17:30	H.C.	2	1	0		277	0					
285	09.03.11	03:14	N.O.	2	1	1		277	0					
286	09.03.11	03:49	N.O.	1	5	2	0		1	0	2	0	0	0
287	08.03.11	18:29	T.G.	1	1	2	1		1	135	2	0	0	0
288	09.03.11	03:40	C.C.	2	1	0		287	1	11	2	0	0	0
289	09.03.11	03:59	K.Y.	1	1	5	2		1	23	4	0	0	0
290	09.03.11	04:18	T.M.	2	1	0		289	1	15	4	0	0	0
291	09.03.11	04:41	L.C.	2	1	0		289	0					
292	09.03.11	05:17	J.C.	1	1,2	0	0		1	29	4	0	0	0
293	09.03.11	06:03	N.B.	1	1	0	0		1	27	4	0	0	0
294	09.03.11	05:15	J.C.	1	1	2	3		0					
295	09.03.11	05:48	T.G.	2	1	2		295	0					
296	09.03.11	05:52	J.C.	2	1	0		295	0					
297	09.03.11	06:49	D.D.	2	1	0		295	0					
298	09.03.11	06:51	D.D.	1	1	2	0		1	26	2	0	0	0
299	09.03.11	07:04	N.W.	1	1	5	0		1	71	4	0	0	0
300	09.03.11	08:18	I.N.	1	1,5	0	0		1	7	4	0	0	0
301	09.03.11	08:55	Z.Y.	1	1	5	0		1	289	2	0	1	2
302	08.03.11	15:28	D.R.	1	1	19	30		1	178	4	0	1	2
303	08.03.11	15:32	T.G.	2	1	0		302	1	9	4	0	0	0
304	08.03.11	15:34	K.W.	2	1	1		302	1	66	0	0	1	2
305	08.03.11	15:35	K.W.	2	1	0		302	0					
306	08.03.11	15:38	J.C.	2	1	0		302	0					
307	08.03.11	15:40	J.C.	2	1	0		302	0					
308	08.03.11	15:40	J.C.	2	1	0		302	0					
309	08.03.11	15:40	K.W.	2	1	0		302	0					
310	08.03.11	15:41	J.C.	2	1	0		302	0					
311	08.03.11	15:45	N.O.	2	1	0		302	1	30	2	0	0	0
312	08.03.11	15:51	K.W.	2	1	0		302	0					
313	08.03.11	15:51	K.W.	2	1	0		302	0					
314	08.03.11	15:52	K.W.	2	1	0		302	0					
315	08.03.11	15:55	J.C.	2	1	0		302	0					
316	08.03.11	15:55	J.C.	2	1	0		302	0					
317	08.03.11	15:59	T.G.	2	1	4		302	1	130	4	0	1	2
318	08.03.11	16:00	K.W.	2	1	1		302	0					
319	08.03.11	16:01	K.W.	2	1	3		302	1	30	0	0	1	1
320	08.03.11	16:31	T.G.	2	1	0		302	0					
321	08.03.11	18:04	J.C.	2	1	0		302	0					
322	08.03.11	18:10	T.G.	2	1	0		302	0					
323	08.03.11	18:21	J.C.	2	1	0		302	0					
324	09.03.11	03:33	T.C.	2	1	1		302	1	69	2	0	0	0
325	09.03.11	03:35	N.O.	2	1	0		302	1	8	4	0	0	0
326	09.03.11	03:39	K.S.	2	1	2		302	0					
327	09.03.11	05:27	K.Y.	2	1	1		302	1	28	4	0	0	0
328	09.03.11	07:34	T.L.	2	1	0		302	1	23	4	0	0	0
329	09.03.11	07:34	T.L.	2	1	0		302	0					

