The Causes and Consequences of Migration: How Displacement and Change Affect the Well-Being of Humli Tibetans in Katmandu

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THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF MIGRATION: HOW DISPLACEMENT AND
STRESS AFFECT WELL-BEING

By

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Humla, one of the most remote regions in the Himalayan nation of Nepal, has undergone tremendous upheaval due to the Maoist insurgency of 1996-2006. As a result, numerous groups from rural Nepal such as those from Humla, have been displaced or chosen to migrate to urban areas, seeking to improve their lives or simply to survive. Pressure from Maoists has caused the displacement of many individuals who make up the community of Humlis now living in Kathmandu. This study aims to understand these causes of displacement and migration, as well as its consequences for Humlis. As a consequence of displacement and migration, significant changes occur in the lifestyle of Humlis. This change itself can be a source of stress. Other sources of stress in their new environment may be physical or behavioral, structural, or psychosocial. From understanding what sources of stress exist in the environment of displaced Humlis, interventions may be introduced which address and mitigate these sources of stress, and thereby decrease the risk of stress-related negative health outcomes in this community.
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Introduction

I first came to Kathmandu, Nepal in 2007, following the advice of Tibetan Buddhist teacher and scholar, Tulku Sangak Rinpoche, whom I recently had met at his retreat center in Arlee, Montana. In Kathmandu I attended a small university situated within a working Tibetan Buddhist monastery, where I studied Buddhist philosophy and Himalayan languages. During the months that followed, I lived among Buddhists and Hindus alike in the neighborhood surrounding the Great Boudhinath Stupa, and was deeply immersed in Nepali and Tibetan culture. I grew to appreciate the tenacity, altruism, and humor of the Tibetan community in particular as they embodied so well the traditions I had come to Kathmandu to study.

I found myself wanting to contribute in some way to a people who had undergone, and continue to undergo, so much hardship as displaced people in an unfamiliar place- and from whom I had learned so much and been treated with such hospitality. I wanted to understand their struggle and what types of support their community could benefit from, to ease the strain of adjustment and improve their well-being.

Upon returning to the U.S. in 2008, I entered graduate school under the advisement of Dr. Kimber Haddix McKay whom I was very fortunate to meet and who has been working and conducting research in Nepal for over a decade. She introduced me to the community of ethnic Tibetans from the remote region of Humla in NW Nepal, who were currently living in Kathmandu. These individuals known as Humlis are a little-studied group, uniquely positioned politically and socially, who have been relocating to Kathmandu for the last two decades, due in large part to pressure from the armed Maoists of Nepal. Neither purely Tibetan in the national sense, nor Nepali in the ethnic sense, this group has been subject to an especially difficult set of adaptation challenges since their relocation to Kathmandu. The lifestyle and social changes experienced by the participants as a result of their migration or displacement from Humla, are significant. For example, every Humli who participated in this study was primarily an agriculturalist in their area of origin in Humla. None of these Humlis who now live in Kathmandu, practice agriculture as a livelihood.
I returned to Nepal in the fall of 2010 to conduct my graduate research, which I completed in 2011. The project is a preliminary study of how lifestyle change caused by displacement and migration affects the well-being of Humli Tibetans in Kathmandu. Specifically, this study aims to explore the relationships between the changes precipitated by displacement and migration; the stress which can result from such changes; and the negative health outcomes which have been associated with this stress, if they are left unmitigated. Because this study is formative, data gathered for this research is designed to highlight increased risk of stress-related health outcomes in this community, by identifying indicators of risk. Indicators of risk were identified both in the interviews and the surveys I conducted with participants from the community of Humlis in Kathmandu. These will be discussed in the data analysis section of this paper. No causal relationships can be claimed due to the limited sample size and convenient sampling used in this ethnographic study.

I used purposive sampling to select participants who fit criteria which were relevant to the research questions mentioned above. The criteria for selection were that all participants in this study had to be adults who were born in the remote, mountainous region of Humla and who have migrated, either voluntarily or involuntarily, to the low valley city of Kathmandu. To recruit participants for the study, my translator and key informant provided a list of Humli community members who resided in the neighborhoods surrounding the great Boudhanath Stupa. We made appointments from the list from the list of community members, for 21 interviews and surveys. This number of interviews was sufficient to reach a level of saturation, after which very little new information was identified in the interviews. According to Guest et al. saturation in this type of study can be reached after only 12 interviews (2006: 59-82). I recruited as wide a distribution as possible in the sample, in terms of the demographic characteristics of sex, age, and education. Once these 21 interviews and surveys were conducted, we administered an additional nine surveys for a total of 30, hoping to increase the power of the sample as much as possible, for statistical analysis of the data. Ultimately, the power of the sample was not great enough to perform statistical
analyses. According to Graves et al. the sample would have to be at least twice this large (between 60 and 120) in future studies to allow for correlative analyses.

There is currently no data available on the number of Humlis living in Kathmandu, nor is there data available concerning the percentage of Humlis in Kathamandu who were displaced by the Maoist conflict. My key informant estimated that there were about two hundred Humlis in the community.

There are a few non-English terms used in this paper. These terms are italicized and defined in English in quotations. Where the terms are Nepali, I have relied on the research and orthography of Pratyoush Onta from his article on the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal (2004). Where the terms are Humli Tibetan, I have relied upon the English translation by my interpreter and key informant, who is a native speaker of Humli Tibetan and who speaks English, which she learned during the course of her education and now uses at a university level.

Based on the interviews and surveys I conducted in the fall of 2010-2011 in Kathmandu, Humlis did show indicators of depression and other negative health outcomes, which have been linked in current anthropological and cross-disciplinary research, with stress; particularly, the stress of social change. Where the term depression is used in this study, I rely on the standard clinical definition and symptoms provided in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders (DSM). This definition of depression including its symptoms and indicators, have been used in other studies of depression among Tibetan refugees (Jacobson 2002) and are found to be consistent with symptoms of existing illness among Tibetans. While there are no terms specifically for depression and generalized anxiety, the symptoms identified in Jacobson’s study of a displaced Tibetan refugees, are very similar to the symptoms and definition of depression in the DSM. As Jacobson states, “The symptom structures of life-wind illness conforms in general to the proposed category of “mixed anxiety and depression”(Andrade et al. 1994; Kessler et al. 1998: Pasnau and Bystritsky 1994; Zinbarg et al. 1994)” (2002:263). Other cross-cultural research on depression includes
work by Theresa O’Nell a psychologist who uses an anthropological perspective to frame her work among Native American communities in the U.S. (1996).

The salience of this research is two-fold. First, because of the rapid rate of social change worldwide, more research is called for in order to understand how change affects individuals culturally, physically, and psychologically. Secondly, there are a great number of people in the world who have been displaced from their homes. Some estimates place this number at nearly 25 million. In Nepal there are currently an estimated 250,000 internally displaced people (IDP). I will look at one particular group of IDPs in order to better understand how this highly vulnerable population has been impacted and to identify their specific needs. This exploratory research aims to gain a better understanding from the literature of the risks associated with displacement and migration, and the resulting change and stress on individuals. Additionally I wanted to gather preliminary data which could be used to assess the level of risk of negative health outcomes for Humlis in Kathmandu, which then may be used to design possible interventions for future studies with this population.
Site Description

Introduction

Many of the participants in this study decided to leave Humla with little or no preparation, and flee to the city for safety. To move from the remote and rural Humla district to the metropolitan capital city of Kathmandu led to drastic changes in lifestyle for Humlis. It is important to understand these changes and how stressful the adjustment to change was, in order to then address and mitigate these stressors—thereby interrupting the process by which stress can lead to negative health outcomes. To put it another way: to identify stressors caused by displacement, and begin to address these stressors, is to improve the well-being of Humlis who live in Kathmandu. That is the purpose of this study.

In order to illuminate the causes of displacement for Humli Tibetans, I will give some anthropological context to their internal displacement—from their place of origin in rural Humla, to their destination in urban Kathmandu. It is important to use both micro and macro-level perspectives to contextualize the causes of displacement. This approach yields a much more comprehensive analysis than could be achieved by either perspective alone. I will first describe the macro-environment from which the community came; specifically, I will give an overview of the national of Nepal in terms of its geography, demographics, and history.

Then I will describe the micro-environment from which Humlis originated—the district of Humla in the Northwest corner of Nepal—in terms of its geography, demographics, and history. In this ethnographic description, I will focus in particular on the six domains of language, religion, diet, household size, livelihood, and daily routine both from the literature on Humla (in the site description section) and from descriptions of life in Humla which I collected in interviews and surveys during the course of this study in 2010-2011 (presented in the data section). Within the data section of this analysis, I will compare and contrast life in
remote and rural Humla, with life in the metropolitan city of Kathmandu, within the six domains mentioned above. The purpose of this comparison is to show how life has changed drastically for displaced Humlis now living in Kathmandu.

An important aspect of the macro-context of Humli displacement is the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. In this site description, I will trace the history of the Maoist conflict in order to situate the factors which influenced decisions of individual Humlis to migrate to Kathmandu. Participants in this study outlined several major factors which informed their decision to leave Humla. I will discuss these ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors, mentioned in the interviews and surveys, in the data section of this analysis, as well as discussing the concept of push and pull factors in greater detail in the literature review. But for the purpose of this site description, it is most relevant to highlight that over half of the study participants identified Maoist pressure as the single greatest (push) factor in their displacement. As one participant relates, “He thinks most of Humlis who are staying in Kathmandu, they came because of Maoist pressure. And maybe they came, his ancestors came (to Humla) because of the civil war (in Tibet). Pushed away.” (Interview participant 14-14).

The literature on the Maoist conflict describes different negative aspects of the Maoist occupations and war tactics. I have equated these negative aspects and tactics with the Maoist pressure sited by participants in this study in their interviews and surveys. I have grouped these negative aspects into six categories- altogether they comprise the push factor of Maoist pressure. These six categories are:

- Forced or voluntary conscription of children into the armed forces
- Threats, harassment, violence, and murder
- Confiscation of property or amenities in the form of forced ‘donations’
- Destroyed infrastructure (which is related to increased food insecurity)
- Destroyed educational and health systems
- Destroyed social structure. I will give examples of each of these six types of ‘Maoist pressure’
I will go into further detail to define the factors termed ‘push’ and ‘pull’ in migration literature, in the literature review section of this analysis. In the literature review, I will also go into greater detail about the concept of (conflict induced) internal displacement and how IDPs (internally displaced people) are a vulnerable population, with specific needs, who urgently require attention and support from their government and from external sources such as international aid agencies (Nepal, 2007).

Nepal Overview

Map 1. Nepal National Map with capital city Kathmandu and Humla VDC capital Simikot

Human Development Index statistics

Nepal is a nation situated high in the Himalayas between two political giants: the Tibet Autonomous Region of China to the North, and India to the East, South, and West. Nepal is culturally rich and geographically stunning but its beauty was marred by political conflict and social upheaval. Ranked 157th out
of 162 nations world-wide according to the 2012 Human Development Index (UNDP, HDI), it is one of the world’s least developed countries. Many of Nepal’s socio-economic difficulties can be attributed to a ten-year long civil war- exacerbated by external influences- and to a historically ineffectual government. To illustrate the many challenges faced by Nepal, the HDI shows that of its 26,494,504 citizens, over 24 percent live on USD $1.25 a day or less and the average annual income is USD $1,137. Life expectancy averages 69 years. Sixty percent of Nepalis live in a state of food insufficiency. The adult literacy rate is only about 66 percent, and the average number of years of schooling is just above three (Upreti, et al, 2010).

**Geography**

In both geography and culture, Nepal is incredibly diverse. Within its 147,181 square kilometers of territory the altitude ranges from just over 100 meters to over 8,000 meters (or 24,000 feet). In contrast to the tropical lowlands in the South, many of the world’s highest mountain peaks lie within the northern border, including Mount Everest and Kanchenjunga at 8,848 and 8,586 meters, respectively. The country is divided into five geographical areas or development regions: eastern, central, western, mid-western, and far-western; and further divided into three ecological zones: plains (terai) in the south, hills (pahar) in the mid-latitudes, and mountains (himal) to the north. There are 75 districts in Nepal. These districts are further divided into smaller political areas known as Village Development Committee (VDCs) and within the VDCs are wards.
Livelihoods

Nearly 80 percent of Nepalis make their living as agriculturalists (UNDP, 2013), as 85 percent of the total population live in rural areas where there are few other economic opportunities. In the plains region most of the rich soil has been cultivated continuously for centuries. Crops such as rice, wheat, and potatoes are widely grown in the plains and also in the hills. Additionally, hill populations make use of forest resources and raise livestock. The inhabitants of the mountain region also cultivate crops but have a much shorter growing season, typically just 3-5 months. These agropastoralists supplement a short growing season with trade to the north and south; and by raising livestock such as goats and sheep, yak, and cows—grazing them in seasonally rotating pastures.

Castes and Ethnicity

As was stated above, Nepal is diverse geographically and culturally. Rugged landscapes have kept groups distinct in many parts of the country (Whelpton, 2005). The people who now inhabit Nepal have
migrated there from all directions and at many different times throughout history. For example, the ‘people of the mountains’ or Parbatiyas, were originally from Hindu kingdoms outside of the Kathmandu Valley and rose to power in the 17th and 18th centuries, subjugating the indigenous Newar groups (Whelpton, 2005). Comprised of a small bloc of Caste Hill Hindu Elite (CHHE) including the Hill Brahmin, Chhetri, and Thakuri, the Parbatiyas have historically been dominant in the state since its inception. They spoke the language which evolved into modern Nepalese. These Parbatiyas and other Indo-Aryan language speakers make up the predominant language group in Nepal. Another major linguistic branch that is prevalent and which belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family is the Tibeto-Burman branch. The speakers of this language group migrated to Nepal from Western China (Whelpton, 2005). Those who speak dialects of Tibetan are known as Bhotiyas in Nepal. The earliest chronicles of the Kathmandu Valley claim that ‘Tibet-Burman hill people’ ruled the valley, before groups from India, beginning in the first millennium AD (Whelpton, 2005).

Development in Nepal was most successful in the Kathmandu Valley. There the Shah dynasty established a caste system in order to facilitate more efficient interactions and governance between distinct groups and the state (Karan and Ishii, 1996). As Riaz explains, “...the state has succeeded in maintaining its hold over the population through a constructed Hindu identity and a complex connection between this identity and the cultural legitimacy of the social order. This constructed identity was designed to subsume ethnic and regional differences” (2007:3) Though castes may have made possible a more efficient bureaucracy in the urbanized areas of Nepal, the cost of the caste system- the discrimination and exploitation which have resulted- far outweigh its benefits. For example, “For many of the lower castes, enslavement remained a possibility until its abolition in 1921, while bonded labor was only finally ended in 2001” (Whelpton, 2005:154).

“Nepali society is divided along various caste, linguistic, and geographical lines while the ruling bloc has been comprised of a small segment “(Riaz, 2007:9). One hundred and twenty six castes and ethnic groups were reported on the 2011 census in Nepal. Chhetri is the largest group at 16.6 percent, followed by Brahmin-Hill, Magar, Tharu, Tamang, and Newar. Together, the Parbatya High Caste elite (Thakuri, Chhetri,
and Brahmin) and Newar comprise 37.2 percent of the population but hold more than 80 percent of the leadership positions in government and state institutions (Riaz, 2007). There are 123 mother-tongues spoken in Nepal, despite the fact that 44.6 percent of Nepalis speak Nepalese as their mother-tongue. There are ten types of religion practiced in Nepal. The most prevalent is Hindu (81.3 percent) with 21,551,492 devotees. The second most prevalent is Buddhism (9 percent) with 2,396,099 devotees, followed by Islam (4 percent); and Kirat, Christianity, Prakriti, Bon, Jainism, Bahai, and Sikhism together comprise the last six percent.

**Nepal’s Political History from 1769-1996**

Nepal has a long and rich history, but for the purpose of this site description I will briefly trace its political developments from the time of the nation’s unification in 1769 up until the Maoist insurgency began in 1996.

The political heart of Nepal has always been Kathmandu. In the mid-1700s, a Shah king named Prithvi Narayan Shah, ruler of the Gorkha principality in present day Kathmandu, took it upon himself to begin a campaign to expand the Gorkha territory. By 1769 he had managed to conquer sixty local kingdoms using blockades, sieges, and assaults (Riaz, 2007:7). His new territory was essentially the same as that of modern Nepal. Under his rule, Nepal became the independent nation-state it remains today. The Shah kings continued to rule the new nation even as the British East India Company challenged their authority and attempted to establish its presence in Nepal from 1814 until 1816 during the Anglo-Gorkha War. The war was followed by three decades of uncertain leadership and a succession of assassinations in the palace (Whelpton, 2005).
Then in 1846, the Rana family became the dominant rulers, though it was not a hostile take-over from the Shah’s, and their families continued to intermarry (Hutt, 2004:2). The Rana dynasty proceeded to ‘Hinduize’ Nepal, introducing a caste system headed by the Gorkha elite (Chhetri, Thakuri, and Brahmin). The elite castes ruled an ‘extractive state’ whereby they collected resources from the lower castes and provided very little to them in return in terms of infrastructure or economic opportunities. The Rana dynasty was overthrown by the Shah king, Tribhuvan, in 1951 and the feudal system was replaced by a burgeoning democracy beginning in 1959 with the first free elections.

Just one year later, King Mahendra dismissed the new congress, illegitimately calling on emergency powers granted by the constitution, claiming that the multi-party parliamentary democracy was “not suited to Nepal” (Hutt, 2004:3). In its place, Mahendra created the party-less panchayat system, which returned power to the king and elites, and re-instated a feudal economy.

Political consciousness grew underground in the decades that followed. Opposition to the panchayat system mounted as corruption spread and the government failed to make notable progress in development. The political parties which were not dead but had only lost their public expression began to re-emerge and lead protests in the late 1970’s and 1980’s. Finally, the panchayat system was dissolved in the wake of the people’s movement for democracy, and was replaced with a new ‘bicameral parliament’. The Nepali Congress Party and a United Left Front, made up of seven communist parties, spearheaded the people’s movement which focused on human rights and accountability in government. Because the economy was suffering badly, in large part due to trade disputes and sanctions from India, the new government gained popularity among the professional class, with whose support the parliament drafted a new constitution. The monarchy was relegated to a constitutional role.

Unfortunately, the new government did not live up to its promising beginnings. Internal divisions within the Nepali Congress Party and other factionalism within the government led to its collapse in 1994. The Nepal Communist Party (UML) tried to gain control, but also fell less than one year later. The years
between 1995 and 1999 were wrought with opposition and power struggles. This unstable political environment set the stage for the emerging Maoist insurgency.

**History of the Maoist Insurgency**

The origins of the Maoist (CPN-M) party can be traced back to the formation of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) by Shrestha in 1949, and the first secret convention of the CPN in 1954. It was during this secret convention that the party established itself as an enemy of feudalism and imperialism.

Ideologically, the movement began in India where Nepali humanists such as Jai Prithvi Bahadur Singh adopted Marxist ideas, gaining some momentum with the strike by cloth mill workers in 1947. Nepali intellectuals believed that communism was the only viable way to prevent imperialist powers from turning Nepal into a ‘military base’ and to keep India from expanding into the country (Thapa, 2004:23). Ironically, however, India would ultimately become involved in the insurgency on both sides of the people’s war, in order to gain influence over the country (Shah, 2004). India’s strategy toward Nepal has been described as “strategic coercion” which entails “the splitting of the political and social structure of a victimized state until the fabric of national morale disintegrates...tensions or vulnerabilities may be exploited by setting such groups (Maoists and the state) against each other in hostile, uncompromising opposition” (Shah, 2004:200).

A full analysis of India’s involvement in the people’s war of Nepal is beyond the scope of this paper. It is, however widely acknowledged that India’s involvement was one of the main causes of the war and a principal means by which it was sustained (Shah, 2004).

In order to advance their ideals, the newly formed Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) sought to replace the monarchy with a republic and an elected constituent assembly. In 1959 King Mahendra opposed the formation of a constituent assembly in favor of an elected parliament, which he then dissolved one year later. The CPN continued to be a dissenting voice in politics and during their 4th convention in 1974, they reached an agreement to create and support a massive agrarian uprising, led by Secretary General Singh.
The Jhapa rebellion, which took place in 1971 as a grassroots uprising against feudal exploitation, acted as a catalyst for the coalition of the All Nepal Communist Coordination Committee. The ANCCC assimilated smaller groups and movements, finally culminating in the 1991 United National People’s Movement, which fought to bring down the panchayat system, but failed to produce a people’s constitution at their constituent assembly due to factionalism within the movement.

After the ANCCC failed to produce a constitution, four parties combined to create the Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Center) which soon after became the United People’s Front and won a majority in the 1991 elections with Prachanda as the Secretary General. In 1994 the UPF dissolved and Prachanda’s faction refused to participate in elections, instead taking up arms as the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). The CPN (Maoist) issued its ‘40 demands’ to the government in 1996. When the government did not respond, the CPN (M) launched attacks on police outposts in six districts.

**Causes of the Maoist Insurgency**

There has been much speculation about the true causes and objectives of the Maoist insurgency (Thapa, 2004:24; Onta, 2004). The Ideology of the Maoists has been called, “a mixture of the Russian model of armed popular revolt and the Chinese model of the protracted people’s war (CPN [Maoist] 200/1:39)” (Roka, 2004:247). Some believe it was a movement instigated and supported by foreign interests (Shah, 2004). Others think it was an authentic popular response to class exploitation and oppression. As Hachhethu states, “The Maoist insurgency in Nepal has been viewed from several different perspectives. Some see it as a consequence of failed development, others view it as an ethnic uprising, and many attribute it to bad governance” (2004:58).

Two other Nepali researchers, Bhurtel and Saleem, offered their insider perspective of the causes of the insurgency, in 2003. Written during one of the most intense periods of the conflict, they observed: “...one of the eminent political thinkers of Nepal, Nilamber Acharya, who was involved in the preparation of
the current constitution of Nepal in 1990, thinks that the Maoist rebellion is basically a political movement created by extreme poverty in rural Nepal and sustained by organizational skill and economic strength of Maoist” (Bhurtel and Saleem, 2003:2).

Bhurtel and Saleem go on to elaborate on the idea that poverty was the main catalyst of the conflict. They suggest that poverty itself is linked to environmental degradation which contributed to the success of the uprising: “...environmental degradation coupled with demographic changes widened socio-economic disparities especially in the form of access to sufficient food and land among peoples in the mid-and Far-western development regions of Nepal and indirectly led to the Maoists insurgency in these regions” (2003:2).

**Maoist tactics**

The Maoists’ stated agenda was to achieve three main objectives: to dissolve the current oppressive government and to create an interim government; to draft a new constitution; and to form a republican state (Hachhethu, 2004 ). To achieve their objectives insurgents attacked police outposts, shut down old regime state institutions such as banks and courts and tried to establish their own system of taxation and people’s courts. They put on ‘cultural programs’ in rural areas to garner support from marginalized sectors of Nepali society while simultaneously emphasizing the equality of all castes, gender, and cultural groups. The Maoist represented themselves as proponents of political reform, social change, and economic development.

The Maoists destroyed records of loans and other contracts which had kept the lower classes indebted to the elite for generations in many cases. They redistributed lands and resources to the villagers and this, more than any other, is what the rural citizens of Nepal understood the agenda of the Maoists to be- at least in the early years. In one interview, “When (villagers) were asked what the Maoists stood for they immediately answered ‘reclaiming our land!’ or ‘bringing the exploiters to justice!’” (Shneiderman and Turin, 2004). Nepalis supported the Maoists because to do so was to hope for a better future- because the
Maoists had not yet had a chance to let the people down. As Pfaff-Czarnecka puts it, “Maoists capitalized on Nepal’s disillusionment with a failed democracy...Maoism was supported by the populace because of disillusionment with current political structures and processes” (2004:167).

