

The Mahesh Chandra Regmi Lecture 2014

What Led to the 2006 Democratic Revolution in Nepal?

Chaitanya Mishra

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Back cover shows Mahesh Chandra Regmi in the audience at the inaugural lecture on 24 April, 2003. Photograph by Bikas Rauniar.

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I. Objective and Organisation

This lecture seeks to attempt an explanation for the democratic revolt that culminated in the end of the monarchy and the rise of a republic in Nepal and to contribute to the theory of democratic revolution and democratisation.

It starts out by sketching the political transitions Nepal has experienced, focusing, in particular, on the democratic-republican transition of 2006. The second section briefly reviews the literature on the 'third wave,' i.e., the post-1970, democratic transition and finds it unsatisfactory because it valorises the psychological level and associated proximate variables such as the nature of leadership. It also severely devalues the significance of history and structure which may constitute the foundational platforms for political transitions. Most importantly, the dominant stream of the third-wave literature is theoretically nihilistic inasmuch as it is myopic, opportunistic, and eclectic. The third section summarises and identifies the coordinates of the key theoretical frameworks developed in the historical-comparative tradition in order to explain democratic revolution and democratisation. The final section discusses the empirical evidence on the democratic and republican turn in Nepal, juxtaposes the empirical and the theoretical, and assesses the fit between the two.

II. Empirical Context

The early winds of democratisation in Nepal could be said to have stirred as early as the 1930s. Such initiatives, however, were extremely small in scale, secretive, and could be said to be conspiratorial rather than political. A larger initiative led, in the

early 1940s, to a public show of force by the rulers who executed four rebels. During the post-WW II period, when anti-colonial nationalist movements had become widespread, including in India and China, Nepal witnessed a small but potent movement for the overthrow of the hereditary autocracy of Rana prime ministers who had ruled the country for one hundred years. The legitimacy, power and privilege of the Ranas were also closely associated with the vitality of British rule in India. A rebel political movement, factional conflicts among the Ranas, and the end of the colonial era in India led to the demise of the Rana autocracy. A decade of democratic but cacophonous politics then ensued that allowed the monarch to claw his way out of a promised constituent assembly. The rise of a communist People's Republic of China immediately to the north of Nepal in 1949 and the American, British and Indian fear of a 'communist domino effect' also worked in favour of the monarchy. An internally powerful but pliable king was far more useful than a republic. An organised push for a potentially republican order was, thus, blocked.

General elections did take place in late 1959. To the king's woe, the mildly left-of-centre Nepali Congress Party received wide support from the large rural peasantry and the small non-aristocratic urban residents and won 74 of the 109 parliamentary seats. An uneasy relationship between the king and the elected prime minister ended in 1960 when the king used his emergency powers, brought the army to the streets, disbanded the elected legislature and government, and ruled the country in the manner of a 'developmental autocrat' for the next two decades. Political turmoil led by the banned political parties and, possibly more importantly, a break within its own ranks—of the hardliner-softliner variety described by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986)—forced the monarchy to become more liberal after 1980. A decade of

relative liberalism was followed, in 1990, by a popular movement for much greater democratisation, including freedom of association and speech, legalisation of political parties, and a tamed 'constitutional monarchy'. Whether the elected government or the king really controlled the army remained, however, as is often the case in such circumstances, under-defined. The mildly left-of-centre Nepali Congress Party (NCP) and the leftist Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML), the immediate drivers of the political movement, became the ruling parties. A much more radical front constituted by the soon-to-become Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN-M), which had not yet disavowed the parliamentary road, became the third largest party in the legislature.

The Maoist left has had a distinctive presence in Nepal since the late 1950s when the Sino-Soviet split took place. The Cultural Revolution in China and, more immediately, the rise of the Maoist Naxalite movement that was raging during the late 1960s and early 1970s in the adjoining West Bengal state of India could not but affect politics in Nepal. However, visible Maoist politics and armed action ceased for almost two decades following a contest of wills in which the Maoists brutally killed a few medium and large landowners under a programme that called for the annihilation of class enemies and the government killed a handful and jailed about a dozen of the rebels during the early 1970s. Maoist politics then went into a slumber. Some factions organised underground. They made do with a very small membership and intermittent splits and coalescences.

The period since 1996 has been one of momentous political upheavals. The CPN-M came into being in 1995 and, in 1996, following in Mao's footsteps, announced a prolonged 'people's war'. 'People's war', it was reasoned, would lead to 'new democ-

racism', which it may be noted, was first formulated by Mao for a 1940s China as an anti-colonial, national-capitalist, and communist party-dominant political programme. But the 'people's war' did have a powerful political and military resonance among the youth, some of whom joined the ranks of the CPN-M. (When the armed insurrection came to an end in 2006, the Maoist army numbered 7,000-8,000 combatants. Of course, many died and were severely injured, and many probably also left the force during the 11-year span of the 'people's war'.)

The usurpation of legislative and executive power by the king in 2002, however, gradually forced a rapprochement between the bourgeois and social democratic parties and the insurgent CPN-M. This rapprochement became possible also because of two other reasons. The CPN-M had itself been searching for an outlet. It had made considerable military gains and intermittently controlled large swathes of rural areas. In its hardcore areas, it had also acquired some level of political legitimacy. But it was very far from acquiring political legitimacy elsewhere, and it was also far from subduing the army and acquiring state power. The stalemate had continued for several years, and the CPN-M was, despite its successes, in a limbo.