V1 NC	V2 Date	V3 Time	V4 Author	V5 Form	V6 Type Cont	V7 Likes	V8 Comment	V9 Reference	V10 GNH/TCA	V11 Length	V12 TCA	V13 GNH	V 14 freed	V15 implicit/é
330	09.03.11	08:17	D.D.	2	1	0		302	1	5	0	0	1	1
331	09.03.11	08:51	K.Y.	2	1	0		302	1	53	4	0	1	2
332	09.03.11	09:24	T.L.	2	1	1		302	1	40	4	0	0	0
333	08.03.11	15:57	K.B.	1	1	3	2		1	602	2	4	1	2
334	08.03.11	16:15	T.G.	2	1	0		333	1	9	2	0	1	2
335	09.03.11	10:05	K.Y.	2	1	0		333	1	13	4	0	4	2
336	09.03.11	10:56	S.H.	1	1	2	0		1	7	2	0	4	2
337	09.03.11	11:34	W.G.	1	1,2	0	0		0					
338	09.03.11	12:29	S.J.	1	1	2	0		1	60	2	0	1	2
339	09.03.11	12:32	P.W.	1	1	0	0		1	9	4	0	0	0
340	09.03.11	12:53	T.B.	1	1	0	0		1	27	4	0	0	0
341	09.03.11	12:58	T.B.	1	1	0	1		1	32	2	0	0	0
342	09.03.11	13:04	S.J.	2	1	1		341	1	53	2	0	0	0
343	09.03.11	14:25	K.W.	1	1	0	0		1	44	4	0	1	2
344	09.03.11	14:28	N.R.	1	1	0	2		1	35	4	0	0	0
345	09.03.11	14:37	N.O.	2	1	0		344	1	8	4	0	0	0
346	09.03.11	14:42	N.R.	2	1	0		344	1	56	4	0	1	2
347	09.03.11	14:14	A.T.	1	1	1	1		1	50	2	0	1	1
348	09.03.11	18:12	S.J.	2	1	0		347	1	37	2	0	0	0
349	09.03.11	13:06	K.W.	1	1	0	15		1	85	1	0	1	1
350	09.03.11	13:17	P.K.	2	1	0		349	1	55	1	0	2	1
351	09.03.11	13:18	P.K.	2	1	1		349	0					
352	09.03.11	13:19	P.K.	2	1	2		349	1	29	4	0	0	0
353	09.03.11	13:20	S.J.	2	1	1		349	1	22	4	0	0	0
354	09.03.11	13:23	P.K.	2	1	0		349	1	38	1	0	0	0
355	09.03.11	13:41	C.C.	2	1	0		349	1	19	2	0	0	0
356	09.03.11	13:54	K.W.	2	1	0		349	1	39	1	0	0	0
357	09.03.11	14:03	W.G.	2	1	2		349	1	91	2	4	1	2
358	09.03.11	14:04	J.J.	2	1	0		349	1	13	4	0	0	0
359	09.03.11	14:10	A.T.	2	1	2		349	1	84	2	0	0	0
360	09.03.11	14:39	N.O.	2	1	0		349	0					
361	09.03.11	14:40	C.C.	2	1	2		349	1	47	2	0	0	0
362	09.03.11	15:03	K.W.	2	1	1		349	0					
363	09.03.11	17:49	P.T.	2	1	2		349	1	32	4	0	0	0
364	09.03.11	18:28	S.J.	2	1	0		349	1	102	2	0	0	0
365	09.03.11	11:30	J.C.	1	1	0	17		1	63	4	0	0	0
366	09.03.11	11:32	D.J.	2	1	1		365	1	19	2	0	0	0
367	09.03.11	11:38	K.S.	2	1	0		365	1	20	2	0	0	0
368	09.03.11	11:41	J.C.	2	1	0		365	1	25	4	0	0	0
369	09.03.11	11:43	D.J.	2	1	0		365	1	9	4	0	4	2
370	09.03.11	11:44	D.J.	2	1	0		365	0					
371	09.03.11	11:46	J.C.	2	1	0		365	1	76	2	0	1	2
372	09.03.11	11:50	D.J.	2	1	0		365	1	6	2	0	0	0
373	09.03.11	12:07	D.S.	2	1	0		365	1	1	4	4	4	2
374	09.03.11	14:53	N.O.	2	1	0		365	1	6	4	0	0	0
375	09.03.11	14:53	N.O.	2	1	0		365	1	9	4	0	0	0
376	09.03.11	15:05	K.W.	2	1	0		365	1	22	4	0	0	0
377	09.03.11	17:26	P.T.	2	1	1		365	1	18	4	0	0	0
378	09.03.11	17:43	T.G.	2	1	0		365	1	8	4	0	0	0
379	09.03.11	17:48	T.G.	2	1	0		365	1	42	4	0	0	0
380	08.03.11	13:51	H.H.	1	1	1	2		1	22	2	0	0	0
381	09.03.11	14:20	J.J.	2	1	0		380	0					
382	09.03.11	15:48	S.O.	1	1,2	22	62		1	71	2	0	1	2
383	09.03.11	16:02	N.O.	2	1	0		383	1	80	2	0	0	0
384	09.03.11	16:06	S.O.	2	1	1		383	1	54	2	0	1	2