Sharma and Prasain explain why the Maoist cause was so successful, “The present conflict is not a product of just the past few years. It has behind it a long history of bad governance, oppression, corruption, and marginalization of people, especially women. Therefore, the conflict should prompt a review of the functioning of state, and strategies should be adjusted accordingly” (2004:164).

The Maoist forces numbered about 5,000 guerilla soldiers under Prachanda in 2004 (Sharma, 2004), and thousands more in the people’s militias which were less active than the guerillas. They centered their activities in heavily forested and mountainous locations where “according to Mao Zedong himself ‘base areas’ will be more securely established and defended” (Ramirez, 2004:227). In these base areas, Maoists successfully rid the villages of police and state institutions. Most of the base areas were located in the mid-western and far-western districts (Bhurtel and Saleem, 2003).

Following a series of skirmishes between Maoist forces and the police, including one incident in 1999 when the police retaliated against the people’s governments, killing nearly 500 Nepalis; the conflict began to escalate. Many more villagers joined the Maoists to seek revenge for those killed by the police. And then in the year 2001, Maoist forces attacked a police outpost in Dolpa, killing fourteen police officers. Violence in this Maoist strong-hold increased until nearly two-thousand people had been killed (Sharma, 2004).

By the year 2001 the militia and guerillas were perceived by much of the country to lack discipline and there increasingly became less of a distinction between Maoist and police brutality. The rebels grew more aggressive as they demanded chandas or donations from villagers who had few resources to spare—barely enough to survive in many cases. The rural population gave what they had for fear of ‘people’s
action’, which was a euphemism for the harassment or killing of anyone who refused to comply with their demands of the insurgents (Sharma, 2004).

The people’s courts, set up by Maoists, proved to be ineffective, and the people’s governments largely restricted commerce and trade and extracted excessive taxes. These policies hurt everyone, not just those targeted by the Maoists. As one villager reported, “People may be dissatisfied with the way Maoists operate, but no one dares risk opposing them” (Sharma, 2004:49).

In 2001, just as the insurgency in Nepal began to gain momentum, two surprising events took place. The 9/11 attacks on U.S. soil provided the opponents to the Maoist insurgency with much needed allies in the West, by labeling the Maoists as a terrorist force. As Singh states, “Previously, the US, India and the United Kingdom had supported the Nepalese government with weapons; the US supplying US$29 million in military aid from 2001 to 2004, [10]largely viewing the Maoist problem as a part of its global ‘war on terror’” (2005:4). The infusion of western resources to the opposition was a crushing blow to the Maoists, and in response they began a new round of talks with the Nepali government.

The other unexpected event which took place in the same year was the royal massacre. In June of 2001 crown prince, Dipendra, went on a killing spree in the palace which resulted in the massacre of his own family and ultimately, himself. The successor to the crown was his only surviving brother, Gyanendra. With the death of King Birendra and his family, the Maoists lost a critical ally, one who had, until then, kept the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) at bay. Just as they had feared, in response to Dolpa and other attacks, the new king, Gyanendra, declared a state of emergency in 2001 which justified the deployment of the Royal Nepalese Army as well as the suppression of many freedoms and rights including control of the media (Hutt, 2004). The Maoists found themselves in a position to compromise on one of their principle demands, the drafting of a new constitution.

By 2002 the death toll had climbed to nearly 3,000. The king declared a second state of emergency, granting himself the power to dissolve the parliament and he replaced the elected government with a small...
group of handpicked advisors. A ceasefire with the Maoists was declared in 2003, but then withdrawn by Prachanda in response to more killings by the RNA. The Maoists maintained their agenda and re-affirmed their commitment to a constituent assembly and a republican state.

The violence in rural areas escalated in the year 2003, as foreign interests including the United States increasingly supported the Royal Army attacks on Maoist strong-holds (Hutt, 2004). For example, in 2003-2004 Nepal had the highest number of disappearances in the world (Shah and Pettigrew, 2009). Maoist recruitment (of adults and children) into their armed forces also intensified in 2004. At this point, as Hutt asserts, “It really was a case of two regimes, in which villagers had to choose between support, opposition, or flight” (2004:19).

The nation began to rise in protest in the years that followed, until King Gyanendra finally re-established the parliament which he had previously dissolved under the state of emergency declaration of 2002 (Pasipanodya, 2008). Peace negotiations ensued in 2006, which resulted in a revolutionary peace agreement, addressing not only human rights, but social and economic rights as well. The provisions were aimed at,

“restructuring the state in order to end discrimination based on caste, gender, language, religion, and region; introducing land reform and ending feudalism; establishing the rights of all citizens to education, health, housing, employment, and food sovereignty; providing land and other economic and social security to economically backward classes; and building a common development concept for socio-economic transformation and justice” (Pasipanodya, 2008: 8).

By April of 2008, national elections were underway which officially included the Maoist party in the mainstream government. This brought an end to a twelve-year long conflict during which over 13,000 people died (some estimate the death toll is closer to 20,000 such as M. Nepal, 2007), nearly one-thousand went missing, and hundreds were tortured, by both sides (Pasipannodya, 2008:378). Additionally, it is estimated that one-quarter million Nepalis were displaced from their homes. They still face substantial
challenges as they seek to establish secure homes and livelihoods in unfamiliar places (Upreti, 2010). It is to these internally displaced people (IDP) that I will now turn my attention, as I briefly describe the principle causes and conditions of their displacement.

**Maoist Pressure and Displacement**

In the early years of the insurgency, the Maoist forces used tactics such as cultural performances, idealistic rhetoric, and land seizures and re-distribution, in many cases burning records which had kept landless villagers under the yoke of tenured labor for generations (Macours, 2011). These tactics and others effectively won the allegiance of the rural population. But as the insurgency continued, it became obvious to many villagers that the Maoist policies of redistribution and their promises of reform, development, and equality came with a heavy price.

When asked why they left Humla, over half the participants in this study stated the main reason was Maoist pressure. I have outlined six types of Maoist pressure that can be found in the interviews I conducted, as well as in the literature on the insurgency. In the following paragraphs I will give examples from the literature of each type which are: 1) forced or voluntary conscription of child soldiers; 2) threats, harassment, violence, and murder by Maoists, police, and army; 3) Maoists forced donations of food, lodging, and possessions; 4) destroyed infrastructure (which is related to increased food insecurity); 5) destroyed educational and health systems; and 6) destroyed social structures. I will give examples of Maoist pressure from the interviews, in the data section of this paper.

**Six Types of Maoist Pressure**

**Forced or Voluntary Conscription of Child Soldiers**
In the literature, the obligatory Maoist policy of “One family, one child” is well documented (Shakya, 2010); for example, the Human Rights Watch reported that, “In areas firmly under their control, particularly in the insurgency’s heartland in Nepal’s west and far west, the Maoists operated a “one family, one child” program whereby each family had to provide a recruit or face severe punishment...any child who considered escape also had to consider the real possibility that the Maoists would exact reprisal upon their families” (2007:8).

Child soldiers are defined by the Paris Principles (2007) as, “any person below the age of 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies, or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities” (Kohrt, et al, 2008:2).

As one sixteen year old former soldier recalls, she had no choice but to join the armed force: “The Maoists first took my younger brother. He was 14 years old. He managed to escape. He just kept crying and kept saying that he would not go with the Maoists even if they beat him...so we had to decide between us in the family whom to send- otherwise the Maoists would have locked our house. I had to go” (Human Rights Watch, 2007:5).

And so, it appears from firsthand accounts, that Nepalis had very few choices when it came to the “one family, one child” program: they could surrender their children to the war effort, they could flee, or they could refuse and accept retribution from the Maoists. In Koenig’s film “Returned: Child Soldiers of Nepal’s Maoist Army” (2008), one former child soldier’s father expressed the choices that Nepalis had during the insurgency, “Atisha’s father succinctly sums up the violent logic limiting the options of civilians and their children: “If you fulfill the Maoist demands (for food), the government army will punish you; if you do not, the Maoists will kill you.”

In some cases, Nepalis feared greatly for the safety of their children but were unable to leave the area:
“One man, a staunch Nepali Congress supporter with a 12-year old daughter, was apparently in great distress. The Maoists visited his family three times to tell him that his daughter had to join their cultural group because she is a good dancer. He said he has so far succeeded in finding excuses for not letting them take her with them, but believed he could not do that forever. He said he might leave the village for good when he has the means to do so.” (Sharma and Dasain, 2004:163).

**How child soldiers were conscripted**

The Maoists used many methods to recruit child soldiers. As Human Rights Watch states, “The concept of “recruitment” covers any means (formal or de facto) by which a person becomes a member of the armed forces or of an armed group, so it includes conscription (compulsory/obligatory military service), forced recruitment, and voluntary enlistment” (2007:21).

Of these three types of recruitment, the “one family, one child” program is conscription or compulsory military service. The other two types of recruitment are also prevalent in the literature. One example of voluntary recruitment from a former child soldier speaks to the intense political propaganda which targeted youth: “I was 15 when I decided to join. I was highly influenced by the political ideology. I didn’t tell my parents. I ran away from home. They wouldn’t allow it” (Human Rights watch, 2007:29). However, voluntary recruitment is not always as straight-forward as it may appear. What looks like a choice, may more closely resemble coercion as this next passage illustrates.

Girls and women also joined voluntarily in large numbers because of the emphasis on gender equality in the Maoist propaganda, which promised new leadership and economic opportunities in spheres previously reserved for men (Sharma and Dasain, 2004; Kohrt, et al, 2010; Macour, 2011).

Children (and adults) were also taken into the armed forces involuntarily. Both Maoists and the security forces used schools as ‘war zones’ where they set up training facilities, used students to spread propaganda, and recruited soldiers from among the students themselves: “Many children were abducted
directly from schools- various respondents and human rights organizations reported that as many as 10-200 students from each school were abducted at a time” (Shakya, 2010: 559).

Another account from a respondent interviewed by Human Rights Watch illustrates how Maoists used schools to advance their recruitment agenda,

“There are still frequent reports of children being forcibly abducted from school or on their way to or from school in order to attend involuntary education sessions during mass rallies. This practice has provoked tremendous anger from Nepali parents as well as human rights groups, which have condemned the interruption of the children’s schooling and the violation of the right to an education. But the chief objection to the practice reflects the fact that the Maoists use these involuntary educational sessions to recruit children as soldiers sometimes simply by prohibiting the children from returning home” (2007:8).

There were other ways the Maoists recruited children for their cadres. The following accounts of forced recruitment are from former child soldiers who experienced these Maoist tactics. As Govinda remembers, “I was returning home from school one afternoon. There was a jungle that I was walking through and they [the Maoists] took me from there. I was completely scared because I thought they would kill me” (Human Rights Watch, 2007:35). The next former child soldier was sixteen when she was taken away by the Maoists:

“I was abducted from school. I was in school, it was lunch break, and we saw several Maoists coming. We were nine girls there, all 16-18 years old. The Maoists asked us how we were doing and said that we should join their campaign. We went to our teacher and said we wouldn’t go, but they threatened him, and then just grabbed us and took us away. There were 15 or 18 of them so they could easily drag us away” (Human Rights Watch, 2007:37).

The final account of Maoist forced recruitment that I will relay here, shows how little choice many children had when being recruited by the Maoists. Sita was 17 years old when, “They took me by force. The
two ladies who came to our house were trying to convince me, but I kept refusing. They said they would kill me, but I still refused. They told me I should kill myself, and then they threatened they would make cuts on my body and pour chili pepper in them. Then I was too scared and had to go with them” (Human Rights Watch, 2007:36).

**Experiences and Impact on Child Soldiers**

According to Macours (2011) in May 2004 alone, at least 7,787 people were abducted by the Maoists. S. Singh estimates the number is much higher. According to human rights group INSEC, over 26 thousand Nepalis were abducted in 2004 (Singh, 2005:2). During the conflict ten percent of the Royal Nepalese Army was child soldiers, and by the end of the civil war, it was estimated that about 9 thousand members, one-third of the Peoples’ Liberation Army, consisted of 14-18 year olds, and 40 percent of these were girls. What happened to the child soldiers once in the armed forces, and what impact their experiences had on these children, are the next questions to be explored in this site description.

Many of the children recruited by the Maoists, worked for them as cooks, sentries, spies, or porters, but a large number also reported having to perform life threatening tasks or engage in combat (Shakya, 2010; Singh, 2004). For example, one young child soldiers was abducted by the Maoists and made to light the fuses of bombs (Shakya, 2010). Regardless of their duties, no child soldier escaped exposure to violence and trauma (Kohrt, et al, 2008). As one 15 year old boy recalls, “In one of the worst incidents I helped to capture six members of my community who were in the wanted list and they got beheaded right in front of me. I was made to witness the incident but I had nothing to do with the killings” (Shakya, 2010:560).

Another dimension of the recruitment of children into the armed forces was the high incidence of sexual exploitation and rape on both sides of the conflict. One ex-child soldier reported that he had witnessed his sister being raped and killed (Shakya, 2010: 562). Another informant from a village in far-western Nepal told one researcher that no women or girls had been spared from sexual exploitation or rape by the Royal Nepalese Army during the conflict (Shakya, 2010:562). In one first-hand account, from Raj, a
young ex-soldier, it is clear that girls were particularly targeted for sexual violence, “We had four girls with us. When we were going to another village, the government army surprised us. They captured us and took two young girls from our group. They raped them, cut them with knives, poured chili powder in their wounds, and killed them” (Kohrt, Tol, Pettigrew, and Karki, 2010:8).

To ascertain the degree to which (women, men) and children were subjected to rape and sexual exploitation is difficult because as Kohrt et al (and Shakya, 2010) explain in their study of the psychological impacts of the war on child soldiers, it is not appropriate to discuss incidents of sexual violence or exploitation with young women or girls: “Sexual abuse was determined to be culturally inappropriate and unsafe to ask of young girls as it could place them in jeopardy of harm from community and/or family members if they were suspected of discussing sexual behavior with strangers” (2008:4). Though it is not stated explicitly in the same study, it might be the case that it is also difficult to gather accurate information about sexual abuse of adults, both male and female, given the sensitivity of the culture toward the sexual experiences of young females.

Due to these and other forms of trauma, violence, torture, and exploitation, the reintegration of child soldiers back into their communities has been difficult at many levels. The majority of ex-child soldiers experience problems which are psychological, psychosocial, physical, economic, and social. Many are stigmatized because of their participation in the conflict and have trouble finding work, needed health care, or have difficulty rejoining their (now more advanced) peers in school (Shakya, 2010; Kohrt et al, 2008).

The Kohrt et al study, conducted in Nepal in 2007, shows the impact of the war on child soldiers, as compared to Nepali children who have never been conscribed into the armed forces:

“All children conscripted by the Maoists reported at least one traumatic event, 51 percent took part in combat, 56 percent experienced bombings, 29 percent witnessed or perpetrated violent deaths, and 29 percent witnessed, suffered or perpetrated torture. This greater exposure to trauma played a major part in the mental health and psychological differences between child soldiers and never-

Experts from human rights groups and humanitarian agencies provided the names and locations of all known former child soldiers who had returned home at the time of the study in 2007. Of the 141 former child soldiers who participated in this study, 53 percent showed depression, more than 46 percent showed anxiety, more than 55 percent showed PTSD indicators, 39 percent showed psychological difficulties, and more than 62 percent had function impairment (Kohrt, et al, 2008).

**Threats, Harassment, Violence, and Murder**

The next of the six types of Maoist pressure, is threats, harassment, violence, and murder. I will give a few examples of how Maoists used these tactics to advance their agenda during the insurgency; in addition to the atrocities mentioned in the last section of child abuse, torture, and sexual abuse (Nepal, 2007).

In the schools, teachers and children were harassed and threatened in order to intimidate them and ensure the Maoists could continue their recruitment programs. Teachers were also harassed, beaten, and even killed to set an example to other villagers that they expected total compliance with Maoist directives. The passage that follows describes such an incident:

“It is such a frightening time, things we never could have imagined are now happening on a regular basis. Did you know that one of my best friend’s relatives was killed by the Maoists? He was a teacher and one day last winter Maoists came to the school where he was the deputy headmaster and dragged him out of the classroom. They called all of the villagers together and in front of them they accused my friend’s relative of giving the police information about a Maoist who was captured some years ago, they also accused him of refusing to give money and of teaching Sanskrit which
they had banned. They took him to a tree and secured him to it. They stabbed him in the shoulder and stomach, and shot him in the head” (Pettigrew, 2004: 267).

Another informant spoke about the fear, powerlessness, and uncertainty she was experiencing in living within the conflict, “Nowadays we are very frightened of going into the forest, we can be killed, looted, or raped at any moment...there is nothing we can do” (Pettigrew, 2004:270).

Nepali villagers lived in constant fear of Maoist retaliation. They could be beaten tortured or killed for acting as informants to security forces (Shneiderman, 2004; McKay, et al, 2007), for failing to pay forced ‘donations’, or, as the next informant reveals, for having a child in the Royal Nepalese Army, “There was constant pressure and threat from the Maoists on my father to recall my brother from the army. Finally, one afternoon they came to my house and tied my father and cut his legs and hand and forced him to call my brother to return home. After he called him they shot him. My brother who resigned from his job and was on his way home was killed by them too” (Shakya, 2010:561).

**Forced Donations**

In many cases, the Maoists and security forces would demand ‘donations of food, shelter, or possessions. The armed forces paid for their expenditures through chandas or ‘forced donations’ campaigns. There are many accounts of Maoists demanding the wages of teachers and other state employees (Nepal, 2007); or of appearing at the homes of villagers and forcing them to open their homes to sometimes entire cadres of soldiers, who demanded shelter, equipment, and food.

In most cases these rural civilians were already seriously impoverished and could not spare what was taken from them (McKay, et al, 2007). For example,
“A study conducted by Seddon and Hussein (2002) reveals that during the insurgency security forces restricted local people from holding more than one-day’s food supply at a time to deny the CPN(M) access to food, as against the general practice of people to hold a few months supply. This imposed great hardship on the people as in rural areas people have to walk up to four days to reach the nearest market” (Uppreti and Muler-Boker, 2010:49).

The scarcity of food in rural areas was compounded when Maoists arrived, often with no warning, and demanded to be fed and housed. Here is one woman’s account of such an event and the dangers it imposed beyond food and resource scarcity: “The leader of the group told me they wanted food and to stay the night. I told them I could feed them but I pleaded with them not to sleep in the house. I said “if you stay here and the army arrives then all of my family will be killed.” One of them laughed and replied “then we’ll die together” (Pettigrew, 2004:267).

Another informant from Pettigrew’s study recalls: “Do you not know that the Maoists are here nearly every day? They come and force villagers to feed them, there is no choice. And then the army comes and they blame people because they fed the Maoists. It is a very dangerous time…” (2004:267).

Additionally, Maoists demanded significant portions of the modest salaries of state employees, such as teachers and medical workers. As one researcher explains, “The insurgents and insurgency affected health services largely through such undesirable factors as intimidation, harassment, extortion, and threats. Most of the health care and civil servants reported that they were compelled to pay levy and donations to the insurgents” (Nepal, 2007:4).

The schools were already a very dangerous environment, due to the recruitment activities of the armed forces, but if teachers refused to comply with the forced donation of their salaries,
many faced dire consequences: “The teachers are also very worried because this morning the Maoists told them that they had to give them two month’s salary. They don’t know what to do. It’s such a lot of money but they know that the Maoists have killed and injured many teachers and so they will probably have to give it to them or leave the village” (Pettigrew, 2004:268).

**Destroyed Infrastructure Resulting in Increased Food Insecurity and Poverty**

The insurgency brought most development efforts in Nepal to a standstill, especially in remote, rural areas such as Humla district (McKay, et al, 2007; Roy, 2009). Maoists disrupted community and VDC level government, cut bridges, and obstructed access to food and supplies. It was not only individuals and groups targeted by the Maoists, who felt the negative impacts of destroyed infrastructure. All Nepalis were affected (Shakya, 2010; Tillett, 2008).

As reported by Human Rights Watch, “The conflict aggravated the problems of Nepal’s already impoverished population…economic disruptions caused by fighting and frequent blockades and checkpoints have curtailed food production and distribution, resulting in high rates of malnutrition and associated childhood maladies” (2007:14). As Tillett (2008) relates, many rural areas in Nepal, including Humla, already experience very low food security due to limiting factors such as climate and poor farmland and practices; and these factors were greatly exacerbated by the destruction of infrastructure by the Maoists- which has further limited remote areas from development (Roy, 2009).

Additionally, thousands of acres have been deforested by Maoists which contributes greatly to environmental degradation (Nepal, 2007). The forests have also long been a source of food and other resources for rural Nepalis. Heavy Maoist and Army regulation of these areas have had dire consequences for the rural populations as relayed by Upreti and Muler-Boker,

“The traditional livelihood opportunities of local poor were jeopardized by the conflict, as they were prohibited by the security forces from entering forests to collect forest-based means of livelihood
(e.g. Mushrooms, young sprouts of plants, medicinal herbs, non-timber forest products, firewood, etc.) Anyone found in the forest by security forces was suspected to be Maoist. As a result there were frequent famines in the Karnali region and other high-conflict areas” (2010:49).

The Maoist insurgency negatively affected the national economy (Nepal, 2007; Shah, 2008) and slowed development in rural areas (Haddix-McKay, 2003; Tillett, 2008). It made life for rural Nepalis even more difficult than it had been before the conflict, by decreasing food security and making access to health care very difficult. The impact is summarized by Devkota and Teijlingen, “Populations affected by armed conflict experience severe public health consequences mediated by population displacement, food scarcity, and the collapse of basic health services, which together often give rise to complex humanitarian emergencies” (2010:1).

**Destroyed Educational and Health Systems**

As Tillett explains, the impact of the Maoist conflict is very pervasive: “Due largely to the Maoist activities in the area (Humla), local services, governance and leadership have been impaired” (2008:37). In remote areas such as Humla district, health services have long been difficult to access. Often only one health clinic or outpost exists in each VDC, such as was the case in Humla, and often these health posts are poorly equipped and not consistently staffed due, in part, to their remoteness (Haddix-McKay, 1999; 2003; 2004). The Maoist insurgency further limited rural Nepali’s access to health services (Haddix-McKay, 2003). As Devkota and Teijlingen explain,

“The conflict aggravated the already poor health services as one third of Nepal’s health centers is in rural areas (where some on the fighting is heaviest) and often operates without staff...and the conflict also hindered health programmes implemented by non-governmental organizations...The Maoist rebels put restrictions on field staff mobility and both the security forces and the rebels tried to stop public gatherings focused on health-related awareness” (2010:1).
M. Nepal, in his essay on the impacts of conflict on health, states that, “The Maoist insurgency has made provisions of adequate health care services to the rural populations very difficult...The country’s health services at the village level have been pushed 10 years back and the health indicators would further deteriorate if the conflict continues” (2007:4).

It is not only the health services which have been set back because of the impact of Maoist activities in rural Nepal. As was shown in the conscription of child soldiers section (of the six types of ‘Maoist pressure), the educational system has also been seriously disrupted (Tillett, 2008). Teachers were harassed and even killed as they struggled to keep schools open and classes running (Pettigrew, 2004). Schools were taken over and used as center of operation by both sides of the conflict. The Maoists and the security forces used schools to spread propaganda and recruit soldiers, as well as grounds for training and meetings (Shneiderman, 2004).

Social Consequences of Insurgency

Perhaps the most disruptive consequence of the Maoist insurgency, certainly from an anthropological perspective, is the erosion of social structures in the areas where the conflict was most intense, as Tillett explains, “The post-conflict communities experience a lack of social cohesion, leadership, and initiative” (2008:3).

As Pettigrew surmises, “Ironically, villagers in search of safety must nowadays re locate to urban centers for security” (2004:279).

The long-term effects of this social disruption are still unfolding, but during the conflict and shortly thereafter, it was easily observable by those documenting the insurgency that, “At the community level, many of the interviewees remarked on the current lack of leadership, social cohesion, and unity. A common answer to enquiries about leadership was, ‘no one listens to anybody anymore’. This was attributed to the
remnants of the Maoist oppression, which actively undermined the authority and reputation of local leaders...and caused some leaders to flee the area” (Tillett, 2008:37).