The upshot of this conjuncture was that an agreement was signed between the political parties and the CPN-M in November 2005 in New Delhi. The agreement called for, among others, joining forces for 'full democracy,' respect for the gamut of bourgeois democratic rights as well as social justice, and for the inclusion of working and 'lower' classes as well as ethnic groups, women, and residents of disadvantaged regions. 'Full democracy' hinted at a republican order but the agreement was not daring enough to explicitly declare it as such. In fact, the agreement called only for 'an end to active monarchy'. The 19-day mass movement called for

jointly by the political parties and the CPNM in March-April 2006, in effect, suspended the monarchy. An interim constitution, which was largely bourgeois democratic but incorporated important social democratic provisions, was drawn up in order to manage the affairs of the state as also to conduct elections to a constituent assembly (CA).

The general elections took place in April 2008. The Maoists won the largest number of seats in the CA. The regionalist-ethnicist uprising for a federal state which had taken place preceding the elections along the southern Plains (Tarai-Madhes) contributed to the political-electoral rise of Madhesi-ethnicist parties. There was a sharp rise in ethnic movements in the Hills region, not the least because the CPN-M had politically and militarily carved out several 'ethnic states' during the latter years of the 'people's war,' although there were several additional reasons for the rise of the ethnic movement (Mishra 2012). The CA, during its first sitting in 2008, declared Nepal a federal democratic republic, and the king became a lay citizen.

The CA failed to formulate a constitution within the stipulated two years, and it failed in the next two years as well. After much political and legal wrangling, elections to a second CA was held in late 2013. The NCP and CPN-UML were the two major winners. The CPN-M came in third, and the Madhesi-ethnicist parties, all of which had splintered during the intervening years, performed relatively badly as well. While the tenure of the current CA lasts till the end of 2018, the political parties had promised to deliver a constitution by January 2015. We are past that date now.

All in all, armed conflict has been over for eight years. The monarchy is no more and is extremely unlikely to make a comeback. Legislative and executive authority remains vested in legitimately organised political parties and elected representatives and there

have been a handovers of executive authority—which some (e.g. Huntington 1992, Przeworski et al. 2000) regard as the acid test of democratisation. There has been a thawing down, during the last two years, of the sharp sense of ethnic divide on the issue of ethnically-based federalisation. In the meantime, several steps have been taken towards a much more inclusive polity vis-à-vis specific ethnic, caste and regional groups, women, the disabled, etc, including in the domains of representation, education and public employment. In essence, a republic has been born. Nepal will be a federal state. It will also be a secular state. The CPN-M, which has fractured since, has recently seemingly officially distanced itself from the Maoist political agenda of ‘new democracy’.

III. Third-Wave Democratisation and Its Limits

In an extensive review of the ‘third wave’ literature on democratisation, Shin (1994: 151) arrives at a set of theoretically nihilistic and disturbing findings. These are: (a) there are few pre-conditions for the emergence of democracy, (b) no single factor is sufficient or necessary for the emergence of democracy, (c) the emergence of democracy in a country is the result of a combination of causes, (d) the causes responsible are not the same as those promoting consolidation of democracy, (e) the combination of causes promoting democratic transition and consolidation varies from country to country, and (f) the combination of causes generally responsible for one wave of democratisation differs from those responsible for other waves. These findings are partially based on O’Donnell and Schmitter’s (1986) almost similarly nihilistic conclusion—otherwise arising out of good case analyses—that theorising across historical and structural contexts is nearly impossible if not altogether unnecessary.

Shin's first finding, of course, is the one powerfully stamped with theoretical nihilism. In laying out the platform for this conclusion Shin (pp. 151-3) brings, among very many others, Huntington as well as Linz and Stepan (1978) who—as the condition for democratisation—almost exclusively concentrate on the role of political leaders and strategic elites, and Lijphart (1990: 72) who argues that democracy 'is not merely a "superstructure" that grows out of socio-economic and cultural bases; it has an *independent* life of its own' (emphasis supplied). Shin also takes note of the fact that Huntington has argued for a shift of focus in research from the causes to the causers of democracy (Huntington 1992: 106). He goes on to infer that in the literature on third-wave democratisation, '... democracy is no longer treated as a particularly rare and delicate plant that cannot be transplanted in alien soil; it is treated as a product that can be manufactured wherever there is democratic craftsmanship and the proper *zeitgeist*' (p. 141). To summarise, Shin notes:

... The establishment of a viable democracy in a nation is no longer seen as the product of higher levels of modernisation, bourgeois class structure, tolerant cultural values, and economic independence from external actors. Instead, it is seen more as a product of strategic interactions and arrangements among political elites, conscious choices among various types of democratic constitutions, and electoral and party systems. (pp. 138-9)

Were Shin's first 'proposition' to hold valid, the entire genre of historical social science, including, most prominently, the historical comparative and world-systemic stances—if not *all* social science—would come to naught. If Huntington's emphasis on 'causers'

damns history and structure, Lijphart's award of an 'independent life' to democracy and democratisation invalidates both social science and causality. If, as Shin notes, the dominant third-wave literature regards democracy as something 'that can be manufactured' through proper craftsmanship, democratisation—as well as all other types of political institutions and processes—would become unhinged from economic and other components of society. The social theory of democratisation, in such a situation, would become diminished to a biography of political fixers rather than a history of society (cf. Mills 1959). Indeed, taken to extremes, social science, under such a vision, would become a platform for a dance of ahistorical and astructural agents (cf. Mishra 2014a). Randomness would prevail and patterns and conjunctures invalidated.