V1 NC	V2 Date	V3 Time	V4 Author	V5 Form	V6 Type Cont	V7 Likes	V8 Comment	V9 Reference	V10 GNH/TCA	V11 Length	V12 TCA	V13 GNH	V 14 freed	V15 implicit
385	09.03.11	16:58	S.O.	2	1	0		383	1	24	4	0	0	0
386	09.03.11	17:11	B.T.	2	1	2		383	1	3	2	0	1	2
387	09.03.11	17:19	S.J.	2	1	2		383	1	2	2	0	1	2
388	09.03.11	17:24	P.T.	2	1	2		383	1	6	2	0	1	2
389	09.03.11	17:28	S.O.	2	1	0		383	0					
390	09.03.11	17:32	P.T.	2	1	1		383	0					
391	09.03.11	17:33	P.T.	2	1	2		383	1	12	2	0	1	2
392	09.03.11	18:01	A.W.	2	1	2		383	1	2	2	0	1	2
393	09.03.11	18:04	TP.	2	1	2		383	1	70	2	0	1	2
394	09.03.11	18:07	S.D.	2	1	2		383	1	2	2	0	1	2
395	09.03.11	18:10	T.G.	2	1	1		383	1	10	2	0	1	2
396	09.03.11	18:21	S.J.	2	1	2		383	1	9	2	0	1	2
397	09.03.11	18:27	TP.	2	1	2		383	0					
398	09.03.11	18:31	S.J.	2	1	2		383	0					
399	09.03.11	18:31	TP.	2	1	2		383	0					
400	09.03.11	18:45	S.J.	2	1	2		383	1	22	2	0	1	2
401	09.03.11	18:47	TP.	2	1	1		383	0					
402	09.03.11	19:45	S.O.	2	1	0		383	0					
403	09.03.11	19:47	TP.	2	1	0		383	0					
404	09.03.11	19:51	S.O.	2	1	0		383	0					
405	09.03.11	19:59	C.C.	2	1	0		383	1	19	2	0	0	0
406	09.03.11	20:05	S.O.	2	1	0		383	0					
407	09.03.11	20:08	TP.	2	1	0		383	1	13	4	0	1	2
408	09.03.11	20:08	W.G.	2	1	1		383	1	9	2	0	1	2
409	09.03.11	19:24	J.R.	1	1	4			1	26	2	0	1	2
410	09.03.11	19:40	S.O.	2	1	2		409	1	85	2	0	1	2
411	09.03.11	19:43	C.C.	2	1	0		409	0					
412	09.03.11	19:45	S.O.	2	1	0		409	0					
413	09.03.11	19:50	W.G.	2	1	0		409	1	14	2	0	1	2