It is difficult to know how these communities will cope with the disruption of their social structures. As Shakya states, “Armed conflicts create enormous upheaval at the personal, family, societal, and national levels. Conflict causes immense pain, both physical and emotional” (2010:558). Many of the communities’ most capable leaders were targeted by both Maoist and security forces. In the Humla district, often the most valuable community members are religious leaders such as Rinpoches (Buddhist teachers) and monks.

The loss of leadership affects communities in many ways; but in this case, the most significant may be the effect it has on children, particularly children who have participated (willingly or not) in the insurgency (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Former child soldiers desperately need the guidance and support of their social networks as they attempt to reintegrate into their communities after the fighting has ended.

Many Nepalis fled their villages to escape Maoist pressure; whether it was to save their children or themselves from forced conscription into the armed forces; to avoid harassment, torture, or death; to escape the theft of their belongings in the form of forced donations; or simply to seek a better life due to the destruction of their own communities and the growing poverty which has resulted. Often it is difficult to identify exactly what is the cause of an individual’s decision to leave their village. Displacement is usually caused by a combination of factors. As Pettigrew states, “It is however, difficult to judge who has left the village for employment and who has left on the pretext of seeking employment and instead joined the Maoists or were forcibly recruited” (2004:276). She goes on to add, “The migration of young people in search of employment has increased as young men and women leave in fear of being accused by the security forces of being Maoists or of being forcibly recruited by the insurgents” (2004:280).
Again, it can be difficult to ascertain who left their communities due to Maoist pressure and who left to seek opportunities outside of their impoverished, war-torn villages. As Whelpton explains, “The number migrating within the country or crossing into India has continued to grow, though it is hard to say how many of those crossing the border in recent years have done so to escape the fighting and how many for purely economic reasons” (2005:228).

The distinction between migrant and internally displaced person (IDP) is an important one. Though they can be difficult to distinguish, their needs are often different, especially in situations where displacement is caused by conflict. The concepts of migration and internal displacement will be further explored in the literature review section of this paper.

In the following section of this paper, I will give an overview of Humla in terms of its geography and demography, to give more context to the displacement of Humlis at a micro-level. Then I will show how their displacement from Humla to Kathmandu has caused significant changes in their lifestyles. I will compare and contrast Humlis’ lifestyles in Humla, to their lifestyles in Kathmandu, within six different domains, in order to highlight the changes they have undergone since moving to the city.

**Humla Overview**

Map 4. Humla District with VDC Boundaries
Geographical description

Of the 75 districts in Nepal, Humla district is perhaps the most remote (Haddix-McKay, 2002).

Located in the mid-west mountain region, in the upper North West corner of the country, Humla shares its border to the North with the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, and to the South and East with three other districts of Nepal: Bajhang, Bajura, and Mugu, respectively. Humla is located at 30-31 degrees N latitude and 81-82 degrees S longitude, within the ‘inner Himalayas’ (Sawyer, 2012), an area just North of the Himalayan mountains. The elevation of Humla ranges from about 1,200 meters up to over 7,300 meters or 24,000 feet (Onta, 2011). The area of Humla is approximately 6,134 square kilometers with a population of 50,858 (Census 2011). The district is within the Karnali region and is bisected by the Karnali River which feeds into the Ganges further south, and which cuts a deep canyon through North Western Humla. On the Northern banks of the Karnali River, at 3,000 meters in elevation, lies the district capitol of Simikot. Four hundred kilometers from Kathmandu, this town has the only market, the only (poorly equipped) health
clinic, and the only commercial airstrip in the district (Haddix-McKay, 2002). Small planes are the only way in or out of Humla besides by foot. There are no roads, but rather a system of trails, only traversable by pack animals in the summer season (Haddix-McKay, 2002; Goldstein, 1974). The participants of this study all come from villages in Humla that are at least 5 hours walk and up to several days’ walk from Simikot (see data analysis for a list of villages).

In Nepal, each of its 75 districts is comprised of Village Development Committees or VDCs. These are civil designations designed to help organize local governments and institutions within the larger national system of government. In places with higher populations, each town is often its own VDC, but in areas like Humla, where the population is low, it is often the case that two or more villages will make up one VDC. Within each VDC are nine wards, and each ward elects members to a District Development Committee (DDC) (Haddix-McKay, 2002).

**Demographic Description**

The majority (79 percent) of the population in Humla district speak Indo-Aryan languages. Speakers of Indo-Aryan languages include the caste groups Chhetri, Thakur, Brahmin, and Dalit. The remaining 21 percent of the population speak Tibeto-Burman languages along with a small minority of languages that are not included in either of these groups (Roy, 2009). The speakers of Tibeto-Burman languages in Humla belong to the ethnic group or caste called Lama. In terms of religious traditions, typically speakers of Indo-Aryan languages in Humla are Hindus (82 percent) and speakers of Tibeto-Burman languages are Buddhists (18 percent). Although, as the percentages show, there is some cross-over; that is, there are some Tibeto-Burman speakers who are Hindus (Census 2011).

The Lama ethnic group is a lower caste than most Hindu groups. As Haddix McKay explains, Lamas experience caste discrimination even in the remote district of Humla: “…local people carefully denied any links to Lama traditions and identified themselves as Chettris, Brahmins, or as members of occupational castes. This is no doubt due to the general low esteem in which Lama people are held by Hindus, who think
of them as relatively backwards and uncivilized (particularly distasteful to Hindus are the practice of polyandry and the consumption of beef, which occur among Lamas)” (2002:245). There are villages in Humla where some Lama families own more land than some Hindu families and consequently, these Lamas hire low caste Hindus such as Dalits, to work in exchange for a portion of the crop yields. In these cases, the Lama caste is not considered the lowest caste, but rather the poorest group, the Dalits, who make up 13 percent of the population, are the lowest caste (Onta, 2011; Tillett, 2008).

**Lifestyle Description**

Some of the participants in this study are from the village of Kermi in the Humla district. In one study by Kimber Haddix McKay (2002), a professor and researcher of anthropology at University of Montana, she describes Kermi and says that among the Lama villages she studied, it was typical. So, I will also use Kermi as an example of a typical Lama village in order to make a few generalizations about lifestyle in Humla.

Lama Villages in Humla are populated mostly if not entirely by ethnic Tibetan Buddhists who speak dialects of Tibetan as their first language. They practice polyandry (that is when one woman marries all of the brothers in another family), they follow the traditions of the Nyingmapa Tibetan Buddhist lineage, and they live in closely knit communities, both physically and socially.

Tillett describes how villages are situated in Humla: “Settlements area located on valley slopes, plateaus, ridges, and alluvial fans, surrounded by terraced agricultural land. Land ownership patterns can be complex, but, generally, the more proximal and productive land is owned by higher-caste families of the village or surrounding area, and the more distal land owned by the lower-castes” (2008:30).

Regardless of the village or caste, all settlements in Humla are made up of tight clusters of flat-roofed buildings, sometimes stacked on top of each other, with narrow walk-ways between them (Roy et al, 2009). Haddix-McKay describes these buildings: “…houses are small, poorly ventilated, and unlit. Most are
built in 3 stories, with domestic livestock kept in rooms on the lowest level, the main room (for cooking, sleeping, and eating) and storage rooms on the middle level, and storage rooms (for equipment and hay) above...When the weather is nice the roof tops are sunny and pleasant and are the primary site of public meetings, domestic chores, such as threshing, children’s play, and general socializing” (2002:247).

The main room in Humli homes has a cooking fire at the center, which can make the room very smoky and dark: “Indoor air pollution is extreme...open fires burn in fire pits in each home, for cooking and heat, and house interiors are lit by a resin-rich smoky wood known locally as jharro (chir pine)” (Haddix-McKay, Zahnd, Sanders, Nepali, 2007:302). Despite the poor ventilation, a man interviewed for this study identified the indoor fires as one of the things he missed most about Humla, since moving to Kathmandu: “Especially he said, like in winter, they have a fire inside the house, and he liked that most” (Interview participant 20-20).

Gender roles in Humla are quite distinct. Women and girls are responsible for all of the childcare, for household chores and food preparation, as well as most of the chores associated with care of livestock, the collecting of water and wood, and the gathering of supplemental foods from the forest (Tillett, 2008). Women and girls do most of the agricultural work as well, with the exception of plowing fields which is the job of men. Men do all of the slaughtering of animals, and also engage in trade whether nearby or far-off in other districts, Kathmandu, or across the border to the North in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. Humli men are responsible for carpentry work, and also make any wooden implements such as drinking/eating bowls which are sold or traded for grain. Women also produce handicrafts for sale or trade, especially woven goods such as cloth and mats (Bauer, 2004).

As Tillett explains, from information he gathered during the course of his study in Humla, there is a pronounced difference in the workload between women and men: “The disparity in the tasks are reflected in the daily burden of the women who regularly complained about the limited free time they have during
the day. Despite this, it was generally stated that men have dominant control over the financial and material resources of the family” (2008:36).

**Challenges of living in Humla and Human Development Indicators**

More than half of the year the temperature in Humla is below freezing and the ground is covered in snow for nearly five months. The growing season is very short (3-6 months) and produces only enough feed for most families for 6 months (Haddix-McKay, 2002). According the 2011 national health survey, only about one in two Nepali households (49 percent) is food secure and has access to food year-round (Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, 2011). Food security was identified in a 2004 needs assessment “as the most fundamental development need of Humla” (Roy et al, 2009:214; McKay et al, 2007; Tillett, 2008). The climate in addition to the fact that only 2 percent of the land is arable due to steep slopes, rocks, and forest cover (Sawyer, 2012) contribute to the impoverishment of the district.

The Maoist insurgency has also been a major factor in increasing hardship in the district (as was explained in the previous section) by destroying state-run infrastructure such as government institutions, schools, health outposts, banks, and bridges; by hampering development efforts; confiscating much needed equipment and food; and by negatively impacting social structures which are such an important part of resource distribution in Humla (Tillett, 2008). As Roy et al state, “Livelihoods are uncertain, mainly on account of harsh climactic conditions, land degradation, remote location, in a border area, and the recent political instability” (2009:211; Sawyer, 2012)

As Haddix McKay, et al explain, “The Maoists added to the situation of extreme poverty and constant uncertainty about crop failure, wintertime food shortages and mortality by bunking with villagers and consuming resources that were always in short supply, demanding time from already pressed villagers during the short growing season for educational ‘camps’, requiring villagers to have written permission to travel outside of the village boundaries, and by engaging in violence” (2007:304).
Humla is ranked 74th out of 75 districts in Nepal in terms of poverty, socio-economic and infrastructure development, and women’s empowerment (NIDS, 2011; Sawyer, 2012). There is a lack of reliable statistical information about Humla because it is such an understudied region (Haddix McKay, 2002) but according to Haddix McKay et al (2007), the per capita GDP in Humla is US $72 and it has one of the highest infant mortality rates in Nepal, which as a country itself has high infant mortality on a global scale (CIA Factbook, 2011).

Humlis who have voluntarily or involuntarily migrated from Humla to Kathmandu have undergone major changes in lifestyle. In the data section of this paper I will show how much change has occurred in the lives of Humlis by using participant responses from the interviews and surveys to compare Humlis’ lives in Humla to their lives in Kathmandu, within the six domains of lifestyle change.

Living in Humla is very different than living in Kathmandu. For example, the population of the capitol city of Kathmandu is 1,744,240 whereas the population of the entire district of Humla is 50,858 (Census, 2011). In Kathmandu city there are about 20,289 people per square kilometer. In Humla district there are about 9 people per square kilometer. Literacy in Kathmandu is the highest in the country at 86.3 percent and lowest in the country in Humla at 47.8 percent (Census, 2011).

Of 435,544 households in Kathmandu, 33,223 or 8 percent use firewood for cooking. Of 9,437 households in Humla, 9,278 or 98 percent use firewood for cooking. In Kathmandu, 98 percent of households have electricity for light, versus only 31 percent in Humla. And in Kathmandu, only 1 percent of households do not have a toilet in their house whereas in Humla, nearly 50 percent or households do not have a toilet. In Kathmandu only 2 percent of households have no facilities such as radio, TV, computer, telephone, or refrigerator. In Humla 42 percent of households have none of these facilities.

It is important to consider the significant lifestyle changes Humlis have undergone since being displaced or migrating to Kathmandu. These types of lifestyle change have been associated with stress and negative health outcomes as I will discuss in the literature review.
The relationship between stress and health is the subject of the following literature review. Here I will explore how displacement can cause social change which leads to multiple types of stress, and, if uninterrupted, can increase the risk of negative health outcomes for those displaced individuals. If Maoist pressure and other factors associated with the insurgency are the cause of displacement, then the next section deals with the consequences of displacement. As Craig Janes, an anthropologist at the University of Colorado who studies the relationship between migration and health explains:

Migration from one community to another often entails drastic changes- in fact, for the individual it is likely to be one of life’s major changes. At the very least, migrants must learn to relate to new places and people, and even if their daily activities change minimally, adaptation must take place on many levels- biological, social, psychological, and perhaps spiritual. Migration therefore is epidemiologically relevant (Wessen, 1971)" (1990:286).
Literature Review- Migration and Stress

Migration Theory

Currently, migration theory in anthropology seeks to answer two questions: what are the causes of migration, and what are its consequences. As Caroline Brettell, a professor and researcher of anthropology at Southern Methodist University who specializes in migration explains, “Anthropologists, by contrast (to migration researchers in other disciplines) have tended to work at both ends of the migration process, beginning in the country of origin and asking what prompts individuals to leave particular communities and then what happens to them in their place of destination…” (2003:1). Answering these two migration questions in the context of the community of Humli Tibetans living in Kathmandu, is the goal of this study.

In the past, migration research has focused heavily on the causes of migration while neglecting to a large degree, the study of its consequences, especially on individuals. As Greenwood states, the consequences of migration have long been understudied in comparison to its causes: “In general, migration research has maintained its strong orientation toward the determinants as opposed to the consequences of migration, and consequently most of the recent advances have concerned the causes of migration” (1985:521).

This study will bring attention both to the causes and the consequences of migration, for Humlis living in Kathmandu, thereby advancing the body of migration literature which focuses on both ends of the spectrum.

Migration theory was built on some enduring concepts; first, that migrants are “rational actors responding to economic disparities between countries” (Massey, 1998:11), and second, that migration is a “means of establishing equilibrium between regions of labor supply and demand” (Massey, 1998:12). Also called the push-pull approach, this second concept has been commonly used since its inception, to identify
the particular factors that both push a migrant from their place of origin, and pull them toward a new
destination, collectively determining whether the move takes place (Weeks, 2005: 292). Both of these two
enduring concepts are part of the neoclassical economics paradigm (Massey, 1998).

As migration author, J. R. Weeks explains, “This (neoclassical) approach has been used to explain
internal as well as international migration. It is also the principle that underlies Ravenstein’s
conceptualization of push factors (especially low wages in the region of origin) and pull factors (especially
high wages in the destination areas)” (2005: 292).

Ravenstein and Lee- Founders of Migration Theory

E.G. Ravenstein is often called the father of migration theory. A German cartographer and professor
of geography based in England in the 1880s, Ravenstein used British Census data, which he later compared
with data from twenty other countries, to produce his work showing trends in migration. He was heavily
influenced by the pervasive economic theories of his time including neoclassical economics, based on the
concept of supply and demand. In 1885, he published “The Laws of Migration” and his papers have “stood
the test of time and remain the starting point for work in migration theory” (Lee, 1966: 47).

Eighty years later, E.S. Lee, an American demographer and sociologist at University of Pennsylvania
was credited with push-pull theory, which he arrived at primarily though the analysis of Ravenstein’s ‘laws’.
‘Push-pull’ theory evolved from Lee’s identification of factors which contribute to a propensity of people to
migrate. He framed migration “as a consequence of factors (primarily economic) distributed along two
dimensions: those that push individuals from their societies of origin; and those that “pull” them to specific

Neoclassical economics gave way to modernization theory (among others), which was the
“dominant paradigm of economic and cultural change in the 50s and 60s” (Kearney, 1986: 333). The push-
pull approach to anthropological study of migration, found fertile ground in modernization theory.
According to Kearney: “Modernization theory splits causes of migration into “push” factors associated with “traditional societies” and “pull” factors located in “developing” areas and evaluates how they influence individual decision-making of migrants…” (1986:338).

While early migration theory has been widely challenged, especially in the 1980s and 90s, the push-pull approach is still commonly used in migration research by anthropologists and other social researchers (Werner and Barcus, 2009; Tietelbaum, 2008; Brettell, 2008; Hollifield, 2008; Graves and Graves 1974). For example, Leo Chavez, a professor of anthropology at the University of California, uses the push-pull approach to analyze the factors which contribute to Mexican migrants’ decisions to move to the U.S. (2006:285). And as David Mosse, a professor of social anthropology at London University states of his research, “Our stories of migration involve push and pull, structure and agency” (2002:60). According to Michael Teitelbaum, a leading expert on immigration and development, most current migration theories use ‘push-pull’ as a framework, though their particular uses of the framework vary considerably (2008:56). Brettell confirms that, “The push-pull elements of modernization theory still prevail to order discussions of why people migrate” (2003:119).

**Criticism of Micro-Level and Macro-Level Theories of Migration**

One major criticism of micro-level, neoclassical migration theories is that their scope is too narrow: “Neo-classical models of migration analyze certain aspects of the phenomena of migration such as push and pull factors in isolation of the socio-economic context” (Red Polemique, 2012:13); and that there are many factors beyond economic considerations and forces which motivate individuals to move (Massey, 1994, 1998; N. Sorensen, 2003; Colson, 2003; Wood, 1981; Brettell, 2003; Hollifield).

This study aims to answer this criticism of neoclassical migration theory, by expanding the push-pull model to include factors other than economic ones (N. Sorensen, 2003; Colson, 2003; Brettell, 2003; Massey, 1994, 1998; Wood, 1981), and by contextualizing Humlis within the broader context of the Maoist conflict in Nepal, also including some international aspects of the war (see the site description for a
discussion of Humlis and the insurgency). As Brettell explains, expanding the concept of push-pull is crucial in gaining a full understanding of the context of migrations: “(anthropologists) well know that individuals do not always leave for purely economic reasons and that the decision-making process is often more subtle and far-reaching, shaped and reshaped by particular social and cultural contexts” (2003:4).

Participants in this study identified three push factors beyond economics which influenced their decision to migrate from Humla to Kathmandu. These three push factors are: Maoist pressure (or escape from violent conflict), access to health services, and access to education (Both lack of access to health services and lack of access to education are push factors which have been exacerbated by the Maoist insurgency, and which do fall into six categories of Maoist pressure which precipitated Humli migration to Kathmandu). These concepts were discussed previously in the site description of this paper, and will be further addressed in the following section discussing internally displaced persons or IDPs, and in the data section.

Other critics of a purely neoclassical approach (Kearney, 1986; Massey, 1998) call for a mixed approach to migration research in anthropology; one that takes into account both micro-level factors such as individual, family, and community dynamics; and macro-level factors such as the socio-political context of individuals or communities within their nation and the world (de Haas, 2010; N.Sorensen, 2003; Vertovec, 2002; Massey, 2008; Brettell, 2008). As Brettell explains, “An anthropological approach to migration should emphasize both structure and agency; it should look at macro-level contextual issues, micro-level strategies and decision-making, and the meso-level structures within which individuals operate. It needs to articulate both people and process” (Brettell, 2003:7). This study incorporates macro-level analysis of socio-political causes of migration, with a micro-level analysis of the consequences of migration for individual Humlis.

In addition to criticism of micro-level research, one criticism of macro-level research is that, because its scope is too broad, it cannot be operationalized in the field (Kearney, 1986:339). To answer this criticism of macro-level migration research, this study uses ethnographic methods such as participant observation,
semi-structured interviews, and surveys to operationalize the study of Humli migration to Kathmandu, in terms of the national and global socio-political factors which motivated Humlis to migrate (see the site description for participant responses about migration factors).

Neoclassical (economic) migration theory has been criticized in the past, for being too narrow in scope. It has also been criticized for its tendency to promote migration as the (economic) solution to issues in developing nations. Some researchers say this tendency has contributed to the very issues it proposes to solve (de Haas, 2010; Wright, 1995:778; Kearney, 1986); however, recently there has been a return to a more optimistic view of migration (N. Sorensen, 2003; Guest, 2003). As de Haas explains there is a, “recent shift toward highly optimistic views” toward migration, and that there is a “general paradigm shift in research and policy away from dependency and state-centrist views to neo-classical and neo-liberal views in general” (2010:257).

Some anthropologists have begun to question whether migration can be viewed as purely destructive to people and their social systems, as was the dominant view in the 70s, 80s, and 90s, in response to the neoclassical pro-development perspective. Some researchers have, within the last few decades, been taking another look at how migration can positively affect the development of some communities, such as in the form of remittances sent from areas of destination, from working migrants back to families in their areas of origin (de Haas, 2010; Hollifield, 2008; Weeks, 2005).

From a review of the literature, it is clear that there is no real consensus on anthropological migration theory (Weeks, 2005; de Haas, 2010; Massey, 2008). The push-pull approach is widely used as a starting point for analysis of the factors that cause individuals to decide to move. But push-pull must be expanded to include factors beyond economic ones. It is clear that both micro and macro-level factors are important when contextualizing individual decision-makers, considering both their agency (Wright, 1995) and their structural constraints.
In focusing on both the causes and consequences of migration, I will advance a small body of research which is burgeoning under the rubric of bio-cultural studies. Bio-cultural research works to understand the relationships between the biological (physical and psychological); and the social or cultural.

As Weeks concludes: “Recognizing now that the reasons for migrating are numerous and complex, we also must bear in mind that when people migrate, the impact is felt deeply at both individual and societal levels” (Week, 2005:307).

**Causes and Consequences of Migration**

In terms of the *causes* of migration (which I discussed in respect to Humlis as Maoist pressure, in the site description of this paper), violent conflict (and its after-effects) is increasingly included as one of the ‘push’ factors which motivates individuals to migrate (Singh, 2007; N. Sorensen et al 2003; Massey, 1994, 1998). Poverty is also considered by some anthropological researchers to be a valid ‘push’ factor “to leave politically unsatisfying environments” (Sorensen, 2003:23).

In terms of the *consequences* of migration, the impacts of involuntary migration can be significant, both for the individual migrants themselves; and for the communities- from which they came and to which they go (Weeks, 2005:313; Cohen and Deng, 1998a:25). Though the change that migration brings can be stressful for anyone, the impact on involuntary migrants is greater than that on voluntary migrants (Weeks, 2005).

**Individual-level Impacts and Community-Level Impacts of Involuntary Migration**

Individual impacts of involuntary migration include physical and structural impacts such as physical damage to the elderly and very young during the move; food insecurity, sanitation issues; lack of housing; unemployment; economic devastation from liquidation or abandonment of assets; and increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and HIV/AIDS (Cohen and Deng 1998a:25; Stepputat and Sorensen, 2001: 775; Mooney, 2005:15). Additionally, individual impacts of displacement include...
psychosocial impacts such as discrimination experienced in the receiving communities (Mooney, 2005; Cohen and Deng, 1998a), and stresses associated with lifestyle changes, de-skilling (Cohen and Deng, 1998a:25) and other adaptation issues in the new areas. Many Humli participants spoke of the hurried nature of their departure from Humla and how they suffered being separated from their families, friends, land, property, possessions, and livelihoods (see site description for interview responses related to these losses). As S. Cohen states, “Multiple losses—of property, livelihood, relatives, entitlements, security, good health, identity, trust, and so on—are central to the common characterization of refugees and IDPs” (Stepputat and Sorensen, 2001:774).