It is useful here to invoke Marx and Engels, who underlined the significance of both agent as well as history and structure. Agency was significant because '... history is not, as it were, a person apart, using man as a means achieve *its own* aims; history is *nothing but* the activity of man pursuing his aims,' (Marx and Engels 1956: 110) and 'Ideas *cannot carry out anything* at all. In order to carry out ideas men are needed who can exert practical force' (Ibid: 140) (emphases in original). On the other hand, both history and structure were significant because 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past' (Marx 1954: 10). In essence, agents are historical and structural creatures. Historical flows, when they enter into a political-transitional rapid, create new and wide latitude for agency action even as such agency action feeds the flow of the transition. But, as the flow meanders and slows down, the structural space for agency action becomes relatively constricted. Nonetheless, agency *and* history and structure

can be separated only for analytical and heuristic purposes, as has also been argued by Giddens (1986). It is invalid and unproductive to drive a substantive wedge between the two, not to speak of a denial of the significance of history and structure on human social activities.

The last of Shin's propositions, however, seeks to evade the ponderous and deep shadow of nihilism precisely, even if backhandedly, because it valorises history and leaves open the possibility that explanations for successive waves of democratisation may mutually diverge. A historically-conscious worldview, indeed, would *demand* such divergence. This proposition also raises the thin but nevertheless worth investigating possibility that post-1970 democratisation falls into a class which is characteristic of both the world-scale adulthood of capitalism and a specific period of cyclical downturn in the capitalist world economy in general *and* the rise of the ex-colonial and other semi-peripheries in the capitalist pecking order in particular.

The dominant tenor of third-wave explanations, as such, cannot be regarded as satisfactory. It would appear that zooming in on what is immediately on the front has focused out—and 'willed out'—the 'invisible background' which, in fact, provides a firm historical-structural foundation to the visible. The appearance may not be necessarily false but may be no more than the tip of the iceberg. A predilection for the shorter run, in the theory of democratic revolution and democratisation, may well have devalued the longer run—within which the shorter run would add value. The preference for the tree has had the effect of losing sight of the forest within which the tree may be better comprehended. One does not have to become disloyal to the empirical and conceptual details as long as it is acknowledged that the details constitute components of, and make sense within, a more encompassing theoretical

framework. Identification of proximate causal factors, which many of the third-wave explanations prefer, can be of significant value. But foundational and intervening causal factors, of which the proximate factors are the 'last links in the chain', are of a higher level of theoretical significance because they possess a scope which is larger scale and longer run. As Acemoglu and Robinson (2006: 81) note in their critique of O'Donnell and Schmitter's as well as Shin's atheoretical rendering, it is not only democratisation that is complex; *all* social processes are complex if viewed in minute details. But to the extent that one can adequately simplify by sifting out the details and identifying and abstracting the principal common patterns, one takes a step toward theorisation which alone can help us explain why some social processes, e.g., democratisation, take hold while others do not.

The action of leaders may make or unmake democracy. Therefore, the theoretical emphasis should not be on excising the significance of agency, leadership, the proximate causal factor, the immediate run, and so on but on pushing the causal chain further toward more encompassing historical-structural levels. The micro, the proximate and the psychological finds its place but within the encompassing, macro and structural. It is surely legitimate and much more theoretically significant to inquire if there is a discernible pattern and sequence to leaders' actions as also to inquire why such leaders come into being at that precise historical-structural moment and why they act the way they do.

The theoretically nihilist, 'presentist', 'nationally'-focused, psychologised, agency and leadership driven—rather than historically and structurally based—character of the third-wave democratisation literature may be attributed to a number of factors. First, the democratisation story has become much more complicated since the 1970s. Most countries in the world acquired a democratic char-

acter after the 1970s or even after 1990s. There are far more ‘data points’ available to ponder over and analyse democratisation than was earlier the case. Second, there have been several ‘contrarian’ examples, e.g., South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, which, at times, subverted the first and second wave explanations for democratisation that prioritised history, capitalism, contingency and conjuncture of macro-level structure and institution, class and class coalition, the national, international and world system, and so on. Third, several countries that could, under relatively standard second-wave formulation, be predicted to have climbed up to a long-term path to democratisation have, in fact, fallen to authoritarianism or have reversed course or continue to remain cases of ‘paper democracy’. Fourth, there has been a massive up-scaling of data collection efforts and increasing seamlessness of data sets. Ever larger ‘big data’ sets are becoming the order of the day. There has also been substantial refinement in techniques of data analysis used to describe and assess democratisation. Fifth, there has been a large growth of spin doctors and academics—some of whom flit in and out and remain in between the academia and the government and bilateral and multilateral agencies—who are obliged to explain political change by means of immediately relatable and myopic bites of sound and ‘actionable’ recommendations. Finally, there has been a large-scale increase in media outlets and production and distribution of ‘news’, including those related to politics, regime change, and democratisation, that is nearly always ‘presentist’ in character.