Curriculum Vitae

Education

October 2006 to present

University of Vienna

Degree Program in International Development

Degree earned: Magister (Austrian degree equivalent to MA)

Core subjects: Asia, Human Rights, Conflict Studies, Middle East

October 2007 to September 2010

University of Applied Sciences, Vienna

Degree Program in Journalism

Degree earned: Bachelor of Arts

Thesis: "Racist Stereotypes in Minority-oriented Magazines"

October 2006 to June 2007

University of Vienna

Degree Program in Mass Media and Communication Science

September 2002 to June 2006

Bundesoberstufenrealgymnasium

Mistelbach specialising in Art

Matura (equivalent to A-levels) in May 2006 (passed with distinction)

Areas tested: German, Mathematics, English, History and a specialised paper, "Manipulation in Advertising"

Scholarships and Special Studies

January 2012

Performance Scholarship of the University of Vienna for Studies of International Development

June 2009

NÖ Top Stipendium - Lower Austrian Scholarship for Excellent Students studying abroad

February 2009 to July 2009

Hogeschool Utrecht, The Netherlands

Erasmus Scholarship for the Exchange

Program "European Culture and European Journalism"

The Program included a two-week reporting trip to a European city which the students had to organize independently.

July 2008

Bosnia and Herzegovina

University Field Trip

Visited NGO's, political parties, development organisations in Banja Luka, Srebrenica, Sarajevo and Mostar.

Scientific Publications:

2012

Einheit in der Vielfalt? Die Einführung der Sharia in Aceh und ihre Folgen. (Unity in Diversity? The implementation of the Sharia in Aceh and its Consequences) In: Slama, Martin (ed.): Islam und Macht in Südostasien. Austrian Studies in Social Anthropology. Sondernummer 1/2012.

Professional Achievements

October 2012	European Youth Media Days 2012 Participant of a three-day workshop at the European Parliament in Brussels, organized by the European Youth Press; topic: „Reporting the Crisis“
May 2012	Euro-Mediterranean Academy for Young Journalists (EMAJ) Participant of a two-week EMAJ training in Alexandria, Egypt
2008 to present	Freelance Journalist at various organisations, e.g. Caritas Wien, Hohe Luft
January 2012 to December 2012	2012 Regular freelancer for a new magazine of the Red Bull publishing house. – wrote in-depth reportages and features
November 2011 to present	Conflict, Participation and Development in Palestine (CPDP) Member of a Research Cluster within the framework of APPEAR (Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education & Research for Development)
December 2010 to May 2011	Presse Reporter'11 Winner out of 95 competitors of the “Reporter '11” competition by Austria's biggest independent premium-newspaper “Die Presse”. - researched and wrote several articles on Gross National Happiness, including a two-week-trip to Bhutan
June 2010 to present	DURST, Vienna Freelancer

	<p>DURST is a student magazine of Falter publishing house.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - created the theme of the magazine for the upcoming edition - researched and wrote articles - took and edited pictures
February 2010 to present	<p>Falter, Vienna Freelancer Falter is Vienna's most popular weekly newspaper, known for its independent research and dealing with socially and politically important topics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - researched and wrote articles
July 2009/2010/2011/2012	<p>International SOS Holiday Village Caldonazzo, Italy Volunteer (2009/2012) and employee (2010/2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - created a weekly newspaper for the holiday village - researched and wrote articles - took and edited pictures - developed the layout and produced the newspaper - was in charge of updating the weblog of the holiday village - taught children how to work as journalists
September 2008 to February 2009	<p>Austria Press Agency, Vienna Intern and later freelancer at the international desk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - covered press conferences and events - researched and wrote several articles per day - interviewed politicians, experts and publicists
August 2008	<p>Kurier, Vienna Intern at the international desk Kurier is one of Austria's major daily newspapers with a circulation of just under 200,000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - researched and wrote articles - attended press conferences
August 2007 and February 2008	<p>Woman, Vienna Woman is one of Austria's major women's magazines. Intern</p>