The areas from which involuntary migrants come and the areas to which they go, are also impacted. Sending areas suffer a breakdown of infrastructure as workers are lost and lands are neglected, in addition to the social breakdown as members of the sending communities abandon their roles in the social networks (Weeks, 2005). Conversely, receiving areas are often over-burdened in terms of infrastructure and resources, resulting in overcrowding, unsanitary living conditions, and security problems (Singh, 2007; N. Sorensen, 2003; Zolberg, 1989:416). The social structure of receiving communities also endures strain as residents struggle to adapt and to accommodate new arrivals and their different lifestyles (Cohen and Deng, 1998a).

**Mental and Physical Health of Involuntary Migrants**

The individual impacts of involuntary migration can be physical or structural or psychosocial. These impacts can affect individuals personally by increasing their risk of negative health outcomes. As Singh states, “The (Maoist) conflict has had an impact on the physical and mental health of the displaced. A recent cross-sectional survey among 290 internally displaced people in Nepal found high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (53.4 percent), anxiety (80.7 percent), and depression (80.3 percent)” (2007:106-7). Mooney supports this connection between the impact of involuntary migration and health, “The trauma of
displacement accounts for a high prevalence of psychosocial problems among IDPs (internally displaced people)” (2005:17).

In addition to psychosocial impacts, food insecurity among involuntary migrants can lead to hunger and malnutrition, and often exacerbates other health issues associated with poverty, exposure, and unsanitary living conditions in which most involuntary migrants find themselves (Singh, 2007; Mooney, 2005).

Structural impacts include lack of access to health care which increases the risk of negative health outcomes for involuntary migrants. As Mooney explains, “Generally, a lack of access to adequate medical services exacerbates the health situation of many IDPs (internally displaced people)” (Mooney, 2005:17).

Additionally, as was explained earlier, “conflict-induced migration might also be fueling a localized HIV epidemic in Nepal. Young displaced women are forced to work as commercial sex workers, for their survival” (Singh, 2007:107). Many involuntary migrant women are compelled to work in high-risk occupations because of their status as low caste, new arrivals in their communities, which makes them very vulnerable to sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking (Singh, 2007; Mooney, 2005).

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

Typology is one common approach to analysis in anthropology. This is often the case in the anthropological approach to migration (Brettell, 2008). Several types of migration have been described over the last century including categories such as internal/international, temporary/permanent, and voluntary/involuntary. In this analysis of the migration of Humli Tibetans to Kathmandu, the types of migration used as a framework for analysis are ‘internal’ and ‘involuntary’. The specific term used to denote these two types of migration combined, is ‘internal displacement’, and the people who have been internally displaced are called IDPs (internally displaced persons). Even more specifically, the type of migration I will
describe, which has occurred due to the Maoist insurgency in Nepal, is called ‘conflict-induced internal displacement’ (Singh, 2007:106).

The term IDP was defined by the United Nations Secretary General in 1992 as a working definition, and was later revised based on the research of the Global IDP Project in 1998, which culminated in the Geneva presentation of the Guiding Principles on IDP. IDPs are defined as: “Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or placed of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed any internationally recognized State border” (Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 1998).

The purpose of designating IDPs as a group is to address the specific needs of a vulnerable population, who are often neglected by their own governments and international aid agencies (Mooney, 2005; Singh, 2007). Those displaced by armed conflict and other forces beyond their control, are often viewed simply as migrants. Because they reside within their original national borders, their own governments and international aid agencies have not historically been compelled to assist those who have been internally displaced by conflict or other factors beyond their control. In the case of IDPs in Nepal, only 23 percent who applied for assistance as IDPs have received any assistance from their government- and what assistance was available (Singh, 2007:107).

As Mooney states, “Indeed there are cases where a government has categorized IDPs as “migrants”, presumably to deflect attention from the involuntary nature of their movement and thereby to avoid its responsibilities towards them. For these reasons the distinction between IDPs and economic migrants is important to maintain” (2005:13).

Reluctance to recognize IDPs, however, is changing (Singh, 2007). For example, the World Health Organization (WHO) has listed IDPs as a ‘special group’ and stated that as a special group they are ‘vulnerable to health hazards’ (Mooney, 2005:17). According to WHO, IDPs are the “largest at-risk
population in the world” (Cohen and Deng, 1998a:15), and urgently need assistance: “there is ‘no doubt that
the internally displaced have been among the most vulnerable. Not only that, but they also get the least
help’ (McNamara)” (Mooney, 2005:18).

As Mooney states, “The fact of the matter is that internally displaced persons do have needs that
make them different from others in the general population...What distinguishes the internally displaced are
the unique needs and heightened vulnerabilities that arise as a result of forced displacement, including their
need for a durable solution” (2005:18).

Specific Needs of IDPs

Internally displaced persons have specific needs and vulnerabilities. In the following paragraphs I will
outline what these needs and vulnerabilities are according to leading expert on IDPs, Erin Mooney.

As Mooney points out, “deprived of shelter and their habitual source of food, water, medicine, and money,
they (IDPs) have different, and often more urgent material needs (than other civilians)” (2005:16). In
addition to those mentioned above, urgent material needs include physical protection, possessions, and a
means of survival (land and/or livelihood)” (2005:16).

IDPs have specific needs that go beyond the material necessities of survival. Mooney points out that
many of these needs arise from what has been lost as a result of displacement:

“As one recent study underscored, displacement leads to ‘massive loss not only of commodities
such as the home, income, land, or other forms of property, but also of less tangible symbolic goods,
such as cultural heritage, friendship, and a sense of belonging to a particular place.’ which can lead
to ‘impoverishment, social isolation, exclusion from health, welfare, and education provision, the
breakdown of social relationships and support structures, and the undermining of authority
structures and social roles’” (2005:15).
Discrimination can be a source of isolation and vulnerability for IDPs in their new environment. Often displaced persons are “stigmatized and may be viewed with suspicion and hostility” (Mooney, 2005:15). Some examples of discrimination from participant responses will be shown in the data section.

Material, structural, and psychosocial stressors, such as discrimination, need to be addressed in order to improve the well-being of displaced Humlis. It may be more urgent, however, to address the specific material needs of displaced Humlis first, especially health risks such as poor sanitation, lack of clean water, overcrowding, and lack of access to health services, and food insecurity. As Mooney states, “Indeed, malnutrition is among the reasons why some of the highest death rates recorded in humanitarian emergencies this past decade have involved IDPs and why their death rates have often been found to be substantially higher than for non-displaced populations” (2005:16).

**Conflict-Induced Internal Displacement**

The latest information states that there are currently over 28.8 million people displaced by conflict world-wide (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 2013). Sonal Singh, a Nepali researcher investigating the relationship between displacement and health, cites the number of IDPs within Nepal as an estimated 200,000, “with the far-western districts of Nepal being the worst affected” (2007:103). Most of these IDPs have been forced to leave their homes by the Maoist conflict and its effects.

The situation of IDPs is complicated by the fact that in nations where war has been waged within its borders, the war “occurs when a state becomes monopolized by and identified with the dominant group or groups to the exclusion or marginalization of other groups, which are thereby denied the protection and assistance that a state owes its citizens” (Cohen and Deng, 1998a:5). And so the likelihood is small that these groups who were marginalized and excluded by the government before the war, and whose marginalization in part ignited the insurgency; will receive needed assistance from their government after the war.
Distinguishing IDPs

IDPs have specific vulnerabilities and needs as discussed above; however, it can be difficult to distinguish involuntary migrants (IDPs) from voluntary migrants. As Cohen and Deng, prominent researchers and experts of internal displacement, explain, “Indeed there are cases in which the needs of the internally displaced may be indistinguishable from those others around them. When IDPs are intermingled in urban settings, it may be difficult to distinguish their needs from other disadvantaged persons. Some may even choose to make themselves indistinguishable as a means of protection” (Cohen and Deng 1998a; Mooney 2005).

As this quote implies, some IDPs take care not to identify themselves for fear of persecution. In the case of Humli IDPs they may conceal their IDP status for fear of persecution by members of the Maoist regime or other authorities- to avoid placing themselves or their families at risk (by the same groups that caused them to be flee their homes).

I found this to be the case with some displaced Humlis who relayed experiences where Maoists tried to locate them after they left Humla. Though over half of the participants identified Maoist pressure as their primary reason for leaving Humla, the number may be higher if not for fear of persecution.

It is also the case that some displaced Humlis are not recognized as such because the definition of IDP does not include involuntary migration due to economic factors which are related to internal conflict, such as destroyed infrastructure which often results in food insecurity, loss of livelihood and job opportunities, and poverty. As I discussed in the section of the site description, there were many reasons Humlis fled Humla that were associated with the destruction of the physical infrastructure, political and economic systems, health and educational systems, and social structure-which were a result of the Maoist insurgency and which compelled them to leave their homes out of necessity. These factors are not included in the definition of IDP, as Mooney explains, “Expanding the IDP definition further to encompass persons who migrate because of extreme poverty or other economic problems has been proposed during the
formulation of the definition and to this day is a suggestion that sometimes is put forth” (2005:13). Perhaps these factors should be included in the definition of IDP. Stepputat and Sorensen agree that, “At some point then, forced migration may transmute into ‘economic livelihood migration’. Thus most migrations include a combination of compulsion and choice, and both ‘migrants’ and ‘refugees’ seem to be motivated by a mixture of fears, hopes, and aspirations” (2001:787).

Even without a non-economic aspect to the definition, there are critics of the designation of IDP. The intention of the United Nations in designating IDPs as a special group is not to ignore the needs of other migrants who need aid- which is the main criticism from opponents of the designation- but rather to encourage governments to respond to the needs of IDPs within their borders; and to raise awareness within the international community that refugees (those forced outside of their nations’ borders) are not the only group who are dispossessed and in need of special aid.

There is an urgent need to address the needs of IDPs. For example, in Sri Lanka, it has been reported that the suicide rate of IDPs in camps is three times higher than the national average. This is due to the “trauma of displacement” which also accounts for a high prevalence of psychosocial problems among IDPs” (Mooney, 2005:17).

More research is needed to clarify the particular vulnerabilities and needs of IDPs (Cohen and Deng, 1998a). And given the prevalence of the problem in Nepal and worldwide, it is imperative that this research is done (Singh, 2007). Anthropologists are well-suited to the task. As Colson states, “Over the past three decades, anthropologists have become increasingly engaged in ethnographic studies of forced uprooting, as well as studies of violence and warfare. The American Anthropological Association now houses a sub-group composed of those whose research interests focus upon refugees, the internally displaced, and other involuntary migrants” (2003:1). Colson also states that anthropologists became involved in internal displacement research with the intention to affect policy and to “make uprooting and adjustment less traumatic” (2003:12). This is where international aid agencies must respond to new research which
identifies the needs of IDPs, and address those needs. One example of an international aid agency that is addressing the needs of IDPs is the UNFAO: “The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has underscored the importance of monitoring the household food insecurity of IDPs as well as understanding the ‘specific constraints’ that prevent them from obtaining required food and ensuring that appropriate measures are undertaken to facilitate this access” (Mooney, 2005:16).

In the next section of this literature review I will explore the bio-cultural relationship between migration/displacement and individual well-being. Another way to state this relationship is: how the stress of change (due to internal displacement) is linked to an increased risk of negative health outcomes.

**Stress**

**Stress Theory and Change**

“The phenomenon of migration is complex and its health effects are diverse and often difficult to disentangle. Clearly they involve both the direct effects of environmental change - in climate, diet, and exposure to chemical or biologic agents - and the more indirect effects of psychosocial stimuli” (Salmond et al, 1985:298).

The body of literature which aims to understand the consequences of migration for individuals, resides in the bio-cultural framework of stress theory. As Lazarus and Folkman describe it, “One of the central themes of this new literature concerns the stress of transitions and social change and how they are coped with” (1984:10).

S. Cohen defines stress as, “a process in which environmental demands tax or exceed the adaptive capacity of an organism, resulting in psychological and biological changes that may place persons at risk for disease” (1995:3).
Craig Janes, an anthropology professor and researcher at the University of Colorado, who focuses on the bio-cultural approach to migration, explains that change and stress can lead to negative psychological and physiological responses, “sociological change is related to disease prevalence which supports the idea that “stress is an etiological element” and can lead to changes in perception as well as actual specific biochemical and biomechanical changes” (1990:5).

Originating in the works of Wolff (1953), Selye (1956), Cassel (1960), Scotch (1963), and Syme (1979), stress theory maintains that: when change occurs in the lives of individuals, and depending on the perception of that change by the individual, stress can manifest, if the perceived stress is not mitigated through the active utilization of resistance resources (Dressler 1990, 1999; Brown, 1981; Janes, 1990; Pearlin, 1981). These resistance resources can include social and structural supports, and psychological coping styles (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Cohen 1985, 1995; Dressler, 1982, 1991; Wessen 1992; Janes, 1990). Resistance resources will be further explained in that subsection.

If uninterrupted, the effect of stressors can be an increased risk of the development of chronic, non-infectious diseases such as hypertension, increased blood pressure, cardiovascular and coronary heart disease, obesity and diabetes, gastrointestinal disorders and ulcers, migraines, reproductive and menstrual disorders including amenorrhea, and mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, and post traumatic stress disorder (Brown, 1981; Dimenas et al, 1995; Dressler 1991; Lazarus and Folkman 1984: Pearlin 1981; Wessen 1992; Salmond et al, 1985;).

**Measurements of Stress and Future Research**

Three kinds of measurements have been found to be appropriate for the assessment of the ‘human stress response’: behavior rating scales, psychological tests, and physiological measures (Brown, 1981). This study uses a validated health survey (v-12 brief) which assesses overall health including depression indicators, in combination with a validated food security survey (USDA Food Security 6-item survey). In future research, other tools should be used in addition to this health/food security survey to test for stress,
depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) such as the Subjective Stress Scale used by Bramston and Fogarty (1995); the Stressful Life Events Screening Questionnaire used by Goodman et al., 1998; the Beck Anxiety Inventory used by Pettigrew in Maoist occupied areas (2002); the PTSD Traumatic Events Checklist to screen for exposure to traumatic events used by Kohrt et al to assess the impact of the Maoist conflict on former child soldiers (2008); the Hopkins Symptom Checklist (HSCL-25) to measure anxiety and depression used by Thapa and Hauff, 2011; and/or the Depression Self-Rating Scale used by Kohrt et al to assess the impacts of the Maoist conflict on former child soldiers in Nepal.

According to Brown, of the three types of measures, physiological measures (i.e., urinary levels of catecholamines and corticosteroids, and blood pressure levels) have the greatest potential for cross-cultural comparisons due to their replicability and to their ease of administration in the field (1981:74). Brown also gives some examples of research where stress measurements are appropriate: “studies of culture change, observations of cyclical patterns of stress, identification of highly stressed groups, understanding of the relative importance of specific stressors on certain groups, and identification of cultural phenomena that are either stress producing or stress reducing” (1981:75). Some of these examples are highly relevant to this study, especially the first example of “studies of culture change”. So according to Brown, it is appropriate to administer physical measures of stress within the community of displaced Humlis, in future research.

**Biocultural Relationship between Migration and Health**

Wessen, in his study of the effects of migration and modernization on the Tokelau people, found there to be a relationship between these forces of change and health:

“Whether because of direct environmental factors such as climate or exposure to allergens, factors associated with diet and behaviors...or a complex array of psychosocial factors, differences between life in Tokelau and life in New Zealand have important health consequences for the Tokelau (migrant) population...for many, the price of progress may well have been high- in terms of both emotional and physical well-being” (1992:378).
The diseases mentioned earlier which are associated with stress, have been identified by some researchers as ‘industrial diseases’ due to their increasing prevalence in industrial nations, and those undergoing rapid change due to industrialization (Wessen, 1992; Dressler 1990, 1991, 1994, 1999, Janes, 1990; Henry and Cassel, 1969). As Farmer states, “Stress is a common experience in modern society, and can affect both physical and mental health” (1997:298). Or as Dressler puts it, “A prominent hypothesis to account for the increase in blood pressure in more modernized (or economically developed) communities is the stressful nature of cultural and social change” (Dressler, 1999:2).

Craig Janes maintains that, “the epidemiological literature on migration is well-established” (1990:3). As Salmond et al explain, “There is substantial evidence from a number of other settings that the phenomena of migration is associated with increased blood pressure and risk of cardiovascular disease” (1985:298). The biocultural relationship between migration and high blood pressure is widely accepted. There are a number of studies which have produced sound empirical evidence of this biocultural relationship (Scotch, 1963; Dressler, 1982, 85, 1991, 1997, 1999, 2004; Janes, 1990; McGarvey and Baker, 1979; Salmond et al 1985 Wessen, 1992). This evidence has led some researchers to the conclusion that “migration is epidemiologically relevant” (Wesson, 1992, p.286); that is, the socio-cultural changes which occur as a result of migration to a new, urban, more modern environment, can cause stress to individuals, which in turn can lead to an increased risk of disease if the stress process is not interrupted by resistance resources. As Wesson points out,

“Migration from one community to another often entails drastic changes- in fact, for the individual it is likely to be one of life’s major changes. At the very least migrants must learn to relate to new places and people, and even if their daily activities change minimally, adaptation must take place on many levels- biological, psychological, social, and perhaps spiritual. Migration therefore, is epidemiologically relevant (1971, p.28).
Identification of Stressors in the Environment (Physical or Behavioral, Psychosocial, Structural)

Another aspect of stress research involves the identification of stressors that result from changes in the environment – which, can be precipitated by migration and displacement. In this study I used ethnographic methods to identify stressors in the environment of displaced Humbles living in Kathmandu. I will discuss examples of these stressors which were identified in the interview and survey, in the data section of this paper.

If stress “refers to a response of the organism to conditions that, either consciously or unconsciously are experienced as noxious” (Pearling, 1981); then ‘stressors’ are defined as “noxious stimuli which result in neuroendocrinal changes, and to which individuals must adapt” (Wolff, 1953). Stressors, as epidemiological factors, fall into three main categories: physical or environmental, psychosocial, and structural (Cassel, 1974; Hunt, 1980).

Physical or environmental stressors include pollutants or contamination in the air, water, food or land; food insecurity; different climate; lack of shelter; urban traffic and hazards; and crime. This category also includes behavioral changes such as changes in diet; smoking; alcohol and drug consumption; and decreased activity levels and exercise.

Some psychosocial (or socio-cultural) stressors include lifestyle changes (such as those discussed in the site description within the six domains of lifestyle change); status or role changes; low self-esteem or self-efficacy; social inconsistency and cultural incongruity; adaptation problems; and caste or class discrimination. Examples of psychosocial stressors from participant responses will be given in the data section.

Structural stressors can include unemployment; neglect by the government of social services such as health care, education, and assistance for the elderly; and lack of adequate housing and infrastructure due to discrimination (Janes, 1990; Wessen, 1992; Pearlin, 1981; Dressler, 1988, 1991).
Psychosocial Stress

Craig Janes explains what is meant by psychosocial stress:

“The prevailing view has been that rapid sociocultural change brings about social disorganization and cultural disruption which is in turn responsible for role confusion, cultural identity conflicts and feelings of isolation and anomie. This psychosocial “stress” is then implicated etiologically in the development of a variety of health problems including alcohol abuse, suicide, schizophrenia, hypertension, diabetes, and, increasingly, other chronic diseases including cancer (Dressler 1982, Antonovsky 1979, Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend 1981, Graves and Graves 1979...)” (Janes et al 1986:249).

William Dressler, a professor and researcher of anthropology at University of Alabama, in his biocultural research, describes how changes in lifestyle can result in psychosocial stress,

“As new styles of life come to be emphasized in the modernization process, the assumption of these new lifestyles becomes essential as a definition of an individual’s social identity. Where individuals are prevented from achieving that social identity (as a result of few economic resources), conflicts over their identity are produced, and poorer health status is associated primarily with that discrepancy” (1991:165-6).

Dressler goes on to explain the how individuals who cannot achieve the success deemed important by the new society they live in, experience psychosocial stress: “We can anticipate that as individuals strive to attain status along Euroamerican-defined dimensions, many will experience the frustrations of blocked aspirations and the uncertainties over being unable to achieve that lifestyle. This entire process could have important health consequences...” (1991:45). Dressler calls this kind of psychosocial stress ‘status inconsistency’.
Another researcher who places importance on the role of psychosocial stressors in the context of change and its relationship to stress, is Craig Janes who explains,

To understand the relationship of environmental processes to individual experience it is useful to see stress as an outcome of conflicts or contradictions arising in social status and role expectations. Culture change, particularly in the context of intercultural migration, introduces new statuses and roles and produces greater variability in social expectations held by community members; social expectations that define appropriate behavior are unclear (Cassel, 1974,1975), or when individuals are unable to live up to status and role expectations or aspirations” (1990:109).

Again, William Dressler (1988) describes the conflicts that can arise for an individual who has been exposed to modern lifestyles, but who is limited by his or her environment or circumstances from attaining this level of (material) success:

“Material acquisition is an expectation associated with prestige and high status in a variety of cultures marked by rapid change. Individuals who do not have the resources necessary to acquire the prized goods, but try to do so anyway, will be under stress because of the conflict between available resources and the expectations of their desired social position”.

When psychosocial stress is persistent, it can threaten the self-concept of the individual undergoing the stress. This diminishment of the self-concept can have a negative effect on that person’s appraisal of stressors in their environment, and ultimately, this may negatively influence the psychological and physical well-being of the individual. Leonard Pearlin describes this process:

“Life events and the role strains they generate are especially likely to eventuate in stress when they also result in diminishment of self. Two dimensions of self concept are of particular relevance in this regard: mastery and self-esteem...Mastery is the extent to which people see themselves as being in control of the forces that importantly affect their lives...Self-esteem involves the judgments
an individual makes about his or her self-worth...the diminishment of these treasured elements of self is viewed as the final step in the process leading to stress” (1981:339).

Janes emphasizes the importance of ascertaining the degree of change individuals have undergone, in terms of lifestyle changes as a result of migration; in order to assess the effects of psychosocial stress:

The greater the difference between one’s old and new settings, both as to status and what is expected of one, the more difficult the adjustment is likely to be, and the greater the possibility of dissonance and stress...It is important in an epidemiological study of the effects of migration that a serious attempt be made to understand the lifestyle changes being experienced by the group under study (1990:286).

Physiological Responses and Negative Health Outcomes Associated with Stress

The impact of stressors, or their associated health outcomes, can include physiological and psychological disorders if the stressors persist, unmitigated, for long periods of time (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Pearlin 1981, 1982; Brown 1981; Dressler 1999; Cassel 1974; Goodman and Leatherman 1998, etc.). Wessen describes how one possible mechanism linking psychosocial stress and health outcomes may function, “The psychological distress caused by the experience of (social) incongruities might affect autonomic responses, producing direct physiological effects” (1992:14).

S. Cohen describes how stress exhibits physiological outcomes, which is one aspect of the stress process:

“The biological perspective (on stress) focuses on the activation of physiological systems that are particularly responsive to physical and psychological demands. Prolonged or repeated activation of these systems is thought to place a person at greater risk for the development of a range of both physical and psychiatric disorders. Two interrelated systems that are viewed as the primary indicators of a stress response are the sympathetic-adrenal medullary system (SAM) and the hypothalamic-pituitary adrenocortical axis (HPA) (1995:4).
Increased output of these and others physiological systems can be the “response to a wide variety of psychosocial stressors” (see Cohen, 1995:4 for a detailed description of this process).

**Types of Life Events as Stressors**

Life events as stressors can fall into categories that are distinguished by their duration. These types of stressors include *acute life changes*. Examples of acute life changes include loss of employment, birth of a child, divorce, death of a spouse or relative, or marriage. Examples of *chronic life strains* include financial difficulties, food insecurity, lack of adequate housing and medical care, serious chronic illness, social discrimination, or marital conflict (Dressler 1991; Pearl 1981; Cohen 1995; Lazarus and Folkman 1984; Farmer 1997).