Precious little has been written about the republican and democratic turn in Nepal, notwithstanding its potential theoretical promise. Almost all of what exists is in the ‘third wave’ vein. This is mainly because almost all of the available literature comes from political parties, leaders and the media. By nature and mission,

political parties are sharply 'agentified'. In addition, it would stand to reason that the degree of 'agentification' correlates well with the extent of radicalisation of a party. The CPN-M, as a party that espouses radical Maoist politics, would be expected to rely far more on agents than less-radical parties (cf. Mishra 2014a). In addition, the modern media, by nature and mission, is decidedly 'presentist' in character. Political party and media accounts have, thus, systematically devalued the significance of comparative-historical and world-systemic stances. These accounts, expectedly, have remained on the surface and attributed the 2006 republican and democratic turn exclusively to the political parties which 'drove' the movement. The CPN-M, in classic communist-party vein, has argued that the 'people's war' was waged because of 'historical necessity' and, teleologically, for the 'inevitability of the new democratic political form' (Dahal 2003, Bhattarai 2003). In some such accounts, civil society and international forces have also been cited as having contributed to democratisation. Such accounts do illuminate the immediate canvas of the movement and provide important inputs for a satisfactory explanation. But, such accounts do not constitute an explanation that is theoretically illuminating and adequate.

That Nepal's experience in democratisation has not been adequately theorised and that the third-wave explanations are myopic and theoretically nihilistic implies that it is necessary to learn from the first and second wave explanation of democratic revolution and democratisation. The first wave here, of course, refers to the explanations forwarded for late-19th and early-20th century European experience of democratisation. The second wave refers to explanations given to democratic revolutions immediately following World War II. 'Third wave democratisation', in turn, refers to democratic transitions made during and after the 1970s, starting with the 1974 Portuguese transition.

IV. Some Comparative Historical Theories of Democratic Revolution and Democratisation

In this lecture, I wish to implicate and carry on a dialogue with selected key texts on the theory of democracy. I do not intend to cover the theoretical debate on democratic revolution and democratisation in an exhaustive manner. I expect the selected texts to enable me to accomplish two tasks: to identify a set of theoretical coordinates to enable me to review the nature of the democratic revolution in Nepal *and* to assess the validity of the coordinates and theories—both in terms of what they commit and what they omit. In this section, I merely map the ‘lay of the theoretical land’ in relation to democratic revolution and democratisation. I also summarise the key arguments made in the texts at some length so that you can make a better judgment yourselves.

It is surprising that comparative historical accounts fail to locate capitalism at the centre of democratic revolution and democratisation. The spectre of capitalism surrounds all of the preceding accounts but it has been pushed to the shadows. In addition, some accounts engage in unnecessary shadow boxing: e.g., the assertion by Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992) (hereafter, RSS) that democracy is owed not to capitalism or capitalists but to contradictions of capitalism. Clearly, capitalism does not sprout without either the capitalists or its contradictions; the first provides the platform on which the rest stand.

It can, on the other hand, be reasoned that celebrated texts do not centre-stage capitalism because most give prominence to and implicate the nature of class relations in the rise of democracy. Capitalism itself is assumed rather than implicated. However, even as class relations may be key determinants of democratisation, this effort to collapse capitalism and class does not cut well. Class is one

central element of the capitalist mode of production. But capitalism is much more encompassing than class. In addition, it seems that the category of class has enjoyed high political currency because it has widely been regarded as possibly the most—if not the only—important instrument that can be wielded to struggle against, reform and undo capitalism. I shall discuss the implications of class relations for democratisation in the next section. But it is of first order of importance to discuss the implications of capitalism for democratisation.

We begin our selective survey with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. That Marx and Engels are not often regarded as theorists of democratisation is both surprising and unwarranted. The two wrote profusely, deeply insightfully, and passionately about large-scale capitalist transitions in economy, polity and social relationships in general. Paradoxically, it is in their most explicitly political-organisational tract, *The Communist Manifesto*, that they eloquently spell out how old pre-capitalist orders are swayed and dismantled by capitalism and its bourgeois agents (Tucker 1972):

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part ... The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley of ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors' ... The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil ... Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeoisie from all earlier ones ... All fixed, fast frozen relations with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned ... (pp. 475-6)

The power of the capitalist process to rapidly sway and dismantle feudal and other pre-capitalist structures, all or almost all of which were undemocratic—with their monarchies, chieftainships and landlordism—has been recorded in history. The power of the capitalist process to weaken and dismantle a rigidly hierarchised and relatively stagnant society in which an individual's life chances were ordered in terms of clan, caste, ethnic, racial, sex, locational, etc, affiliation, and in which the worker was bound to systems of slavery, serfdom and other forms of attached labour has been evident in the last several centuries. Freedom from such objective conditions, as Perry Anderson (1984) notes, corresponds at the subjective level, to 'a tremendous emancipation of the possibility and sensibility of the individual self'. Compared to the pre-capitalist forms, capitalism, thus, is deeply imbued with a democratic potential. It provides a platform where democracy can potentially be erected. It is also an emancipation which has, in V.S. Naipaul's (1990) words in another context, unleashed a 'million mutinies'.