Of the two types of stressors (i.e., acute and chronic), chronic life strains produce the most stress (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Migration falls within the chronic life strain category; although it can certainly be argued that both acute and chronic events can be attributed to migration.

Life events and their impacts can also be distinguished in terms of whether they are desirable or undesirable or scheduled or unscheduled. A significant relationship has been recognized between the desirability of certain life events and increased rates of psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety (Pearlin 1981; Lazarus and Folkman 1984).

**Resistance Resources and Perceived Stress**

Additional factors that can determine the degree to which individuals are affected by stressors in their environment, include resistance resources and perception. *Resistance resources* (Antonovsky, 1979) are the social, psychological, and structural supports that can act as buffers against the negative effects of stress (S.Cohen and Wills, 1985; Janes, 1990; Dressler, 1990). Pearl identifies two types of these buffers or mediators which people can call on to “defend themselves against the deleterious effects of the causes of stress: coping and social supports” (1981:340). Social supports can be defined as, “the access to and use of
individuals, groups, or organizations in dealing with life’s vicissitudes” (Pearlin, 1981, p.340). Coping can be defined as “the modification of the situations giving rise to stressful problems; the modification of the meaning of problems in a manner that reduces their threat; and the management of stress symptoms” (Pearlin, 1981, p.341).

Social support includes family members and friends upon whom an individual can rely for emotional and economic support during times of need, or upon whom and individual believes they can rely, regardless of whether they are actually available for support (Cohen, 1985; Bisconti and Bergman, 1999). Other forms of social supports can be membership in religious or civic networks such as churches, clubs, or community organizations. Bisconti and Bergman explain that the level of social support an individual perceives themselves to have, is an important aspect of that individual’s well-being: “The first step in understanding the process by which psychosocial variables may influence psychological and/or physical health is to establish that support alone is an important predictor of well-being” (1999:95).

Psychological supports include the coping styles which individuals employ to help them deal psychologically with life events; for example, by adjusting one’s perception of illness, a person can reduce the impact of that particular stressor.

Structural supports include those resources provided, for instance, by governments or NGOs to assist individuals such as food assistance, financial assistance, housing, educational or informational support, or medical services.

**Perceived Stress**

The way stressors are perceived by individuals can greatly influence the physiological and psychological effects of the stressors. This relationship between perception and stress was observed by Henry and Cassel: “the effect of a given stimuli is determined by an organism’s perception” (1969:173). As observed by Lazarus and Folkman, “how we think about and perceive events in our lives has a direct
physiological consequence: mental events have biological consequences” (1984:v). Relatedly, individuals who are under stress, perceive themselves to have poorer health than those who are not under stress (Farmer and Ferraro, 1997; Rodin and McAvay, 1992). And individuals who perceive themselves to be ill, greatly increase their distress and their risk of developing illnesses, especially depression (Janes; 1990; Brown, 1981; Kaplan et al, 1996; Tessler and Mechanic, 1978; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Farmer, 1997; Bisconti, 1999; Dressler 1991, 1999).

Self-concept, including self-mastery and self-esteem, can mediate the harmful effects of stressors. Positive self-concept can have a strong buffering effect against events and strains, whereas negative self-concept can lead to deleterious manifestations of stress such as emotional and mental afflictions including depression and anxiety (Tessler and Mechanic, 1978; Pearlin, 1981; Smith et al, 2004).

Studies by Farmer and Ferraro (1997), Janes (1990), Hunt (1985), Dressler (1991), Tessler and Mechanic (1978) and others have shown that the perception of illness, can itself be directly correlated to ‘actual’ health status. For example, as Hunt explains, “Several health investigators have found perceived health status to be an accurate reflection of so-called objective measures” (1985:185). One study by Kaplan et al concluded that, “Perceived health levels were strongly associated with risk factors and disease indicators” (1996:259).

Assessing Stress

Because individual perception is important, qualitative, ethnographic, techniques remain essential in ascertaining the level of stress an individual perceives themselves to be experiencing, as well as their overall (perceived) health status. Dressler elaborates on the importance of cultural context in studying stress and health:

“Events and circumstances can only be threatening to individuals because those events and circumstances have some significance or meaning for the individual, and meaningfulness ultimately
is a function of culture, that system of shared meanings and symbols. Therefore, the study of stress and disease must be the social and cultural study of stress and disease...social factors are in part what determines the perception of stress” (1991:2).

From Dressler’s quote above, it is clear that assessing stress is not simply a matter of issuing a survey and quantifying the responses. The perception of stress is contextual. It is based on the meaning of events for individuals, and so must be understood in terms of the cultural, social, political, historical context of individuals (Wessen 1992; Dressler 1991; Janes 1990). As Farmer and Ferraro (1997) point out, “There are few social conditions that are inherently stressful. Instead, the meanings that individuals attach to conditions are what determine if it is a source of stress” (1997:299).

Stress is best measured using qualitative techniques in conjunction with quantitative measures, including biophysical samples (Brown, 1981; Dressler, 1991), in order to paint a more holistic picture of overall well-being than could be accomplished using any one of these techniques alone. A mixed methods approach in anthropology and epidemiology, one which takes into account both qualitative and quantitative data, as well as both biological and socio-cultural sources of data, is increasingly important in understanding the contextually specific causes and remedies of disease (Dressler, 1991; Pelto and Pelto, 1970).

Proponents of such a mixed methods approach to research include Dressler (1982, 88, 91, 99, and 2004), Pearlin (1981, 1982), Janes (1990), Wessen (1992), Brown (1981), Cassel (1960, 1974, and 1979) and others. For example, the goal of Goodman and Leatherman’s review was to, “consider the possibility for a biocultural synthesis that takes into account the complexities and contradictions of social life and how they influence biologies” (1998:25). Arthur Kleinman, a clinical medical practitioner of twenty years, expressed support for the development of this cross-disciplinary synthesis: “In the broader biopsychosocial model now making headway in primary care, disease is construed as the embodiment of the symbolic network linking body, self, and society (Engel, 1970)” (1989:6).
Well-Being

In order to achieve a sense of overall well-being, individuals need to be supported by their environment at many levels: physical, social, and psychological (Bisconti and Bergeman, 1998; A. Chavez, 2005; Hunt, 1985; Antonovsky, 1979; Campbell, 1976; Bryant and Joseph, 1982). Ultimately, the well-being of an individual is a subjective measure, a sense of wellness they possess in varying degrees at different times and which is influenced by a vast array of factors (Robison, 1991). Isolating these factors and their outcomes is a complex process that requires in-depth analysis of an individual’s particular environment and situation. In future research, the Psychological General Well-Being (PGWB) index could be used as a tool to better assess Humlis’ overall perceived well-being, as was used in by Dimenas et al in 1995 in their study of the impacts of upper gastrointestinal symptoms on patients’ perceived well-being.

Assessing the well-being of displaced Humlis in Kathmandu is complex. The outcomes of the survey and interview indicate that Humlis have predominantly low assessments of their well-being (This will be discussed in further detail in the following data section.). Using ethnographic techniques, I collected Humlis’ perceptions of why they think they are less well in Kathmandu than in Humla. These perceptions of wellness are discussed in the data section of this paper. From these reports I determined what factors may be contributing to their low sense of well-being. However, it must be noted that these perceptions of better wellness in Humla than Kathmandu, will have some distortion from a sense of nostalgia for the past which has been reported in various studies on social change (C.W. Bissell, 2005).

Specifically, assessing Humlis’ well-being involves identifying what (perceived) stressors exist in their new environment, what sources of resistance exist for them individually and as a community, and what may be some of the physical and psychological manifestations of unmitigated stress, which are related to their displacement or migration. In understanding change, its relationship to stress, and the physiological processes leading from stress to increased risk of chronic diseases; it becomes possible to identify potential interventions which may effectively interrupt the stress process thereby improving the well-being of
displaced Humlis living in Kathmandu. As Farmer and Ferraro (1997) state, “the management of stress is key to maintaining health.”
Methods

Specific Aims

The purpose of this exploratory study is to assess how displacement has resulted in lifestyle changes for ethnic Tibetans from Humla, who are now living in Kathmandu; and to determine how these changes may affect the well-being of individuals in this community.

Two guiding concepts frame this research. First, that lifestyle change can lead to stress (Janes 1990); and secondly, that stress can lead to illness if it is not mitigated by resistance resources (Pearlin 1981; Brown, 1981; Salmond, 1985; Dressler 1985, 1991; Cohen, 1995; Bisconti and Bergeman, 1999).

Study Participants

During the fall of 2010, in the neighborhood of Boudhanath, which surrounds the Great Stupa in the capital city of Kathmandu, Nepal, I conducted my fieldwork within the community of displaced Humlis. Participants in this study were recruited by two key informants from the community, who were introduced to me by my advisor, Dr. Kimber Haddix McKay, one of whom she had worked with in the past in her own research. Participants were recruited based on the following criteria: all were adults who were born and had previously lived in the district of Humla, and who were currently living within the city of Kathmandu. Study participants were from one of the following villages in Humla district: Muchu, Kermi, Yalbang, Yangar, Bhod Kolshi (Khaloe), Purang, or Tomki. There is currently no data on the number of Humli Tibetans who live in Kathmandu, nor is there data on how many of the Humlis who do live in Kathmandu, were displaced from Humla versus migrating there voluntarily. My informant and translator estimated that the total size of the Humli community in Kathmandu is in the hundreds.
**Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

This study was conducted on approval by the University Of Montana Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Use of Human Subjects in Research. The IRB approval was granted upon completion of their project Application and Checklist, in consultation with my committee chair and advisor, Dr. Kimber Haddix McKay, in August of 2010. The IRB ensured the ethical treatment of the project participants by requiring me to complete the Human Subjects Training Course; and by requiring me to include in my project purpose and methods plans to ensure all study participants would be protected by confidentiality and the secure handling of all collected data.

**Instruments**

After arriving in Kathmandu in the fall of 2010, and settling in to the neighborhood of Boudha, I conducted twenty-one semi-structured interviews with a translator from the Humli community; who was one of the aforementioned key informants introduced to me by Dr. Haddix McKay. All interviews were carried out in the homes of the participants or in the homes of friends or neighbors of the participants. Often times two or three members of the community would gather together to give interviews. Of the twenty-one interviews conducted, I selected fifteen for this analysis based on their completeness. I found that often when certain family members were present during interviews, usually male and in positions of authority within the family, women would give very brief answers or refuse to answer some questions at all. Several of the interviews were missing responses because of this observed behavior and I chose to omit these interviews as well as two that were improperly recorded. As was stated earlier in the introduction, saturation was reached, and very few new responses were appearing in the transcripts, before having completed the coding of all fifteen interviews. Guest et al. (2006), in their study of data saturation for ethnographic fieldwork, recommended that the number of interviews for this type of study which are required to reach a saturation of responses, is twelve. However, according to their research, “basic elements for meta themes were present as early as six interviews” (Guest et al., 2006:60).
Additionally, I conducted 21 surveys in a structured interview format, with the same translator from the Humli community, during the same sessions where interviews were conducted. After having completed all 21 surveys and interviews, I administered nine more surveys for a total of 30, hoping to increase the sample size enough to be able to conduct statistical analysis with the survey data. This did not end up being a sufficiently large sample to do statistical analysis, according the post-hoc power test I ran on the sample after returning from Nepal. Guest et al. (2006) recommend a minimum of 60 surveys to gain enough power in the sample for statistical analysis. Future studies with Humlis in this community should use this minimum requirement as a guideline in their research.

The survey I used was self-designed to address the issues of food security and health, both physical and psychological. It is comprised of three parts including the validated USDA Food Security 6-item Survey which is normally used for national surveys, but has also been used in the past in convenient samples of subpopulations in the U.S. and world-wide. One such case is the 2002 study of Food Security and Nutritional Outcomes of Pre-School-Age Mexican-American Children where the sample size was 211 (Kaiser 2002). According the USDA published article, Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, the 6-item survey is appropriate for use in my research: “Other studies of low-income populations may include food security as one of the dimensions of household and personal well-being that are considered” (Bickel, et al. 2000).

The survey I used also includes the validated brief 12-item Health Survey (SF-12), which is also normally used for large, national-level surveys but which has been tested and approved for smaller-scale studies of specific populations including one study of the health of 145 adults at a homeless shelter (Larson 2002). This abbreviated survey may be considered appropriate for small sample sizes due to its precision, and is popular for these applications because of its brevity (SF-12 Users’ Manual 2002). The third section of the survey I used is a subjective section which asks participants to compare their health now in Kathmandu to their health in the past in Humla as either ‘better in Humla’, ‘better in Kathmandu’, or the ‘same’.
I did not have the opportunity to gather comparative base-line data from this population prior to their displacement, and so all comparisons are of self-perceived health, through time. As was stated previously, this data is vulnerable to the distortions and inaccuracies which are a product of subjective reporting by study participants, including nostalgia for the past and exaggeration of the difficulties in the present as compared to the past. Nostalgia and its tendency to change perception, does not make the subjective observations of the study participants irrelevant, however. As W.C. Bissell states regarding the usefulness of nostalgia, “In the nostalgic domain, the personal is inherently political- and vice-versa. Above all, sentiments of longing and loss can supply a critical framework that dynamically links intimate and individual domains to broader issues of political import, and it does so in ways that are not only meaningful to social actors but deeply moving to them as well” (2005:240).

Study design

This ethnographic research approach is consistent with an ex post facto design, which means it is a natural experiment that aims to observe and evaluate the impacts of a particular event on an individual or group of individuals. In this case, I will assess how the well-being of Humlis has been affected by the event of their displacement from Humla to Kathmandu.

Analysis Techniques

As a mixed methods approach, I used NVivo8 and NVivo9 software to analyze the qualitative data from transcribed interviews; and I used SPSS software to analyze the quantitative data from the surveys. My goals in this data analysis are to assess the subjective well-being of displaced Humlis, by interpreting data collected from the survey, such as question 20 which asks participants to compare their health in Humla to their health in Kathmandu; and by interpreting survey scores from the validated Food Security and Health Surveys. Another goal of this data analysis is to identify the stressors which compromise the well-being of Humlis in Kathmandu; and to identify possible negative health outcomes that may be related to unmitigated stress. By identifying these stressors I can suggest possible interventions which augment and support
existing community strengths, thereby mitigating the negative health impacts of stress and improving the well-being of displaced Humlis.

**Quantitative Tools and Analyses**

As was explained previously, the survey I used was a self-designed combination of two validated surveys: the USDA Food Security 6-Item Survey and the Health Survey v12-Brief; followed by five demographic questions and three subjective questions which I designed to measure the perceived well-being of Humlis in Humla versus Kathmandu. Both validated surveys test for the participants’ perceived statuses of health and food security (see Appendix A for complete survey).

To run the SPSS analyses, I first entered the survey responses from the thirty participants into excel spreadsheets, then uploaded the spreadsheets into the SPSS program. Next I ran histograms for each response to find the distribution for each set of data. From the histograms I determined the median of each data set, and assigned cut-offs. Then I collapsed the responses for survey questions with more than two possible responses, so that each question had only two possible values (i.e. ‘high’ (2) or ‘low’ (1) food insecurity). I replaced the old numbered responses in the excel spreadsheets with the new (‘final cut’) values, uploaded the revised spreadsheets into SPSS and ran the frequency analysis. I was prepared at this point to run chi-square analyses to test for statistical significance of association between survey responses, and did a few early chi-square tests including one which did show statistical significance (0.038) between food insecurity and low mental health. But after completing a post hoc power test, I found that there was not enough power due to the small sample size in this study, to warrant chi-square analysis. This is a weakness of the study. In future research the size of the sample should be increased so that statistical analysis of the data has more power.
Data Analysis

Findings of Note from Participant Surveys

Population Demographics

The following table of demographic statistics, from the SPSS frequencies analysis, describes the group of Humli participants in this study. These statistics are derived from responses to the demographic questions in the survey.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Sample

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<td>0-1000 USD per annum</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1001-5000 USD per annum</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5001 + USD per annum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants who took this survey ranged in age from 18 to 72 years old, with the largest percentage (26 percent) between the ages of 25 and 34. Of the group, 56.7 percent were female, 36.7 percent were male, and two participants did not respond. All participants who responded reported their ethnicity as Tibetan. Their incomes ranged from $0 to $10,000 with the largest
percent (50 percent) between $0 and $1000 yearly. Eight respondents did not know their income or did not respond to this question. Most of the respondents who did not know their household income were females who said the head of the household (male) didn’t tell them. The education levels of the study participants ranged from no school to college with the greatest percentage (43 percent) having had no school, and two participants did not respond.

Assessing Well-Being

As was stated in the literature review (Hunt, 1995; Farmer and Ferraro, 1997), low perception of health can have a strong correlation with actual poor health. Therefore, the high percentage of participants who reported having better health in Humla than in Kathmandu (63 percent); combined with the low General Health scores on the Health Survey (56.7 percent reported ‘poor’ health), particularly on the high depression indicator outcomes (such as the 80 percent ‘low’ Mental Health score); indicates high risk of disease. The presence of these indicators of high risk of disease in the survey outcomes, warrants further testing to determine the biophysical and psychological well-being of Humlis in Kathmandu. (Refer to Appendix C for all Health Survey scores.)

Table 2. Health Survey v-12 Brief Scores and Perceived Health Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Health Scores</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Scores</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived health Humla vs. Kathmandu</td>
<td>More healthy Humla</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More healthy Kathmandu</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same health in both places</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In response to the Health Survey question 12c, “How much of the time in the past month have you felt downhearted or depressed?”, ten percent responded “all” of the time, 30 percent responded “most” of the time, 40 percent responded “some of the time”, and ten percent responded “none” of the time. Other depression indicators which are discussed in the literature include insomnia, lack of enthusiasm for normal activities, lack of energy or feeling slowed down, poor appetite, and feeling hopeless about the future (Pearlin, 1981). These other depression indicators will be discussed in the qualitative outcomes section with some examples of participant responses from the interviews.
Food (In) Security Outcomes

Researchers have also found that food insecurity can be associated with depression (Hadley, et al, 2008). The high food insecurity scores (70 percent) for participants in this study indicate the high risk of psychological disorders among members of the displaced Humli community. As was stated previously, initial chi-square analyses were run including cross-tabs on Food Security and Mental Health outcomes. A statistically significant association was found between the two outcomes (0.038), but after running a post hoc power test (a power test which is appropriate after data is collected), it was determined that there was not great enough power to warrant chi-square analysis, due to the small sample size in this study. Future research is needed, using a larger sample size and more specific tools, to measure for depression, anxiety, and PTSD, in order to determine whether there is a strong statistical correlation between food insecurity and depression among displaced Humlis in Kathmandu.

Table 3. USDA Food Security 6-item Survey Scores and Displacement Scores from Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food (in)Security</td>
<td>Low insecurity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High insecurity</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years Participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lived in Kathmandu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-9 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-30 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaced vs. Migrated to Kathmandu</td>
<td>Displaced</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Migrated</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional SPSS analyses were run using interview responses of the number of years participants had lived in Kathmandu, and what their reasons were for leaving Humla. These analyses show that, of the number of years that displaced Humli participants have lived in Kathmandu, the largest numbers (59.9 percent) of Humlis were displaced between six and nine years prior to 2010 (see Figure 15 below); that is, between the years of 2001 and 2004. The largest number (20 percent) had been in KTM for 8 years, which means they were displaced from Humla in 2002. This situates their displacement at the height of the Maoist insurgency. This outcome and its context within the Maoist insurgency, reinforces Humlis’ responses: that 53 percent (or possibly more) of the study participants were displaced by Maoist pressure in Humla. As was mentioned in the IDP section of this paper, many conflict-induced internally displaced persons do not identify themselves as such for fear of retaliation by the insurgents. This may be the case with some Humli study participants, which would increase the number of ‘displaced’ participants in Figure 16 below.

**Perceived Well-being Outcomes: Why So Low?**

The quantitative outcomes of this study indicate a low level of perceived well-being among displaced Humlis in Kathmandu. These outcomes include: lower perceived health in Kathmandu than in Humla; low (perceived) General Health scores on the Health Survey; low (perceived) Mental Health scores on the Health Survey; and high scores on (perceived) depression indicator responses including Health Survey Question-12c (‘downhearted and depressed’).

The following qualitative analysis of interview responses will help to answer why the perceived well-being of displaced Humlis is so low. Qualitative findings from the interviews can be categorized into three main groups: 1) push factors; 2) stressors and associated illnesses; and 3) resistance resources. After a brief description of the interview itself and the qualitative analysis techniques I used, I will return to a discussion of these findings categories listed above.
Qualitative Tools and Analysis

The self-designed semi-structured interview I used in this study was a three-page series of eight questions which took about one and a half hours to administer (see Appendix B for complete interview guide). The first section asked demographic questions pertaining to place of birth, age, marital status, language, education, and ethnicity. The second section asked about lifestyle in Humla in six domains including livelihood, daily schedule, diet, household structure, religion, and language. The second section also had questions about health and health care in Humla. The third section asked participants why they moved from Humla to Kathmandu, what problems they faced while living in Humla, and what was good about living there. The fourth section asks participants to describe their lifestyle in Kathmandu in the same six domains as those they described for Humla. There are also questions in the fourth section about health and health care in Kathmandu and whether there are any obstacles to obtaining health care in the city. The fifth section asks participants to identify differences between life in Humla and life in Kathmandu. In the sixth section, participants are asked to compare their health in the city to their health in Humla and explain why they were healthier in either place. In the final section I asked participants how well they felt they had adapted to life in Kathmandu, if they felt they had changed at all since relocating, if they feel they can live as according to their culture in the city, and why or why not.

After returning to the U.S. in 2010, I completed my correspondence with the key informants in 2011 and began analysis of the interviews using NVivo8 and then NVivo9 software. First, I transcribed the interviews and stored them securely on my personal computer. Then I edited each interview using a coding scheme which was compatible with NVivo 8, and uploaded the transcripts into the qualitative data analysis program. Next, I autocoded the transcripts, breaking all of the transcripts into coded sections. In addition to the autocoded nodes, I further coded the transcripts into free nodes such as ‘depression indicators’, stress-related illnesses’, and ‘resistance resources’ in order to organize themes in the interviews. In the
following section I will describe how I analyzed the qualitative data to assess the well-being of displaced Humlis in Kathmandu.

**Findings of Note from Participant Interviews**

*Push factors are the first of the three principal categories of qualitative findings from this study.*

Push factors were identified in the interviews which were the main causes of displacement and migration to Kathmandu.

In addition to violent conflict, participants in this study identified other push factors which influenced their decision to leave Humla and move to Kathmandu. These other push factors include access to health care, access to education for their children, and job opportunities. For example, when asked why she moved from Humla to Kathmandu, one participant responded, “One (reason) is the Maoist pressure. And when she came here (to Kathmandu) she had a baby and stayed for their education...” (interview participant 02-02). Another participant, when asked why she moved to Kathmandu, explained, “To educate her children. All her hopes are in this. She wants to go back (to Humla) but can’t...Yeah she wants to go but she doesn’t think she can. She thinks she will not be able to go because of her children. She can’t leave them over here (in Kathmandu)” (interview participant 05-05). One woman said she came to Kathmandu to get medical treatment because there was none available in Humla: “They came for (her) medical check-up (then operation) and after that her husband again started his meditation period in Kathmandu for three years (monastic retreat)...at that time there was Maoist pressure in Humla especially on monks and Rinpoche’s, so they couldn’t go back” (interview participant 06-06).

Though several push and pull factors were identified by Humli participants, including seeking education for their children or themselves, seeking healthcare, or seeking job opportunities; the majority of participants explained that Maoist pressure was the main factor that precipitated their move from Humla. The six types of Maoist pressure which were discussed in the literature review, will again be addressed in this section, with examples from participant responses. These six types of Maoist pressure are: 1) forced or
voluntary conscription of child soldiers; 2) threats, harassment, violence, and murder by Maoists, police, and army; 3) Maoists forced donations of food, lodging, and possessions; 4) destroyed infrastructure (which is related to increased food insecurity); 5) destroyed educational and health systems; and 6) destroyed social structures.

**Forced or Voluntary Conscription of Child Soldiers**

In interviews and surveys I conducted for this study, many displaced Humlis said they left Humla due to Maoist pressure; and some, more specifically stated that they fled in order to protect their children from conscription into the armed forces. One of the participants interviewed for this study explained how the “One family, one child” policy of the Maoists was just one manifestation of a more over-arching oppression, “Yeah, it’s ‘Maoist pressure’ (why he has come to Kathmandu), and um, Mao had captured all of the society of Humla, and whatever- there’s not any freedom, to decide what to do. It’s the Mao that they decide who is, who among the family members, who is going to do an army (service), and if they have to do anything, they have to take permission from them (the Maoists)” (Interview participant 14-14). The same participant went on to explain that the Maoists were the main cause for leaving Humla, and if not for prolonged Maoist pressure in his village, he would have returned to Humla rather than settling permanently in Kathmandu.

The difference between voluntary and involuntary military recruitment was not always clear. One of the participants in this study explained how Maoist propaganda overpowered young and impressionable recruits, even though they may technically volunteer for military service,

“The young people, they don’t have idea, knowledge, right? They just want to go because they don’t have any idea, and it’s new for them, and they are something, excited, and they want to go...they (Maoists) give uh, lecture, yeah- you have to do this for your country...Just give something, information that changed the mind. And they are totally uneducated; they don’t know what is right and what is wrong. And they follow” (Interview participant 12-12).
Children (and adults) were also taken into the armed forces involuntarily. As one participant in this study remembers, “Yeah, it’s compulsory. They just forced. And also, they don’t take mothers, those having children, babies. The rest of them they just forced them to take” (Interview participant 12-12). Another participant in this study recalls similar events, “They usually do like, they collect young girls and boys and they forcefully take them to train” (Interview participant 06-06; 12-12).

Threats, Harassment, Violence, and Murder

The next of the six types of Maoist pressure, is threats, harassment, violence, and murder. I will give a few examples of how Maoists used these tactics to advance their agenda during the insurgency. In the schools, teachers and children were harassed and threatened in order to intimidate them and ensure the Maoists could continue their recruitment programs. Teachers were also harassed, beaten, and even killed to set an example to other villagers that they expected total compliance with Maoist directives.

One participant from this study remembers his experiences in Humla and why he felt the need to flee to Kathmandu for his safety,

“He has come from Humla because of Maoist pressure. They took all his things. And also their livestock. So he ran away from them... It’s only Maoist pressure that they have come to Kathmandu. And even they came to here at the beginning they have lots of problems...he was a leader at the Humla, in his village, and there was much pressure from Maoists especially for him- they were threatening him that they will kill him or something like, very pressure. So, he stayed (in Kathmandu), he didn’t go back for a very long period. And also, even he came to Humla by running, his son was living over there and they punished him. (The Maoists said) “Bring the father back!” (Interview participant 20-20).

Maoists Forced Donations
In many cases, the Maoists and security forces would demand ‘donations’ of food, shelter, or possessions. The armed forces paid for their expenditures through *chandhas* or ‘forced donations’ campaigns. There are many accounts of Maoists demanding the wages of teachers and other state employees (Nepal, 2007); or of appearing at the homes of villagers and forcing them to open their homes to sometimes entire cadres of soldiers, who demanded shelter, equipment, and food.

One participant from this study recalls how the insurgents collected the ‘donations’: “Also, if they have something in the village, if they (Maoists) found something like a pressure cooker, they take away, anything that is useful for them they just take away. And also, most of the villagers, if they have something, good things like a pressure cooker, tent, etc. they usually hide (it)” (Interview participant 06-06; 20-20).

**Destroyed Infrastructure Resulting in Increased Food Insecurity and Poverty**

The insurgency brought most development efforts in Nepal to a standstill, especially in remote, rural areas such as Humla district. Maoists disrupted community and VDC level government, cut bridges, and obstructed access to food and supplies. It was not only individuals and groups targeted by the Maoists, who felt the negative impacts of destroyed infrastructure. All Nepalis were affected.

**Destroyed Educational and Health Systems**

It is not only the health services which have been set back because of the impact of Maoist activities in rural Nepal. As was shown in the conscription of child soldiers section in the literature review, the educational system has also been seriously disrupted (Tillett, 2008). Teachers were harassed and even killed as they struggled to keep schools open and classes running (Pettigrew, 2004). Schools were taken over and used as center of operation by both sides of the conflict. The Maoists and the security forces used schools to spread propaganda and recruit soldiers, as well as grounds for training and meetings (Shneiderman, 2004).
Social Consequences of Insurgency

Perhaps the most disruptive consequence of the Maoist insurgency, certainly from an anthropological perspective, is the erosion of social structures in the areas where the conflict was most intense.

The void left behind when community members fled to escape Maoist pressure, is one way in which the social structure of Nepal’s rural communities has been eroded. As one participant recalls, “…he was a leader at the Humla, in his village, and there was much pressure from Maoists especially for him- they were threatening him that they will kill him or something like, very pressure. So, he stayed (in Kathmandu). He didn’t go back for a very long period” (Interview participant 20-20).

One participant in this study recalls that, “Also at that time, there is Maoist pressure in Humla, especially on monks and Rinpoches, something like (threats) so they couldn’t go back” (Interview participant 06-06). Many community leaders chose to flee to towns and cities rather than live with the uncertainty and violence that was their alternative in rural Nepal.

Many Nepalis fled their villages to escape Maoist pressure; whether it was to save their children or themselves from forced conscription into the armed forces; to avoid harassment, torture, or death; to escape the theft of their belongings in the form of forced donations; or simply to seek a better life due to the destruction of their own communities and the growing poverty which has resulted. Maoist pressure is the most prevalent push factor which was reported by participants in this study.

Assessing Well-Being

The second category of outcomes which were identified in the interviews, are the stressors in Humlis’ environment (Kathmandu) and the illnesses which are associated with this stress. These stressors
include the lifestyle changes (in six domains) which are a result of displacement and migration; and the three types of stressors discussed in the literature review: physical or behavioral stressors; psychosocial stressors; and structural stressors.

To assess the well-being of displaced Humlis, according to stress theory, it is crucial to identify sources of stress in their environment (Pearlin, 1981; Brown 1980). Change is one significant source of stress for individuals, particularly for IDPs and migrants. The types of changes in lifestyle that IDPs must undergo, when they move from their place of origin to their place of destination, were referred to in the site description. Here I will compare lifestyle in Humla to lifestyle in Kathmandu from participant responses, within the same six domains 1) livelihood, 2) daily schedule, 3) diet, 4) religion, 5) household structure, and 6) language. The purpose of this comparison is to show how there were significant differences in lifestyle within each domain. These differences indicate major lifestyle changes and also stress.

Comparison of lifestyle in Humla to Kathmandu from interviews/surveys and literature

The following section compares lifestyle in Humla to lifestyle in Kathamandu in order to show the magnitude of the change that Humlis have undergone since their move to the city. The significance of studying this change is, as Albert Wessen concludes, major changes in lifestyle increase the ‘risk factor’ of disease (1992).

Living in Humla is very different than living in Kathmandu. For example, the population of the capitol city of Kathmandu is 1,744,240 whereas the population of the entire district of Humla is 50,858 (Census, 2011). In Kathmandu city there are about 20,289 people per square kilometer. In Humla district there are about 9 people per square kilometer. Literacy in Kathmandu is the highest in the country at 86.3 percent and lowest in the country in Humla at 47.8 percent (Census, 2011).

Of 435,544 households in Kathmandu, 33,223 or 8 percent use firewood for cooking. Of 9,437 households in Humla, 9,278 or 98 percent use firewood for cooking. In Kathmandu, 98 percent of households
have electricity for light, versus only 31 percent in Humla. And in Kathmandu, only 1 percent of households do not have a toilet in their house whereas in Humla, nearly 50 percent or households do not have a toilet. In Kathmandu only 2 percent of households have no facilities such as radio, TV, computer, telephone, or refrigerator. In Humla 42 percent of households have none of these facilities.

**Six domains of Lifestyle Change from Humla to Kathmandu**

**Livelihoods**

**How livelihoods changed from Humla to Kathmandu according to literature and participants**

In Humla district, unlike Kathmandu, there is very little opportunity for cash-paying work (Tillett, 2008). The economy is based on subsistence agriculture and pastoralism. As one participant in this study recalls, “She had not seen money in the village. Five hundred and one thousand (rupees) means a lot when someone has (it). And mostly women have five rupees, twenty rupees and they keep it very safely” (interview 10-10). Another participant recalls a similar situation in Humla: “…even in the beginning when she was young, there was no source of any – they don’t even need money. There is also not any source of income, and even they get the money, there were no things available that they need. So, here (in Kathmandu) she can get things that she wants, very easily” (interview participant 06-06). This shows how different the economy is in Kathmandu than Humla. According to one participant, “(he is) worried because (in) Kathmandu (he) needs money, always. When he does anything, he is worried about money” (survey participant 24). Again, this is a major change from life in Humla as explained by another participant. As she says, in Humla there were, “no tensions about money there. She had her own house and field and grew her own food” (survey participant 26; 14-14).

**Agropastoralism**
Melvyn Goldstein (1976) used the term agropastoralism to describe the subsistence livelihood of northwestern Nepal. The term agropastoralism refers to a system of combined agriculture and pastoralism. In Humla, this livelihood strategy depends on a communal network of seasonally rotating fields and pastures (interview participant 11-11; Goldstein, 1975). Additionally, Humlis engage in trade and crafts to make ends meet. One study participant expresses the same tendency of Humlis to combine livelihood strategies in order to survive:

“It (livelihood) depends on how (it) is, how much they produce in a year. (It) depends on the season. If they have enough, then they do a little bit of trading. Else, if there is (a) very unlucky year, that even they produce (crops), it’s not enough for them and their livestock, (then) they do barter system with lower part of Humla. Like they can give salt, and buckwheat and they (lower Humla) gave rice” (Interview participant 10-10).

The types of foods cultivated in Humla include crops such as barley, potatoes, buckwheat, millet, mustard, wheat, radishes, corn, amaranth, and beans. According to Bauer (2004), at least half of the calories consumed in Humla come from grains, particularly barley, which they produce as much of as possible in their short 4-7 month growing season. They also harvest foods and materials from the forest such as walnuts, apricots, peaches, and mushrooms (Roy, 2009; Upreti and Muler-Boker).

Humlis raise livestock including yak, sheep, goats, cows, horses, and dogs (Interview participants 14-14; 12-12) and from these animals they get meat, wool, milk, butter, and cheese, in addition to transportation and protection (Bauer, 2004).

Types of trade that Humlis engage in include crafts such as woven cloth (interview participant 11-11), wooden eating/drinking bowls, wooden saddles; harvested goods like logs
which are often painted and made into pillars or beams for construction (interview participant 05-05), and medicinal herbs (interview participants 12-12; 17-17); surplus grain, wool, and in the past, salt (Bauer, 2004; Goldstein, 1975).

In the past, trade with Tibet was extremely important to Humlis, but since the invasion of Tibet by the Chinese in 1959, trade across the border to the north has become increasingly difficult and un-profitable due to heavy monitoring and regulation from the Chinese authorities. These factors, in addition to an increase in the demand for industrially produced goods and modern commodities in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, have seriously limited trade between this region and Humla (Goldstein, 1975; Roy et al, 2009).

Of the 15 interviews used in this analysis, 14 of the participants reported their livelihood in Humla was farming, 4 said they also did trade, 1 said his family were porters, 1 said they did road work, and 1 said they did work for cash wages. One participant’s experience illustrates how her livelihood was fairly certain in Humla. When asked what was good about Humla, she said, “…fresh environment, and she knows what to do there (Humla) - farming” (survey participant 26).

The livelihoods of Humlis in Kathmandu are quite different than they were in Humla. As one participant put it, livelihood in Kathmandu is “unpredictable” (survey participant 30). Of the 15 interviews conducted for this study, none of the participants reported farming as their source of livelihood, 6 reported they are unemployed and have no income, 4 reported their income comes from Humla, 2 reported they are housewives, 1 said his family does trade, 1 said he works for NGOs, 1 said she does crafts, 1 said she sews, and 1 said he is a teacher in a monastery.

From these reports it is clear that the livelihoods of Humlis in Kathmandu have changed dramatically since leaving Humla. This degree of social change and the associated psychosocial
stress can have a significant impact on the well-being of individuals were discussed in greater detail in the literature review.

As one participant explains, he experiences the impact of the change as increased anxiety and depression: “…but he has worried, like now how to go (on) with their life- totally, both of them are jobless, and there is not any source of income right now, so these (things) make him very anxiety and depressed” (interview participant 21-24).

**Distribution of Resources**

According to Bauer, and his study based in Dolpo, a contiguous district to Humla (2004:1), agropastoralism is a system of “diverse livelihood strategies for marginal environments…a complex system of resource exploitation supported by reciprocal economic and social relationships…” (2004: 41-42). Crop and livestock production are an intricate system. Since resources and water are so scarce and the weather and environment are so unforgiving, a close-knit community and cooperation are required to survive. For example, as one participant in this study relates, distribution has different spiritual aspects: “They distribute for two reasons: one reason is to do a help for the people who are very (in) need of it. And another reason is like they have a concept like, if we distribute (in) this life, that we will get this return or the food (back) in the next life” (Interview participant 14-14).

These systems of distribution are very different than what exists now among the Humlis living in Kathmandu. I did observed some distribution activities such as when I was at the home of one participant and observed as a local student group of Humli teenagers came to the door and asked for donations for a sick child in the hospital. But the study participants in Kathmandu did not
report the same degree of sophistication in their resource distribution system, as they recalled from their lives in Humla.

In fact, as one participant reports, he feels the loss of this community distribution system at a personal level: “...there is no good community (here) as he had in Humla, so also, here (there are) lots of strangers, so he can’t distribute. To whom he has to feed?” (Interview participant 14-14). This is a good example of psychosocial stress which I will discuss in greater detail in the literature review section. This man is experiencing personal distress because his sense of identity within the community has changed significantly with the loss of his capacity to distribute resources as he did in Humla. This is a major change in lifestyle from Humla to Kathmandu.

Diet

How Diet has Changed from Humla to Kathmandu

The following description of common foods consumed by Humlis both in Humla and in Kathmandu, come from the interviews and surveys conducted for this study. Not every reported food item was listed, if it was not common. Some comparisons will be made between the prevalence of these foods in each place. Those foods with stars are reported to be consumed uniquely either in Humla or in Kathmandu.

In Humla, the most common foods reported were *locally grown grains (koru, tzidzi, morshi), and a staple called (barley)*tsampa, which is a kind of raw dough made from a mixture of locally produced barley flour and Tibetan butter and salt tea (reported 8 times). Other common foods were *buckwheat pancakes, *roti or ‘flat bread’, rice, potatoes, green vegetable, radish, califlower, pumpkin, *corn, *beans, occasional fresh meat which comes from the ‘accidental’ death of *yak (usually just once a year during the winter festival; see interviews 09-09; 12-2; 11-11), *beef, goat, buffalo, *dried meat,*chura or ‘cheese curd’, milk, thukpa or ‘Tibetan-style soup’ (as medicine and for regular consumption), and *chang or ‘locally-made beer’. Additionally, Humlis report eating foods foraged from their natural environment, even in winter if the
snow wasn’t too deep (interview participant 12-12)- such as vegetables,*mushrooms,*walnuts,*herbs,*chives,*peaches, apples, and *apricots, the pits of which they also use to make cooking oil.

In Kathmandu, the most common foods eaten by Humlis according to their reports are: *rice,*dal bhat (‘rice with lentil porridge’, reported 8 times in Kathmandu and 0 times in Humla), which is the most common Nepali staple food and may have replaced *tsampa or ‘barley flour and butter tea’ as the number one daily staple for Humlis in the city (as *tsampa consumption was reported only once in Kathmandu, but was reported 8 times in Humla), *ting-mo and *mo-mo or ‘dumplings’), *chow mien,*bread,*thukpa or ‘Tibetan soup’ (same number of reports as in Humla), *meat (buffalo replaced yak in every case), *chicken,*pork,*pumpkin (half as many reports), *green vegetable,*banana, and apple.

From these lists of common foods consumed in Humla and in Kathmandu, it is clear that there are significant changes in Humli’s diets since moving to the city. The most significant changes are the lack of locally grown grains consumed in Kathmandu, differences in the types of meats and fruits consumed, and the lack of foraged foods in Kathmandu. According to one participant, she has seen only one kind of grain in the city that is grown locally in Humla (koru), but that “in Humla it is tastier” than in Kathmandu (interview participant 12-12).

Changes in Diet Other than Types of Foods

Other changes between diet in Humla and Kathmandu, which were reported by Humlis, include the difference in availability of foods. Most vegetables are seasonal in Humla, but many are available all year in Kathmandu (interview participants 21-24; 11-11). Also, there are more varieties of foods available in Kathmandu, including more commercially produced foods (interview participants 21-24; 20-20).

Another change is that food costs more in Kathmandu. For example, one kilogram of rice in Kathmandu costs about 30 rupees, but in Humla it may cost 200 rupees (interview participant 17-17).
There is a perceived difference in the quality of food from Humla versus food from Kathmandu, reported by many of the participants in this study. For example, one man explained that, “The food over there (Humla) is more energetic. More strong. More protein. And as he said before, the comparison between water and milk (water in Humla has more strength than milk in Kathmandu), and maybe, he said like (the) difference may be due to the high altitude. Yeah. And over there (in Humla) most (of) the people are very healthy” (interview participant 21-24). Some participants said food was “tastier” or “healthier” in Humla (interview participants 04-04; 21-24; 20-20). One man reported that even though food in Kathmandu is more readily available and there is more variety of foods in the city, he preferred the food in Humla because it is “really strong. If he eats tsampa or ‘barley flour and butter tea’, he doesn’t feel hungry. It’s a long-lasting one. Here, even (when) he eats rice and dahl (or ‘bean porridge’), within a very short period, he again feels hungry” (interview participant 21-24).

Many participants in this study preferred the food in Humla to what they eat in Kathmandu. For example, one woman said: “And about her diet, she’s having rice and some atta or ‘potato’ or veg (green vegetable) (that) she gets over here (in Kathmandu), whether she likes it or not. And she wants to have food like (in) Humla, actually” (interview participant 02-02).

These changes in diet from Humla to Kathmandu, show how much change Humlis’ lifestyles have undergone since moving to the city; however, one similarity found between diets in Humla and Kathmandu, is that there exists a scarcity of food in both places. For example, when one participant reported that she was “happier in Humla” (interview participant 05-05) and was asked why, she explained, “It’s because of the (clean) environment and because though the food is limited (in Humla), food and water are free. There’s no expensive rent and other worries about money. She has problems raising her children because of food shortages (in Kathmandu), and also she can’t start a business because they have no start-up capital.”

Though food scarcity exists in both places, there is also a difference between food scarcity in Humla and Kathmandu. In Humla, as some participants explained, when there is a food shortage, they just borrow
from someone else in the community (interview participant 21-24). When asked if he recalled whether or not there was usually enough food in Humla, one participant responded: “As far as he’s concerned, he didn’t remember anything (like) that they felt a shortage of food, and even (when) they don’t have (enough food) they just borrow from a neighbor. They didn’t have any problem until now” (interview participants 14-14). There were no reports of this borrowing option in Kathmandu. In fact, as one participant reported, he had no one to turn to in times of scarcity. He has to do everything himself in Kathmandu (interview participant 13-13). So, there seems to be a change in the community’s capacity to support one another in times of food scarcity.

**Daily Routine**

**Changes in Daily Routine between Humla and Kathmandu**

Another major change in lifestyle, undergone by Humlis when they move to Kathmandu, is in their daily routines. In Humla, work begins very early in the day and ends very late at night— that is, if you are female. As Tillett observed, “The disparity of tasks (in Humla) is reflected in the daily burden of women” (2008:36). Most males, particularly boys and married men who were interviewed for this study reported that in Humla, they had a lot of leisure time; for example, one young man, when asked what his daily schedule was like in Humla, replied, “No time schedule. (He) Talks to his parents and friends most of the day” (interview participant 13-13; 16-16). This is in stark contrast to reports from women who often said they had no free time at all in Humla. One participant recalled that,

“In Humla most of the work she has to do manually, because there is no animation (mechanization). For example, if they have to produce oil, they have to do everything by hand. It’s very hard. And also when they, what do you call, to turn grain into powder- they mostly do (that) in evening. They have to take a sack of grain and babies and other children and there’s no electricity. She has to burn wood- there’s a special kind of wood they use for light and then sometimes she gets sleepy. Whole night she have to spend this (way), and when she returns home, she don’t have time to take rest, she have to do fieldwork and other things” (interview participant 02-02).
It was common for women who were interviewed for this study, to express the uneven work load between men and women in Humla. According to one participant, she worked from dawn until after dark cooking, cleaning, caring for children, feeding and milking livestock, and working in the fields. She had, “no free time. She says she has to this all by herself. No male will contribute” (09-09; 11-11).

As another woman remembered, “Her work start(ed) at nearly five in the morning and first work she had to do was collecting cow dung for fertilizer, and then without breakfast she has to do this. And then at nearly ten o’clock and she had a breakfast and then again she has to do the fieldwork. And then one of her family would come for tiffin (lunch) from her. And then, yeah, she has to do (fieldwork) until evening” (interview participant 11-11).

As was stated above, daily routine in Kathmandu is much different than it was in Humla. There were many reports of joblessness and inactivity due to lack of gainful skills in the city. As one participant said when asked to explain the difference in daily routine between Humla and Kathmandu, “Lots of difference. Here she is totally free. Though she want to go (to work), there is no job. And she can’t afford (due to) lack of energy. And here she only look(s) after her children...for free time pass she used to go for kora (circumambulate the stupa for religious practice)” (interview participant 02-02).

Another participant described in detail a totally full day of work in Humla, and finished by saying she had “no free time” there. Then she described her daily routine in Kathmandu: “She’s a housewife. That’s it. Cooking here. Cleaning” (interview participant 09-09). She went on to talk about how she had more free time in Kathmandu than Humla, and that she would like to work but that, “Here she cannot work because of unskill.” This feeling of wanting to work, but having few opportunities to do so, was echoed by another participant: “Here she has more free time. No work over here. Um, but money problem over here” (interview participant 10-10).
This inactivity may be related to negative health effects. For example, one participant believes his chronic back pain is a result of lack of exercise. In Humla he did not experience the pain, which he thinks is related to the consistent physical activity required by the lifestyle in Humla (survey 30).

As was mentioned earlier, the situation for males and females is quite different in Kathmandu than it was in Humla. One young man, who was a college student in city, spoke about how because he has no other family members in Kathmandu, he has to do everything himself and is very busy and discouraged: “Life is complex. He has to do everything himself. His diet is up to him. He does all his own cooking, cleaning. It is difficult and individual.” He went on to say, “It’s like, he has to manage everything by himself here (in Kathmandu), so he’s doing his level best and he’s doing according to his ability. And on the way he’s facing, still facing some kind of trouble. Yeah, it’s not possible for him to manage everything by himself” (interview participant 13-13).

Several people interviewed said that in Humla expectations for cleanliness were different, and that in Kathmandu they had to learn to abide by a whole new set of standards for cleanliness in their appearance and in house-keeping. As one woman put it when she was asked what differences she noticed between life in Humla and life in the city, “In Kathmandu it is cleaner. Not the environment. (Now) she knows how to clean, managing, and also here there is a proper house, right- here she can wear a clean dress. In Humla, though you wear a clean dress in the morning, in the evening it’s totally dirty <laugh>. It’s like in Humla there’s clean water, clean environment, clean air” (interview participant 11-11).