The rise of the capitalist order has been foundational to democratisation because it had led to the tumultuous questioning and invalidation of the old regimes of 'feudalism' and faith—and of the 'god and/or nature given' order where an individual as well as entire collectivities were slotted to definite stations in life and were bound up in definite and deeply undemocratic political and economic relationships. It is difficult to think of democracy in pre-capitalist societies—except, possibly, of the foraging kinds. RSS (1992: 2) agree with this conclusion as well. The dominant political form in pastoral and agricultural societies was chieftainship, monarchy, empire and so on. It is good to recall that the idea and practice of citizenship has been, fundamentally, a capitalist invention. For a significant period of history people were no more than subjects.

The 'increase in bourgeois resistance to labour and democracy' that RSS find in this more recent phase of capitalism may have some validity. However, it does not tell the whole story of the equation between capitalism and democracy. That the bourgeoisie may resist workers' struggle does not at all invalidate that it was capitalism that invented free labour and thus created the possibility of the struggle between the capitalist and the worker in the first place. The possibility and practice of resistance is an exercise in democracy by itself, regardless of the outcome of resistance. A worker who can negotiate a bargain with an employer is an invention of capitalism as is the worker who can call a strike if negotiations do not go well. The contractual, i.e., unattached, relationship between the worker and the employer is a deeply democratic aspect of capitalism which no 'bourgeois resistance' can completely undercut. Within capitalism, 'bourgeois resistance' can ebb and flow, but the worker who sought to resist was a rare presence in pre-capitalist forms. Moore's 'no bourgeois, no democracy' could, thus, be reformulated as 'no capitalism, no democracy'.

Nor is the equation between capitalism and democracy limited to the domain of the capitalist-worker relationship, class, class coalition, and class struggle. Capitalism's weakening and dismantling of inborn hierarchy, physical and social immobility, rigid circumspection and un-freedom of the worker, etc, relates to much more than capitalist-worker relationship. These weakening and dismantling processes are deeply democratic. Limiting the revolutionary implications of capitalism to the capitalist-worker equation, thus, diminishes and misrepresents the sweeping power of capitalism to transform *all* social relationships, e.g., leader and led, government and governed, teacher and student, neighbours, parent and children, husband and wife, and so on. *All* that had been

solidified melts into air. This state of liquidity is where democracy has often taken root.

This capitalist democracy is largely a bourgeois democracy. But, it is clear from the kinds of democracy that are prevalent in the world today that democracy under capitalism is malleable to a significant extent—although by no means indefinitely so. That capitalism and bourgeois democracy together, in specific historical settings, can potentially open up the political space in which the unemployed, the worker, and the dispossessed can gradually build a labour-friendly social democracy is clear from the example of a number of European and other countries such as Japan. A capitalist economy which is under political pressure from the unemployed, workers and the dispossessed and which is also on an upswing can relatively easily adjust to such demands because it may be costly not to do so and also because it pays off in terms of healthier, more educated and skilled labour power as well as a politically peaceful climate—which also protects profits and welcomes further rounds of investment.

That capitalism is not a nest where all possible political forms can hatch and grow also implies that it is partial to specific political forms. That capitalism, in comparison to pre-capitalist forms, clears the old and entrenched privileges and debris implies, first of all, that it prepares a relatively more level political space where contending forces can potentially negotiate a set of rules of the game. Capital is powerful but it cannot do without labour power. The fact that entrepreneurs in capitalism compete against one another for labour power implies that workers can potentially work out a bargain. That one cannot negate the other and that one has to negotiate with the others in order to arrive at a set of rules constitutes, in class terms, the foundational platform of democracy. One cannot, in a capitalist set up, procure labour power on the basis of a

'natural' or 'divine' or 'customary' order and privilege. There are very many platforms upon which negotiations take place, e.g., collective bargaining, where the trade union or an industry agrees to a tentative bargain. The most important negotiating site, however, is the general elections in which political parties and other political forces pit themselves against one another and the result of which shape the power balance.

Nor is it enough to highlight the association of capitalism and democracy. If capitalism is revolutionary, it also has nine lives. Capitalism, the world-system perspective reminds us, is a hierarchised structure. The nature and impact of capitalism will be different across the slots in the hierarchy. Further, because hierarchisation is not stable the nature and impact of capitalism, including on democratisation, will be of a distinctive nature across different locations in the hierarchy. In addition, because the capitalist mode of production is inherently cyclical and experiences booms and busts of various durations and depths, the nature and impact of capitalism on democratisation across the cycle is bound to be uneven. It is possible, as RSS argue, that the bourgeoisie in some loci in the capitalist hierarchy and cycle are much less allied to labour or to democracy than in other loci. But the capitalist mode of production invariably forces 'uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions' and, as such, the relationship between labour and the bourgeoisie sooner or later undergoes a transition.