Religion

Changes in Religious Practice between Humla and Kathmandu

The ratio of Buddhist to Hindu religious practitioners is about the same in both Humla and Kathmandu. In Kathmandu about 15 percent of the population is Buddhist and about 80 percent of the population is Hindu. The remaining 5 percent practice other traditions. In Humla about 18 percent are Buddhist and 81 percent are Hindu, although in some villages the population is totally Buddhist or totally
Hindu, or mixed. Many of the participants in this study are from villages that are totally Buddhist. The change is significant of moving from a Buddhist village to the city of Kathmandu which is overwhelmingly Hindu.

The religious practices themselves are much different in Kathmandu than they were in Humla, even though the lineage of Tibetan Buddhism that is practiced by Humlis in Kathmandu remains the same in name (Nyingma) as it was in Humla. For example, some of the participants in this study described elaborate community-wide, bi-annual ceremonies that took days to complete in Humla. As one woman remembers,

“Twice in a year they have to gather- it’s alternative on the roof of the homes (the location alternates) - if this year, all (would) gather on my roof. Next time it’s (another’s) turn, and they have to stay there three days, and one day they have to do a fast and one day they are not allowed to talk, and to eat. If accidentally they talk they have to do prostrations, one-hundred times. It’s like a punishment. And (the) next two days they have to do prostrations and mantra (recite prayers). She heard that, at that time (when she was in Humla) it was not very compulsory. But in the beginning she heard like, from every (household) there should be one participant. It was compulsory (then)”
(interview participant 09-09).

In Humla, religious ceremonies or pujas were held for members of the community who were ill, or a spiritual teacher (Rinpoche) or monk would prepare some kind of medicine, usually in the form of soup, to cure the ill person. As one man recalls, “It’s like there (in Humla) it is very rare to get a medicine. And for patients they do like- they give a soup of holy things like in Kailash (a sacred mountain in Tibet), there is a sea just near that one (mountain), and they bring fish of that sea, and they just boil and make it into soup and give it (to the patient). And also, they bring some herbs from that Kailash, and also they drink it. For headache and for jaundice there is one tree, like bushes which grow a white flower. They just boil the flower and drink”
(interview participant 21-24).
Several participants stated that soup with spiritual aspects was given to ill people in Humla. One woman explained how spiritual elements were often present in medicinal foods; for example, when asked how she treated her headaches in Humla, she responded, “Religious practice. It’s like some form of practice. In one dish they put everything they have, like food, tea, whatever. And then they also add ash and then sand and then they throw away. Then they, before they throw it away they take it round on the patient’s (head). And they say some mantra, different mantra(s) and throw it” (interview participant 09-09). Another woman explained that for her fever she would, “sleep and take holy water...Also there are some things that are holy, and we put this into water and drink it” (interview participant 10-10). When one woman was asked what she would do if she did not feel well in Humla she replied, “Religious practice, eat soup, get medicine from a Rinpoche or monk. She feels this is a good system- the best system. When she was physically sick, visit a doctor. When it’s a spiritual problem, get help from a Rinpoche” (interview participant 05-05).

In addition to long, seasonal ceremonies and spiritual medicines for the sick, elderly Humlis and some young ones would make their way into the mountains in the winter- when life wasn’t as busy as in the summer- to do monastic retreats, often staying for months while they did their spiritual practices (interview participant 05-05).

In contrast to Humla, religious practice for Humlis in Kathmandu almost always includes doing kora which means circumambulating (or walking in a circle) around the Great Stupa in the heart of Kathmandu. Religious devotees also light butter lamps, do prostrations, and recite mantras (prayers), according to most participants in this study. Humlis also occasionally do pujas (ceremonies) in their homes or in one of the many monasteries in the city but there are factors that limit this kind of practice. As one participant explained, “…without money, no one can do anything (in Kathmandu) including religious practice” (survey participant 24). Another participant said, “Money is an obstacle to religious practice in Kathmandu- time is also an obstacle to religious practice” (survey participant 30). These are significant changes in religious practice from Humla to Kathmandu.
Household Structure

How Households have Changed from Humla to Kathmandu

According to the interviews conducted for this study, household size decreased by half or more in nearly every case, when families moved from Humla to Kathmandu. This is a major change in household structure. One participant explained that in his village (Kermi) his household had seventeen family members. In Kathmandu, the same man lives only with his wife and three children, for a total of five family members in his household. Another participant, a young man who came to Kathmandu to escape Maoist pressure and to get a secondary education, explained how isolated and overwhelmed he feels in the city because none of his family lives with him. They are still in Humla. His household size went from four to one when he moved to the city (interview participant 13-13).

What is apparent from his analysis is that Humlis’ household size in Kathmandu may be so much smaller than in Humla, because it is not an economic necessity to have such a large, extended family- nor may it be possible to have so many in one household due to structural limitations in the city. This degree of change in the size and structure of households from Humla to Kathmandu is significant, and is one part of the greater overall change in the lifestyle of Humlis who are now living in the city (Cohen and Deng, 1998a:25).

Language

Changes in Language between Humla and Kathmandu

Of the participants interviewed for this study, 100 percent said they spoke their local dialect of Humli Tibetan in Humla. 27 percent reported that they also spoke some Nepali in Humla. In Kathmandu, all of the Humlis interviewed reported speaking Humli Tibetan among their community members and 93 percent said they also spoke some Nepali in the city. 50 percent said they also spoke some Lhasa Tibetan
(the common language among Tibetans from the region of the former capitol city of Lhasa) and 27 percent said they spoke some English in Kathmandu.

Despite the fact that nearly all Humlis who live in Kathmandu speak some Nepali, there were many reports from participants in this study of difficulties associated with language in their daily lives. For example, when asked whether she felt she could live as a Tibetan in the city one respondent replied, "Language problem. Um, basic communication problem. And there are lots more problem. I don’t know which problem <laugh>" (interview participant10-10; 09-09).

One young man said that he felt his lifestyle was very different than it had been in Humla. When asked what language he speaks the most in the city, he replied Nepali. When asked whether he spoke Humli Tibetan regularly, he replied, “Almost I (did) forget my Tibetan language; also it’s very difficult to speak and to write also in Tibetan language, as it is in English. It’s very easy and comfortable in Nepali language.” When asked whether he feels he could go one day just speaking Humli Tibetan in Kathmandu he answered, “It’s possible, but little bit difficult for him to manage” (interview participant 13-13). This example illustrates how much language use has changed for Humlis who now live in Kathmandu. The same participant went on to describe what he sees as the major changes he has undergone since moving from Humla to Kathmandu:

“I have to say; in Humla life is very simple. But in Kathmandu, (it) is very complex. Yeah...when I came here I got a chance to know about the world, in Kathmandu and the city, like organizations, and the mobility of the peoples. But when I was in Humla, I didn’t have any idea about that...In Humla there is no(t) any kind of stress, right. Because we don’t know about the real world. Because there the Humli people think that their life is only within the society. They don’t know about the world in the age of information. They don’t have any idea. They don’t have a television. They don’t have a newspaper- that’s why they don’t know about the city, and like all these organization. They are happy with farming. They’re happy with what they have available. They are happy... Yeah. But when in Kathmandu, we know about, we read in newspaper and the magazines, we see the
television, all kinds of out in the world, right, and then the class differentiations—some people are very, very rich and some people are very poor. And this division is at—it’s like discrimination. It’s like due to discrimination between rich and poor or between the caste system. When any Humli people come here, there is a difference...He say(s) like in Humla, the society is very small and there is no media that they can know about the outer world. So, they don’t have any idea about the outside of the world, so they are really more satisfied (with) what they have. Within our society they feel much happier and when he moved over here, then he knew the outside of the world—everything—and he have to not only (deal with) the caste discrimination, but also he has to <inaudible> and compete with other people also and that is very difficult, not only to manage but also to compete. And also they know lots of information about the world and when you know more, then you get more stress. That’s why” (interview participant 13-13).

Finally, when asked whether he feels he can live as a Tibetan in Kathmandu he said, “Yeah, it’s not that much easy to stay as a Tibetan because he has to change according to (the) time—like he’s doing college, right? He has to mange—how to say—arrange, according to his friends. Yeah, they are Nepali. He has to change, but, also (his) act and dressing has to change. But, innerly, right? He’s feeling is like (a) Tibetan” (interview participant 13-13).

The purpose of including this participant’s responses within this section of the paper is to show how much change has occurred for Humlis who have been displaced from their mountainous and rural homeland, down into the city. The changes he talked about are profound. They are affecting him personally and at a deep level. This same participant explained earlier in his interview, how he perceives the changes in lifestyle he has undergone since moving to the city, to be the cause of his migraine headaches. He thinks the business and noise of the city, in combination with the stress of isolation and being unable to meet all of his own needs and succeed in college, are having a negative impact on his health. It is also observable from his interview responses that he is not getting enough nutrients from his diet of primarily rice and dhal and occasional meat and vegetables. His imbalanced diet is due to lack of money to buy nutritious food. All of
these factors may be increasing his risk of negative health outcomes; that is, physical, psychosocial, and structural stressors are having a negative impact on his well-being.

Three sources of stress in the environment of displaced Humlis, besides lifestyle change, include: physical or behavioral stressors; structural stressors; and psychosocial stressors. In the following section, I will discuss all three types of stressors and give examples of each from the participants’ interviews.

Types of Stressors: Physical or Behavioral, Structural, and Psychosocial

Physical or Behavioral Stressors

The first type of stressors identified in the interviews includes physical and behavioral stressors. These are sources of stress which come from the physical surroundings of Humlis in Kathmandu, and which affect Humlis in a direct, biophysical way. Behavioral stressors include changes in routine or behavior of Humli participants as a result of displacement, which also have direct biophysical consequences.

In the interviews, Humlis reported physical stressors in their environment (of Kathmandu) such as pollution or contaminants in the air, water, and land; the noise and chaos of the city; and adapting to the different weather. The behavioral stressors reported include changes in diet, differences in alcohol consumption (a positive change in Kathmandu according to participant 11-11), and a differences in the level of physical activity or exercise since moving to Kathmandu.

The following is one example of physical stressors in the environment. When asked what was good about living in Humla, one participant replied that (in contrast to Kathmandu) in Humla there is, “Pure water. Clean water. Clean area. Clean air. She (was) healthier- more healthy there (in Humla). (Because of) Clean area. She feels healthier physically (there), mentally also. Because of her children, for their education, she has to stay here (in Kathmandu)” (interview participant 02-02).
One man said in response to a survey question which asked how much pain interferes with his normal work, “Sometimes he has back problems. (He does) stretching to help it (and) it goes away usually, then returns. (He believes) the cause is not much physical exercise. (He rides a) motorbike in Kathmandu. In Humla (he got) more exercise, and there was no (back pain) problem” (Survey participant 30). This same participant went on to describe how his health was definitely better in Humla, because of the clean air and clean water, and because the food is organic and fresh, and the work is physical.”

According to another young man, a student in college in Kathmandu, when asked if he had any health problems in the city, he responded, “Yeah, I (just) got one problem. I got migraine headache(s). Last six- five, six years- (they began) when I came here. Like because of the pollution, and crowded, unmanaged in the city. (I have) lots of problems” (interview participant 13-13).

Another participant relayed how his health is different in Kathmandu than it was in Humla: “(He was) healthier in Humla (because of) clean environment. (Here there is) pollution and also crowded. Water problem over here” (participant 17-17). He believes the pollution and contaminated water are causing his gastrointestinal issues since moving to Kathmandu.

The effects of physical stressors may include social impacts as one participant explains, “In Humla- maybe because of her age- she was young then and could do lots of work. And she felt healthy and she could sing and dance, but now she can’t do all of the things, maybe because of her age, now she can’t. (It is) getting worse and worse about her (health). One reason she gave is maybe because of the water” (interview participant 02-02).

**Structural stressors**

Structural stressors are sources of stress which prevent Humlis from meeting their basic needs. These kinds of stressors identified in the interviews fell into two main categories: lack of financial resources, and lack of educational resources. Stressors which had to do with lack of financial resources include lack of
adequate housing and/or overcrowding in homes; food insecurity or lack of nutritious food; lack of access to medical services (interview participant 06-06); and inability to observe religious practices.

As an example of how the structural stressor of lack of money can be an obstacle to other needed resources, one participant responded when asked what made a good life, “According to him, the ‘good life’ is enough to eat. Yeah. Food stuff. And then he said, like money is very important because without money no one can do anything, and also if one has enough money, he can do a religious practice, and then also he said, like when someone has all these things then also one should have a very good relation with their community and relatives” (interview participant 21-24). This same participant went on to describe how when he first arrived in Kathmandu, his focus was on all the choices and options available to him; how there were so many more choices of food available, for instance. And now that he is unemployed, his primary concern is just getting enough to eat to survive: “He used to be concerned with all that’s available in Kathmandu, when he was young. Now he just thinks about getting balanced food. That’s all.”

Stressors which have to do with lack of educational resources include lack of job and/or skills training, language skills (i.e.-Nepali, English, Lhasa Tibetan), navigation skills, and calculation skills. Other structural stressors were lack of housing and resources for the elderly, and difficulty of access to government assistance. One participant in this study also highlighted the need for strong leadership within the community (survey participant 30).

One participant, when asked how well she has adapted to the city, explained that due to ignorance of the layout of the city, she has fear that she will be lost when doing errands: “She has adapted quite well, but still she’s having problems, like calculation problem still, and also while traveling in a new place, like visiting (at the) hospital or something like that, she gets very, she gets worried if the taxi driver will drop her off at the same place or not” (interview participant 12-12).

Another woman similarly feels she has difficulty accomplishing daily chores due to educational structural stressors, “Even (if) she wants to go to do her shopping in the downtown or something, she can’t
go because she doesn’t know the place and also she doesn’t know the calculation. And that’s why (she still faces problems adapting)” (interview participant 10-10). This woman is facing problems due to her lack of knowledge about the layout of the city and lack of basic math skills.

One participant, when asked if she has changed since moving to Kathmandu, said that language problems limit her ability to shop for food and other necessities, “(She has not changed), maybe because of illiteracy. Even (if) she wants to buy things, she doesn’t know the right name of that things and it was the same in the beginning, and also right now” (interview participant 06-06).

Another participant explained how he has access to housing for the elderly because he is originally from Tibet, but that his wife cannot live there with him because she was born in Humla, and so she is not technically Tibetan, though she is ethnically Tibetan: “He’s allowed to go there because he’s Tibetan, he has all the documents, but then his wife is not allowed. You know, that’s the problem for him” (participant interview 21-24). Another elderly Humli who participated in this study expressed her worry because she would not receive any government help as she grew older,

“She said like she would really appreciate if there is any help for old man or woman for doing religious things (in exchange for religious practice on their behalf). (In Kathmandu) there is lots of old age home, right? But in Tibetan/Humli community they don’t have, and they would really appreciate if they have such community. There are lots of old men and women that are very single and (have) no support from children- they are not looking (out) for them...She has seen many people facing (the) same problem, like her- no support from their children and they are very single and so she would really appreciate, she would be very happy to have such (a) thing” (interview participant 06-06).

One woman explained how the educational structural stressor of lack of language proficiency, limit her access to necessities, “Always (she spends time in her community). Because of language problems she can’t deal with other people. She has to stay within our community” (interview participant 06-06). This
participant went on to describe other structural limitations in her life. When asked how well she feels she has adapted to life in Kathmandu, she responded, “She has problem(s). Like language problem is one, and then even (if) she wants to travel, she don’t know how to speak and how to calculate. That’s a problem. And when she get(s) sick and also she can’t afford medicine.”

Another woman had a similar educational structural stressor which limited her access to her needs: “In Humla she can work and she can work herself in the field, and how to say, that can be enough for the family. Here there is no such opportunity. Here she cannot work because of unskill” (interview participant 09-09).

**Psychosocial stressors**

Psychosocial stress results from social interactions that threaten the self-esteem, self-efficacy, status, role, identity, or inhibit individuals from living culturally congruent lifestyles, that is, lifestyles that are in accordance with the shared values of their society or community (Bhugra, 2005). Psychosocial stressors which were identified in the interviews include lack of livelihood or ability to gain employment; unpredictable income; caste discrimination; lack of knowledge about the new/modern environment; lack of leadership in the community; increased desire for things in the new environment that there is minimal access to; inability to communicate with members of the larger society because of language inefficiency or differences in communication styles; inability to ‘fit in’; isolation; worry about children’s future in terms of health, education, opportunities; and inability to compete successfully in the society.

For example, one woman explained in her survey that “She has (an) emotional problem due to her children. Some of them are in Humla, and some of them are going outside (of Nepal), and she gets worried about them. What will happen to them?” (survey participant 21).

Another woman reported significant psychological impacts due to psychosocial stress: “Sometimes she has dizziness due to high blood pressure. She worries about her husband (who passed away) and son.
(She has) worry due to expensive life (in Kathmandu). Her emotional problems (are that) she has no concentration and has trouble sleeping and nightmares. Sometimes she doesn’t know if it is day or night. She has a lost sense of time and a lot of sadness” (survey participant 06). This participant went on to describe how she copes with her stress and episodes of anxiety, “Her heart beats fast and her mind is very distracted. She tries to sleep to calm herself. She uses compassion (Buddhist ideal) to help her feel less worried. She thinks of how even business men have problems (and that reduces her anxiety). It helps her emotional problem(s) when she visits with the community” (survey participant 06).

One young man, who was quoted earlier describing his how he attributed his back pain to lack of exercise, described in his survey (question 9b) how his chronic back pain limits his activities. He manages the pain by doing stretches but it returns after a short time. He said that in Kathmandu he rides a motorbike so gets less exercise than he did in Humla where his lifestyle was much more physically active. He said he never had back pain until he moved to Kathmandu (survey participant 30). According to stress theory, the back pain may also be related to psychosocial stress that this participant is experiencing in other areas of his life.

As an example of the kinds of role changes that can be experienced by migrants or IDPs, one participant in this study explains how he has had to change to fit in as a college student in the city, “It’s like, it’s a bit hard for him to adjust. He gives (an) example of like even in Humla, no one bother(s) what your dress is, whether it is clean or dirty, it doesn’t matter. But here he has to wear, dress according to the place he’s going to visit. Like in better place, he has to dress better, (or) else the people will look, (or) something negative. So this is the main reason (he can’t live as a Tibetan in Kathmandu)” (interview participant 17-17).

The following passage is an example of a psychosocial stressor from a participant's interview. When asked what were the major differences between Humla and Kathmandu, he replied, “It’s like, in Humla, everyone living in this society is a Buddhist, there is not any inter-caste; so here (in Kathmandu) Buddhism is
(a) very little amount (of the population). Most of them are totally Hindu. So (culturally) he found many differences” (interview participant 17-17).

The next two quotes from interview participants illustrate how psychosocial stress can affect individuals. One woman describes how different people act in Humla versus Kathmandu: “(People are) happier in Humla. And it seems like happier there, but she doesn’t know the fix. It’s like Humlis who are staying there (in Humla), physically they look happier. Whenever she has a chance to talk with them, they used to laugh a lot and talk very feely. And here when she has to talk with her friends they have complaints like “prices rising” and always (they have) budget problems” (interview participant 12-12).

One woman, when asked why she felt ‘much happier in Humla’, responded that, “It’s because of the (clean) environment and because though the food is limited, food and water are free. There’s no expensive rent and other worries about money. She has problems here raising her children because of food shortages, and also she can’t start a business because they have no start-up capital” (interview participant 05-05).

Humlis also experience caste discrimination in Kathmandu. This can be a source of psychosocial stress. As one participant in this study replied when I asked if he felt he could live as a Tibetan in Kathmandu, “No. He can’t. Like, in the beginning he can. But now, he has a problem. Like, Hindu- some of the Hindus, they just make him crazy. Yeah. Because they’re all around, and some, I don’t know what happened to them, but he said some of them just fight with him, like a “Tibetan”. (There is) lots of discrimination by Nepalis to Humlis. (Humlis are) “untouchables”- even if their shadow touches them on the trail (Hindus get angry). Thamang (are) similar to Humlis but they do crazy things to him sometimes” (interview participant 21-24).

When psychosocial stress is persistent, it can threaten the self-concept of the individual undergoing the stress. This diminishment of the self-concept can have a negative effect on that person’s appraisal of stressors in their environment, and ultimately, this may negatively influence the psychological and physical well-being of the individual.
As one participant in this study explains, when asked to elaborate on whether it is good to have knowledge of the modern world, “It’s like there is both disadvantage and advantage and posted point is, like when you get more information, you get more envious, and it is good when, the information is good when you have a source to compete with that information. And when the, uh, level is over, then you can’t afford the information, and you can’t compete with that, and that will bring us stress” (interview participant 13-13).

Another participant states that because of the strength of his community in Humla, he feels more at peace there,

“It’s like, mentally he’s healthier over there (in Humla). (There) they don’t have expenses like over here (in Kathmandu). And he said in Kathmandu it's very easy to get many things like hospital (care) and transportation- but he prefers to stay over there (in Humla) because of his own society and the relatives over there. Like, since he’s mentally healthier over there and he feels like, physically that helps him to recover his – how to say - that mental peace, that helps him to be healthier. Physically healthier” (interview participant 20-20).

This quote implies that the participant feels less at peace in Kathmandu because of the lack of community support, and due to the psychosocial stress of living in a different social environment than what he was accustomed to in Humla.

**Reported Illnesses Related to Stress**

The sources of stress, or stressors, discussed above can lead to certain chronic, non-infectious illnesses that have been associated with stress, if the stress is not mitigated by resistance resources. Some of these illnesses, which were also mentioned in the literature review, are depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, high blood pressure, hypertension, cardiovascular and coronary disease, obesity and diabetes, gastrointestinal disorders, stomach

The illnesses which participants reported having in Kathmandu are: depression; anxiety; kidney problems; body pains; cough; migraines and headaches; gastrointestinal disorders; ulcers; issues relating to menstruation and ‘womb’ (interview participant 06-06); respiratory issues; fever; common cold; and ear problems.

Of these illnesses reported by participants in Kathmandu, those that are stress-related include: depression; anxiety; gastrointestinal disorders; ulcers; migraine headaches; amenorrhea and menstrual issues; unexplained body aches and headache; and insomnia.

For example, one woman who reported debilitating fever and headaches said “She felt healthier in Humla. She thinks it’s because she didn’t have to think about anything in Humla, (there was) too much to do. (It is) confusing for her why (she is) more ill in Kathmandu” (survey participant 12).

One young man, a student at a college in Kathmandu, explained how he had developed migraine headaches since moving to Kathmandu. He stated that the cause of his migraines is that “the city is noisy and stressful” (interview participant 13-13). The same participant described how he feels isolated and worried in the city because he lives alone and has to do everything himself. His family still lives in Humla.

Another man says that his health problems also began when he moved to Kathmandu. He has been diagnosed with stomach ulcers (survey participant 29). One young woman said that her health was better in Humla. She said this is “maybe because of the water problem, and lack of balanced diet” (interview participant 09-09). She also reported having low energy and poor appetite which are indicators of depression.

As another woman explains, better health in Humla is related to peace of mind: “In Humla, though they have lots of hard work, they have peace of mind. They have peace and emotionally they are healthy.
And they have more healthy food over there. She feels more healthy. And here, though there is delicious food, she doesn’t feel like it’s healthy food” (interview participant 02-02). The same participant responded in her survey that, “While she was in Humla, she could do (a lot) of things- hard work- because she was healthier and there was (a) job. But here there’s no job and she’s also very unhealthy. She looks after her children only” (survey participant 02-02). These responses indicate that the psychosocial stress of her role change in Kathmandu and low self-efficacy due to her inability to find work, have had an impact on her mental and perhaps biophysical health.

**Depression Indicators**

Dressler has found, in his study linking psychosocial stress with negative health outcomes, that psychosocial stress negatively affects well-being in the form of gastric ulcers, high blood pressure, and depression (Dressler, 1991:1). As he states, “For all groups it is primarily the conflict over establishing valid social and personal identities that leads to depression” (1991:4).