Capitalism, in essence, promotes democracy analytically *independently* of its effects through class, class coalition and class struggle. Capitalism and class are twin-born. But the continual unhinging and uprooting of the older orders that are necessary features both of the initial pre-capitalist-to-capitalist transition *and* of successive transitions *within* the capitalist order create continual pressures for re-regulation of social and political relationships and

a widening and deepening of contractual and associational bases (Durkheim 1997, de Tocqueville 1835/40). Marshall Berman's *All that is Solid Melts into Air* (1983) captures some of these changes insightfully.

Beyond this, the relationship between capitalism and democracy becomes contingent and conjunctural. Certainly, in comparison to pre-capitalist forms, capitalism seeds the birth of bourgeois democracy. But it is less certain if the seed will sprout, grow and mature. The rise of authoritarian capitalist regimes, in particular, does force us to re-think and re-specify the nature of the association between capitalism and democracy. Nazi and fascist dictatorships, as Moore and others have shown, were outcomes of capitalism as well. Authoritarianism and democracy have alternated in some regions and periods, e.g., Latin America between 1950 and 1990. The more recent and ongoing saga of the Arab countries, most of which are both capitalist and authoritarian, raises further questions. The rise of fundamentalist-jihadi Islam concurrently with the development of the capitalist form in the core fundamentalist-jihadi regions and states and its deeply undemocratic implications for state and society also demand further re-specification of the relation between capitalism and democracy. The mix of capitalism and authoritarianism in China begs an additional and distinctive class of questions. On the other hand, in most countries of the world, capitalism and democracy do seem to be walking together. Not in perfect goose-step, but the historical tendency is broadly clear. It may be noted that the association between modernisation and democracy posited by Lerner (1958), Lipset (1959) and Parsons (1966), and many others may, in fact, be the association between capitalism and bourgeois democracy, not between an under-historicised and under-theorised 'modernisation' and capitalism as such.

Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*:

Lord and Peasant in the Making in the Modern World (1966) has deservedly been hailed as a 'book of epochal vision and rigorous comparative inquiry, a work that explored morally compelling questions about the societal underpinnings of freedom and oppression, probing for the roots of democracy, revolutions, communism and fascism' (Ross et al. 1998: 1). The book reviewed the political, economic and social history of a number of states, namely, England, France, USA, China, Japan and India, from the point of view of the *nature* of modernisation. Moore saw that even as states modernise they do so in highly distinctive ways. Modernisation led not to a specific and predetermined political highway but to a path-dependent and conjunctural outcome which forked in three directions. Modernisation led to bourgeois democracy in England, France, USA, and—to a certain extent—India. It led to socialism in China and to fascism in Japan.

Moore did not fundamentally attribute these distinctive political outcomes to agency actions and political leaders. Instead, he advanced a historical-structural explanation in which the nature of class relations—and class struggles—shaped the political outcome. As the title of the book implies, the labour-repressive feudal lords—who also ran the state—and the peasants had remained the principal political actors in most societies across the ages. And then a new class matured and asserted itself. That was the bourgeoisie, which also included commercial farmers and the urban middle and upper class. Essentially, in a political struggle where the peasants were dominant by themselves, socialism was the outcome. A struggle in which the landed interests and the bourgeoisie together asserted themselves over the peasants, the outcome was fascism. Finally, a struggle in which the bourgeoisie and the peasants took control against the interests of the labour-repressive landed class, the outcome was bourgeois democracy. In

the case of England, France and the USA, i.e., states in which bourgeois democracy took hold, political turmoil due to revolutions weakened and displaced the labour-repressive landed class. This rent-seeking landed class in those countries could not develop a coalition with the emerging bourgeoisie either. The peasants smashed both the landed class and the bourgeoisie in the Chinese case and fashioned socialism. On the other hand, a coalition of landed interests and the bourgeoisie against the peasantry led Japan along the path of fascism. Such a coalition enabled the landed class and the bourgeoisie to enhance the extraction of surplus from the rural areas and the peasants. While the peasants and the lords were the longstanding and principal historical 'actors', the rise of the bourgeoisie, in essence, was the lynchpin on which democratic revolution and democratisation rested. Indeed, Moore, in the concluding chapter of the book, went on to assert, 'No bourgeois, no democracy' (1966: 419).

Moore has both been supported *and* faulted by many. (For a succinct summary, see Mahoney 2003: 137-51). In particular, Skocpol (1979) has argued that democracy flowered in England despite the fact that the landed class continued to remain powerful, notwithstanding the rise of the bourgeoisie, till at least the first half of the 19th century. Skocpol (1979) also makes the case that Japan did not really have large landholders which, Moore argues, contributed to fascism there.

I just referred to Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (1979), which, like Moore's *Social Origins*, is widely regarded as a classic. As the title forthrightly implies, her book is more about why revolutions, including democratic ones, take place.

Skocpol draws a number of fundamental and intertwined lessons from her study of the French, Soviet and Chinese revolutions.

First, revolutions, whether of the bourgeois or the socialist kind, are structured around class interests. A close attention to the nature of class relations, defined, in classically Marxist terms, 'as rooted in the control of productive property and the appropriation of economic surpluses from direct producers by non-producers' (p. 13) is, therefore, of primary significance.

However, and second, in a nod to Tilly (1978) as well as the Leninist-Trotskyist notion of a vanguard, she asserts that class relations alone do not produce a revolution. The ways in which classes organise and access resources, 'including coercive resources' (p. 14), are crucial to revolutionary action. The organisation that leads a revolution could be a Leninist party, a coalition of peasants and/or rural organisations (or, possibly, a bourgeois party or a coalition of such parties). These are frontal carriers of the revolutionary organisation and spirit.

Third, and drawing in part from Wallerstein (1974), she finds that the roots of revolution in a country are cast far and wide at the international and world-systemic levels. A revolution is never an entirely national affair. In particular, the uneven development of capitalism means that the more developed and better integrated regions and countries are almost necessarily implicated in revolutions in less-developed and less-integrated regions and states.

Transnational relations have contributed to the emergence of all social-revolutionary crises and have invariably helped to shape revolutionary struggles and outcomes. All modern social revolutions, in fact, must be seen as being closely related in their causes and accomplishments to the internationally uneven spread of capitalist economic development and nation-state formation on the world scale. (p. 19)

Further,

Historically, unequal or competitive transnational relations have helped to shape any given country's state or class structures, thus influencing the existing 'domestic' contexts from which revolution emerges (or not). Furthermore transnational relations influence the course of events during actual revolutionary conjunctures. Modern social revolutions have emerged in countries situated in disadvantaged positions within international arenas. In particular, the realities of military backwardness or political dependency have crucially affected the occurrence and course of social revolutions. Although uneven economic development always lies in the background, developments within the international states system as such—especially defeats in wars or threats of invasion and struggle ... have directly contributed to virtually all outbreaks of revolutionary crises.

Fourth, Skocpol (pp. 24-33) awards a singular significance to the (potential) autonomy of the state—from classes, political parties and other economic, political, and cultural groups and structures. Unlike in the Marxist as well as other comparative historical accounts of revolution and democratisation, including Tilly's, for Skocpol the state and the dominant class, e.g., the landed class in feudalism and the bourgeoisie in capitalism, is not one and the same. The capitalist state cannot be fully reduced to a bourgeois state. Skocpol criticises Tilly and argues that the state is a distinct political structure that can exercise a significant degree of autonomy from the society.

Skocpol asserts:

... State power cannot be understood [unlike in the Leninist view] only as an instrument of class domination, nor can changes in state structures be explained primarily in terms of class conflict. In France, Russia, and China, class conflicts—especially between peasants and landlords were pivotal during the revolutionary interregnums. But both the occurrence of revolutionary situations in the first place and the nature of the New Regimes that emerged ... depended fundamentally upon ... state organisations and their partially autonomous and dynamic relationships to domestic class and political forces, as well as their positions in relation to other states abroad (p. 284).

The Skocpolian notion of state autonomy, which draws from Weber as well as 'structural Marxists' such as Miliband (1969), bears a key significance for a theory of revolution. Under this insight, not only is the state not collapsible to the 'elite' and the 'ruling class,' but the state on the one hand and the dominant classes or the elites on the other may occupy opposing positions during a revolutionary situation. A theory of revolution, Skocpol reasons, must keep the state at the centre because 'political crises [e.g., revolutions] have not at all been epiphenomenal reflections of societal strains or class contradictions. Rather, they have been direct expressions of contradictions centred in the structures of old-regime states' (p. 29).

The state ... is no mere arena in which socioeconomic struggles are fought out. It is, rather, a set of administrative, policing, and military organisations headed ... by an executive authority.

Any state first and fundamentally extracts resources from society and deploys these to create and support coercive and administrative organisations ... These fundamental state organisations are at least potentially autonomous from direct dominant-class control ... State organisations necessarily compete with the dominant class(es) in appropriating resources from the economy and society ... The use of state power to support dominant class interests is not inevitable ... The state has its own interests vis-à-vis subordinate classes. (pp. 30-1)

Thus, for Skocpol, it is not just that the super-ordinate and the subordinate classes are pitted against each other but also that there is a state which may act relatively autonomously against one or the other classes. The chances are that the state is closer to the super-ordinate classes, but this cannot at all be assumed. Certainly, the fact that the state can be an autonomous actor implies that the super-ordinate class is unlikely to hegemonise either the revolutionary process or the revolutionary outcome.

Further, states function within an international system and interact with other states. The interests of the international system and neighbouring states may not always be supportive of the dominant class interests. '...Geopolitical environment create tasks and opportunities for states and place limits on their capacities to cope with either external or internal task or crises' (p. 30) such that 'the state, in short, is fundamentally Janus-faced, with an intrinsically dual-anchorage in class-divided socioeconomic structures and an international system of states'.

Fifth, the nature and outcome of revolution is dependent on the distribution of ownership of productive resources in the old regime. As Goldstone (2003: 65) summarises Skocpol, in states where sources of livelihood were relatively widely dispersed, e.g., in 1640

England and 1789 France, the revolution could not seize the economy. The revolution would merely change the regime of private ownership. In states where the sources were less dispersed, the new regime sought, and sometimes succeeded, to severely limit private property.