Another researcher who focuses on the relationship between stress and negative health outcomes is Leonard Pearlin. In his estimation, one of the problems that need to be addressed in biocultural research is in establishing which illnesses are consistently associated with stress and how that association operates within the human body/mind. As Pearlin et al state, “…in large measure the confusion surrounding the concept (of stress) results from disagreements about which of its many outcomes can be regarded as the “real” manifestations of stress” (Pearlin, et al, 1981:341-342). According to this research team, depression is a symptom or indicator of stress that has been consistently established.

The problem raised by Pearlin et al, then raises another question: If depression is an indicator of stress, what then, are the indicators of depression? Pearlin et al list several indicators of depression in his 1981 study titled simply “the Stress Process”. These depression indicators are: feeling bored or lack of interest or enthusiasm, poor appetite, feeling lonely, having trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep, crying
easily of feeling like crying, feeling downhearted or blue, feeling low in energy or slowed down, and feeling hopeless about the future.

The Mayo Clinic lists additional depression (major depressive disorder) symptoms such as: angry outbursts, feelings of worthlessness, unexplained physical problems such as back pain or headaches, anxiety and excessive worry, and feelings of sadness or unhappiness (1998-2014: diseases and conditions).

Five of the indicators of depression listed by Pearlin et al, and the Mayo Clinic were also reported by participants in this study during surveys and interviews. These five indicators of depression were: difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, lack of energy, feeling downhearted or depressed, feeling hopeless about the future, and lack of enthusiasm. Two participants spoke of their inability to sleep. Three talked about their lack of enthusiasm for normal activities. One third of the survey responses indicated that participants ‘had a lot of energy none of the time (survey question 12b). As was discussed earlier, the responses to survey question 12c ‘how often do you feel downhearted or depressed’ indicated strong risk of depression. 80 percent of all respondents felt downhearted or depressed at least ‘some’ of the time. And there were many reports of anxiety and worry throughout the interviews. The following quotes are from participants who reported feelings or experiences which are indicators of depression.

One man was intensely worried about how he would survive in the city since losing his job as a cook in a monastery. He and his wife are elderly and have no steady source of income. When asked whether his health limits his daily activities (Survey question 9a) he said, “Yes. All of the time. His knee and teeth have pain all the time. Unemployment makes him worry because in Kathmandu he needs money always.” In response to survey question 10a, he replied that emotional problems cause him to ‘accomplish less, most’ of the time: “When doing anything, he is worried about money” (participant 21-24).
Another young man reported in his interview that, “He has insomnia due to anxiety. (When he has) emotional problems he stops everything. He doesn’t do the things like work, and he prefers to stay alone. When he’s having this (emotional) problem, he prefers to stop everything. He doesn’t do anything and wants to take a rest, take a nap and after refreshing, the sleep or rest helps” (survey participant 22). This participant’s reports of insomnia, lack of interest or ability to carry out normal activities, his lack of energy, and his tendency to isolate socially are all indicators of depression.

**Resistance Resources**

The third category of outcomes from the participant interviews are the *resistance resources* which are derived from existing community strengths. As was explained in the literature review, resistance resources can be used to address needs which are identified by community members, and have been shown to mitigate the negative health effects of stress.

Resistance resources are those social supports, psychological coping strategies, and structural supports that buffer against the negative effects of stress, and reduce the risk of stress-related disease (Janes, 1990). Several resistance resources were identified in the surveys and interviews which may mitigate the negative effects of stress. In particular, nearly all the participants in this study referred to their community as a main source of support. Due to the strength of their community, many participants felt they could manage their problems in the city and maintain their ethnic identity to some degree. I witnessed an example of Humli community strengths in their skill of resource distribution. During one interview I observed as a group of students from the Humli community came to the door asking for donations for a sick young boy who was in the hospital and badly needed medical treatment. Other participants stated that if there was not enough food, they could borrow from someone in the community. The same was true if they became sick: “Because usually when someone gets sick over here (in Kathmandu), even (if) they are lacking
financially, just they borrow from relatives or friends” (interview participant 20-20). This community support among Humlis is an important buffer against the negative effects of stress faced outside of the community.

The Humli community is also a source of emotional support for its members. As one participant stated, “last month physical pain interfered a lot with housework and college. He lost all energy and was very downhearted. Until he talked to his community (members) and then his mood improved a lot” (survey participant 16). This same participant went on to describe how he is busy in the summer with work that doesn’t bring income. Caring for sick community members. This kind (of work) is community work.” There is an alternative economy among the Humli community members of resource and labor distribution. This is another community strength.

Although one survey participant (survey 30) identified a need for strong leadership in the community, some participants in this study exhibited strong leadership qualities. For example, one man who was a former leader in Humla regularly lobbies the government for access to government development projects and funds in Humla (interview participant 20-20). He reported that he is often successful depending on who is on the committee making such decisions and what his relationship is to those people. Interestingly, a few young Humli community members also expressed a desire to work on behalf of their community, especially to do development projects and to access government assistance to do so (interview participant 13-13; 17-17). This appears to be an excellent opportunity to pair current leaders with future leaders to educate and pass on structural skills to the younger generation.

One man recalled how difficult it was for him when he first came to Kathmandu because there were so few other Humlis in the city at that time, “At the beginning there are very few Humlis staying in Kathmandu, and also they don’t know the location or area in Kathmandu, and also at that time when they have a lacking of financial (resources) there is no one to support (him) because- there is, he is totally new
over here, so right now he knows almost (everyone), also some of the Lhasa (Tibetans), yeah he has
relation(ships) with them (and so) his (life is) much easier right now” (interview participant 20-20).

Another participant who moved to Kathmandu nearly ten years before (circa 2001), also spoke
about how life was harder then because there were so few Humlis in Kathmandu: “In the beginning she
faced problem(s), because at that time there are no Humli people here, but now she is not facing (a)
problem because of our community” (interview participant 11-11).

In addition to social supports, psychological supports are also important sources of resistance
resources. Psychological supports include the coping styles which individuals employ to help them deal
psychologically with life events; for example, by adjusting one’s perception of illness, a person can reduce
the impact of that particular stressor.

As one participant explains, his religious practice helps him keep a positive perspective, thereby
improving his well-being: “Stress is due to ambition. (There is) more tension when (there is) physical illness.
His attitude affects the pain. (He uses) positive thinking and then there is less tension. Negative thinking
leads to more pain. So, Buddhist knowledge helps him (he is a Buddhist teacher by profession)” (survey
participant 28).

Psychological coping skills that already exist within the community of displaced Humlis include
religious attitudes and practices such as the Buddhist concepts of compassion, positivity, and impermanence
all of which were mentioned by participants when they were discussing their difficulties. Many participants
spoke about their strong faith and reliance on their spiritual leaders. As one participant explains, “Stress (is)
due to ambition. More tension when (there is) physical illness. His attitude affects the pain. Positive
thinking and then less tension, negative thinking leads to more pain. So, Buddhist knowledge helps him”
(survey participant 28). This participant is a Rinpoche or Buddhist spiritual teacher by profession in
Kathmandu.
Another participant described how her religious faith and love of her culture are a source of strength for her. When asked whether she feels she can live as a Tibetan in Kathmandu, she replied,

“She can still. And she’s, it’s like, she’s very faith(ful) in Guru Rinpoche (a Buddhist saint) and she’s always willing to go to take a meditation, and to stay in (meditation) and calm and peace and also she says because of, she wants to stay in a very peace(ful) and calm and quiet place and have tsampa (Tibetan food) and she wants to die with these things. And she also says like regarding her community, she’s very satisfied with (the) Tibetan community, and their dressing, way of talking, communicating. Yeah. She still dress(es) in Humli clothes and all this” (interview participant 06-06).

Other Humli community strengths which are resistance resources, include the ability of individuals to complete long hours of hard work; their communal household structure; Humli neighborhood clusters or ‘enclaves’ within the city (Weeks, 2005); the ‘Yalbang school’ (an example of education which encourages children to stay in the community) in Humla built by Humlis in collaboration with the ISIS Foundation (interview participant 11-11; 10-10); and their historically flexible and seasonal livelihood model which includes agriculture, animal husbandry, trade, and travel.
Discussion

The sources of stress identified in this data analysis indicate risk of disease. These are summarized as follows: because the (perceived) health and food security surveys indicate risk of disease, depression, and poverty/malnourishment; because displacement due to ‘Maoist pressure’ was shown and subsequent change was shown in the lifestyle comparisons between Humla and Kathmandu; and because a number of stressors were identified in the environment of Kathmandu; it can be assumed, based on stress theory, that these sources of stress will have negative health impacts if they are not addressed. Therefore, resistance resources must be recognized and applied to these stressors, which can serve to mitigate (or buffer) the negative health effects of stress.

As Palinkas states, there is a need for biocultural studies of the effects of social change, and a need to implement interventions that address those effects which have a negative impact on individuals and communities:

“These studies contribute to our understanding of the etiology and prognosis of chronic disease by enabling us to examine a complex set of environmental, social, cultural, and psychological risk factors while holding genetic influences constant. They also point to the need for specific forms of clinical interventions and community-based programs to prevent the occurrence of chronic disease in acculturating populations” (Palinkas, 1995:1643).

Policy Implications and Possible Interventions Based on Community Strengths and Expressed Needs

The following interventions are suggested in order to address and mitigate the negative effects of stress, effectively interrupting the stress process which leads to disease. I will refer to stressors which were
identified in interviews (physical/behavioral, psychosocial, and structural stressors) and suggest interventions which address them, using and also augmenting existing community strengths (resistance resources, to mitigate the negative effects of stress. These resistance resources have been shown to reduce the risk of negative health outcomes associated with stress (Antonovsky, 1979). Interventions which are based on resistance resources that are already present in the community, and those which have been identified as needed by community members, are *culturally appropriate*, and have a greater chance of being effective at improving the well-being of displaced Humlis, than those interventions which are not derived using ethnographic methods.

**Addressing Physical stressors- suggested interventions using existing community strengths and expressed needs**

The following are physical and behavioral stressors which were identified by displaced Humlis participants in this study, and suggested interventions to mitigate the negative effects of those stressors. To address food insecurity interventions could include financial assistance and/or food assistance as well as nutrition education, and community gardens. To address lack of exercise interventions could include exercise or yoga classes, group walks, work crews, or community gardens. As one participant pointed out, when he works, his gastric issues go are relieved (interview participant 20-20). To address pollution or contamination in the environment possible interventions may be clean-up crews, sanitation classes, cleaning supplies, water filters, air masks for travel, ear-plugs for sleeping and/or white noise machines, and shoes and clothing appropriate for the seasons in Kathmandu. possible interventions which could address changes in diet may be community gardens, or financial assistance for cultural events and/or celebrations including Humli foods.

**Addressing Structural Stressors-suggested interventions using existing community strengths and expressed needs**
The following are structural stressors identified by displaced Humli participants in their environment of Kathmandu, and possible interventions which may mitigate the negative effects of these stressors. To address inadequate housing and overcrowding in homes, possible interventions could include financial assistance or additional housing. To address food insecurity interventions could be financial assistance or food assistance. To address lack of medical care, possible interventions could be financial assistance or medical care. To address the inability to observe religious traditions, possible interventions could include financial assistance or hosting of *pujas* or ‘religious ceremonies’ and religious leaders.

One participant explains how knowing what ‘rights’ Humlis have, opens access to government assistance. He says the first reason to know about the modern world is to be able to compete in it. The second reason is to know your rights: “...the first (reason) is economic. Now he’s talking about the ‘right’. When someone knows about the caste system and reservation minority, then one has to know the information about that, in order to get the reservation (assistance) or minority reservation, to fulfill their rights and get the opportunity. One can know their rights and also challenge for that right” (interview participant 13-13).

In order to address the following structural stressors, different kinds of education are recommended as interventions. To address the lack of job training/skills interventions could be job/skill training or micro-loans for start-up businesses. As one participant reported, she and her family would like to start a business but lacked the start-up capital to do so. When asked what business she would start if she had the capital, she replied, “Cut trees and make pillars for houses. They would paint them and export them to Tibet” (interview participant 05-05). In order to address language barriers, interventions might include language and writing classes in Nepali, English, and Lhasa Tibetan. To address calculation issues, interventions might be arithmetic classes, calculators, and technology use instructions (mobile phones, computers, etc.). To address navigation problems, possible interventions might be tours of the city, or a group system for shopping/traveling.
Additional structural stressors and appropriate interventions include lack of adequate care for the elderly which could be addressed with a community center which provides meals and/or housing to the elderly Humlis. Also, to address difficulty of access to government assistance or development projects, Humli leaders in the community and those with experience navigating the government bureaucracy could mentor those interested in that work to increase knowledge and access to needed assistance and projects.

**Addressing Psychosocial Stressors- suggested interventions using existing community strengths and expressed needs**

The following are psychosocial stressors which were identified by displaced Humli participants within their environment of Kathmandu, and some possible interventions which may mitigate the negative effects of these stressors. These interventions may serve to ease social tensions and increase community strengths which already exist among displaced Humlis in Kathmandu. In order to address caste discrimination possible interventions might be education of the history of caste structures and Hindu cultural classes, or discussion groups to explore possible solutions and outlooks. To address the lack of viable livelihoods interventions might be job training, purchasing of farm land, community gardens, and micro-loans for start-up businesses. To address lack of knowledge about the world at large, interventions could include classes in world history or current events. To address the lack of leadership in the community, interventions could include cultural events to encourage the community to select leaders, and community leaders’ mentorship of younger members who show leadership potential. To address feelings of inadequacy and inability to fit in, some interventions might be classes teaching communication skills and city etiquette; and some assistance in securing items which are highly valued in the larger society also called ‘cultural imperatives’ (Dressler, 2000) such as clothing, household items, cell phones, and personal accessories. In order to address feelings of isolation or struggle to meet basic needs, possible interventions that make use of existing community strengths such as resource distribution networks; could include assistance for community centers and gatherings or celebrations which reinforce cultural values and self-esteem, and
strengthen social support networks. To support and bolster existing community strengths is a powerful way to mitigate the negative effects of psychosocial stress.
Conclusion

The importance of conducting research which links lifestyle change and stress to well-being, is that, as Dressler et al state, “…this body of research has not yet provided much insight into the social and cultural processes that generate stress factors related to disease, nor is there any indication of how cultural and historical circumstances may modify the relationship of stress factors to disease” (2002:6). This study aims to advance biocultural research by using a mixed methods, multi-level, ethnographic approach to understanding relationships between change, stress, and disease.

As Goodman and Leatherman state, “The infinite intersections of global economies and local ecologies, and of world history and local history, have made it equally critical to understand the local, and the global within the local. With its broadly holistic and biocultural approach, anthropology is seemingly well-positioned to help address these challenges” (1998:4).

Anthropologists who study migration look at both its causes and its consequences, though the consequences of migration are far less studied than its causes. The causes of migration and/or displacement can be analyzed on macro and micro-levels using global, national, community, and individual units for analysis. Current reviews of migration theory call for a multi-level, mixed methods approach to migration to accomplish a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon of migration/displacement. In this study I reviewed the literature on the Maoist insurgency to contextualize Humlis’ displacement on a macro-level, and related Humli participant interview and survey responses to the literature to identify a set of factors which ‘pushed’ Humlis from their place of origin in Humla to their place of destination in Kathmandu. These micro-level push factors were often referred to as ‘Maoist pressure’ by the participants.
Displacement caused by Maoist pressure has had consequences for individual Humli IDPs. In assessing the well-being of displaced Humlis in Kathmandu, according to the stress model, I first identified changes in lifestyle which had occurred for Humlis since moving from Humla to Kathmandu. To show these changes I compared lifestyle in Humla to lifestyle in Kathmandu in six domains (livelihood, daily schedule, diet, religion, household structure, and language).

Lifestyle change has been shown to be related to different kinds of stress in the environment of migrants/IDPs which I have grouped into three main categories: physical/behavioral stressors, structural stressors, and psychosocial stressors. These stressors have in turn been associated with certain chronic, non-infectious diseases such as high blood pressure, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, gastro-intestinal disorders and ulcers, migraine headaches, and depression to name a few.

Many of these stress-related diseases were reported by Humlis in their surveys and interviews including gastro-intestinal disorders, migraine headaches, and depression indicators such as insomnia and downheartedness. Of particular salience in this study are the depression indicator outcomes from the survey and interviews. Depression has been shown to be associated with psychosocial stress and food insecurity. Food insecurity and low mental health was found in this study to have a statistically significant relationship in initial chi-square analysis, though the power of this sample was not found to be great enough to continue with statistical analysis.

The combination of low food security scores; general and mental health scores from the health survey; high scores on survey questions such as 12c (‘how often do you feel downhearted or depressed?’); and low scores on the self-designed subjective well-being questions asking Humlis to compare their health in Humla to their health in Kathmandu; all indicate high risk of disease, especially depression and other mental disorders. These preliminary indications of high risk of disease, warrant future research in order to draw stronger conclusions about the relationships between identified stressors and stress-related diseases within the community of displaced Humlis in Kathmandu.
Future research of this population could include, in addition to the food security and health surveys, more focused tools for measuring psychological disorders such as the Hopkins Symptom Checklist, or the Beck Anxiety Inventory to measure depression and anxiety, the PTSD Traumatic Events Checklist to measure post-traumatic stress disorder; tools for measuring subjective well-being such as the Subjective Stress Scale; and non-invasive physiological measurements such as blood pressure and catecholamine and corticosteroid urinary levels; in addition to the validated Food Security, and the validated Health Survey used in this study.

Weaknesses of the study are that, as was mentioned previously, the small sample size did not allow for great enough power to effectively use chi-square analysis to show statistical significance between survey scores. In future studies, a survey sample of at least 60 should be recruited to increase the power of the statistical analysis. Another weakness of the study is that the interview and survey were not vigorously tested before use to ensure cultural appropriateness. As a result, some survey questions were not answered due to misunderstanding and the inappropriate presence of extra family members in the room. Missing responses complicated the analysis process, and every effort should be made in the future to ensure fewer missing responses.

Although many Humlis (20 out of 30 surveyed) said they were healthier/happier in Humla than in Kathmandu, actually returning to Humla is not an option for most Humlis for a variety of reasons including education, health care, and travel expense. The work then is to increase well-being where they are now, in Kathmandu; to collaborate with the community to design interventions using resistance resources which build on existing community and cultural strengths to address stated needs. If the stress process which began with displacement and migration, is allowed to continue unchecked to its completion, then negative health outcomes can result. The aim is to interrupt the stress process by addressing stressors, and reduce the risk of negative health outcomes, thereby improving the well-being of displaced Humlis in Kathmandu.
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Appendix

Appendix A

Moderator’s Guide

1. Ground Rules and Format (5 min)

Before we begin, I will let you know that the interview will last about 1 hour.

During the interview, I will ask a question, then please respond to that question when you are ready.

Questions and Discussion

2. Icebreaker

**Question:** (if have already done survey, skip to c.)

First I am going to ask you some basic questions about yourself.

When were you born?

What is your age?

Are you married? How many children do you have?

What is your first language?

Describe your education.

What is your ethnicity? How do you trace your ancestry?

**Question:**

Where were you born? How long did you live in Humla?
Probe: Please describe your lifestyle in Humla: language, diet, livelihood, family structure, religion, daily schedule

Probe: How was your health while living in Humla?

Probe: What was the health care like in Humla? If you were ill, what would you do?

3. Introduction

Question:

Why did you move from Humla to Kathmandu?

   Probe: What problems did you face in Humla?

   Probe: What was good about living there?

4. Transition

Question:

How long have you lived in the city of Kathmandu?

Probe: Describe your lifestyle in Kathmandu: language, diet, livelihood, family structure, religion, daily schedule

Probe: How is your health now, living here?

Probe: What is the health care like in Kathmandu? If you became ill, what would you do?

Probe: Are there any reasons you cannot get the health care you want?

5. Main Question

Question:

What is different about the way you live since moving to Kathmandu?

6. Follow up

Question:
How would you describe your health now compared to when you were living in Humla?

Probe: Why do you think you were (healthier or not as healthy) in Humla?

7. Ending

Question:

How well do you think you have adapted to living in a new place?

Probe: Do you feel you have changed at all since relocating to Kathmandu? How?

Probe: All things considered, do you feel you are currently able to live according to your culture? Why or why not?

Adjourn

Thank you for coming today and giving honest and insightful responses. Your opinions are very important to the success of this study.

Do you have anything you want to add?
Appendix B

USDA Food Security 6-Item Survey Questions (validated)

Questions 1 and 2 contain statements that people have made about their food situation. For these statements, please check whether the statement was “often true”, “sometimes true”, or “never true” for you/your household in the past 12 months.

1. “The food that (I/we) bought just didn’t last, and (I/we) didn’t have money to get more.”
   □ Often true
   □ Sometimes true
   □ Never true
   □ Don’t know

2. “(I/we) couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.”
   □ Often true
   □ Sometimes true
   □ Never true
   □ Don’t know

3. In the past 12 months did you (or other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?
   □ Yes
   □ No
   
   (If you answered No, skip question 16)

4. How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?
   □ Almost every month
☐ Some months but not every month
☐ Only 1 or 2 months
5. In general, would you say your health is:

- □ Very good
- □ Good
- □ Poor

6. The following questions are about activities you might do during a typical day. Does your health now limit you in these activities? If so, how much?

a. **Moderate activities**, such as moving a table, pushing a broom, carrying groceries, washing clothes

- □ Yes, limited a lot
- □ Yes, limited a little
- □ No, not limited at all

b. Climbing **several** flights of stairs

- □ Yes, limited a lot
- □ Yes, limited a little
- □ No, not limited at all

7. During the **past 4 weeks**, how much of the time have you had any of the following problems with your work or other regular daily activities **as a result of your health**?

   **Accomplished less** than you would like

- □ All of the time
- □ Most of the time
- □ Some of the time
- □ None of the time
8. During the **past 4 weeks**, how much of the time have you had any of the following problems with your work or other regular daily activities as a result of any emotional problems (such as feeling depressed or anxious)?

   a. **Accomplished less** than you would like

      □ All of the time □ Some of the time
      □ Most of the time □ None of the time

   b. Did work or other activities **less carefully than usual**

      □ All of the time □ Some of the time
      □ Most of the time □ None of the time

9. During the **past 4 weeks**, how much did pain interfere with your normal work (including both work outside the home and housework)?

      □ Not at all □ Quite a bit
      □ Moderately □ Extremely

10. These questions are about how you feel and how things have been with you during the **past 4 weeks**. For each question, please give the one answer that comes closest to the way you have been feeling.

    How much of the time in the **past 4 weeks**...

    a. Have you felt calm and peaceful?

        □ All of the time □ Some of the time
        □ Most of the time □ None of the time

    b. Did you have a lot of energy?
c. Have you felt downhearted and depressed?

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- A little of the time
- None of the time

11. During the **past 4 weeks**, how much of the time has your **physical health or emotional problems** interfered with your social activities (like visiting with friends, relatives, etc.)?

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- None of the time

**Demographics Questions**

12. Date of Birth: _______ Age: _______

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

13. Sex:

- Female
- Male
14. Ethnicity: (check all that apply)

☐ Tibetan
☐ Indian/Hindu
☐ White, non Hispanic
☐ Other: ____________

15. Median family income in the **past 12 months**:

☐ $ 00.00-$1,000
☐ $6,000-$10,000
☐ $2,000-$5,000
☐ $11,000-above

16. Years of school completed:

☐ No school
☐ Elementary school
☐ Secondary school
☐ College degree
**Subjective Survey Questions** (skip if doing interview)

18. How healthy were you when you were living in Humla?
   - Very healthy
   - Fairly healthy
   - Not very healthy
   - Very unhealthy

19. How healthy are you now while living in Kathmandu?
   - Very healthy
   - Fairly healthy
   - Not very healthy
   - Very unhealthy

20. How do you compare your health now to when you were living in Humla?
   - More healthy then (Humla)
   - More healthy now (Kathmandu)

Thank you for completing this survey!
# Appendix C

## Survey Outcomes- SPSS Frequencies

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