The fourth text I wish to engage with is *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (1992) by Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyn Huber Stephens and John D Stephens (RSS). RSS agree that early capitalism, due to a successful coalition between the peasants and the bourgeoisie – and against the landed interests – did lead to democracy. But, they argue that the bourgeoisie, at least in Belgium, Denmark, Norway and Switzerland, later actively resisted the political inclusion of subordinate groups.

RSS are well-known as one of the strongest proponents of the view that democracy is *primarily* an outcome of the struggle and the power of the peasants and the lower classes against the landed classes – even though state power and transnational power also play key roles in democratisation. They find that

The centrality of class power to the process of democratisation was repeatedly confirmed in the comparative studies [of the advanced capitalist countries, Latin American and Central America and the Caribbean] ... The organised working class appeared as a key actor in the development of full democracy almost everywhere, the only exception being the few cases of agrarian democracy in some of the small-holding countries ... [In the Latin American cases,] the relative weakness of the working class certainly has contributed to the infrequency of full democracy in the region and to the instability of democracy where it did emerge. (p. 270)

It should be noted that the countries with small holdings identified by RSS which remained democratic during the period between the two world wars were Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands and France. RSS further note that the west and south of Germany, much of north Italy as well as parts of Spain and Austria-Hungary were characterised by small holdings but the rest of the countries had large holdings which shaped their non-democratic trajectory during the period.

More generally,

Large landlords, particularly those who depended on a large supply of cheap labor, consistently emerged as the most anti-democratic force in the comparative studies ... The orthodox Marxist and liberal social science view of the role of the bourgeoisie as the primary agent of democracy did not stand up under scrutiny. Though clearly not as anti-democratic as landlords, capitalist and the parties they primarily supported rarely if ever pressed for the introduction of full democracy. (p. 271)

On the other hand,

... In most countries the bourgeoisie supported the opening up of contestation and the introduction of parliamentary government which, in turn, allowed the civil society to develop and opened the way for the inclusion of the middle classes and later the working class ... Capitalism creates democratic pressures in spite of the capitalists, not because of them ... Capitalism brings the subordinate classes together in factories and cities where members of those classes can associate and organise more easily; it improves the means of communication and transportation facilitating nationwide organisation ...

RSS do not find that there is an 'overall structural correspondence between capitalism and democracy that explains the rise and persistence of democracy', nor do they trust the conclusion that 'the bourgeoisie [is] the main agent of democracy that has been central to both classic liberal and marxist-leninist theory' (p. 7). RSS assert that 'democracy is above all a matter of power ... it is power relations that most importantly determine whether democracy can emerge, stabilise and then maintain itself even in the face of adverse conditions (p. 5). Democratisation, most importantly, is a matter of a

... balance of power among different *classes and class coalitions*. This is a factor of overwhelming importance. It is complemented by two other power configurations—the structure, strength and autonomy of the *state apparatus* and its interrelations with civil society and the impact of *transnational power relations* on both the balance of class power and on state-society relations. (p. 5) (Emphases in original)

Further,

... Capitalist development is associated with democracy because it transforms the class structure, strengthening the working and middle classes and weakening the landed upper class. It was not the capitalist market nor capitalists as the new dominant force, but rather the contradictions of capitalism that advanced the cause of democracy. (p.7)

RSS further find that (a) the landed interests, which depended on cheap labour, were the consistently anti-democratic force, (b) the middle classes played an ambiguous role in that they supported the lower classes only insofar as furthered their own

interests while seeking an authoritarian alternative if threatened by the lower classes, and (c) the peasants and rural workers '... played varied roles ... Independent family farmers in small-holding countries were a pro-democratic force whereas their posture in countries or areas dominated by large landholdings was more authoritarian' (p.9).

As far as the nature of the state is concerned, RSS find that states needed to consolidate power and acquire some degree of autonomy in order to pursue democratisation although much too high an autonomy could translate into authoritarianism. Political parties played an important mediating role in installing and consolidating democracy. Finally, in connection with transnational power relations, RSS find that economic dependence was negatively related to democratisation, in particular because such dependence shaped the class structure in ways not conducive to democratisation.

RSS identify one major puzzle in research on democratisation. Quantitative cross-national comparisons of democratic and other countries, as argued and illustrated early on by a host of 'modernisation theorists', e.g., Lerner (1958), Lipset (1959), and Parsons (1966) invariably point to high positive association between measures of economic and social growth and development on the one hand and indicators of democracy on the other. This, RSS argue, makes one optimistic that democracy may flower in developing countries—to the extent that these countries attain economic growth and social development. On the other hand, qualitative comparative historical comparisons would tend to indicate that development and growth-led democratisation may have been a product of a specific historical constellation of political-military, economic and cultural features of the early-capitalist phase of world history, which may not repeat again. A host of other authors of the comparative-historical bent, such as de Schweintz (1964),

Chirot (1977), Moore, and O'Donnell, have lent credence to this conclusion. On the other hand, Bollen's study (1983) supported the hypothesis that higher levels of socioeconomic development contributed to democratisation even when 'late-capitalist' processes, e.g., penetration by multinational corporations, foreign trade concentration and volume of US aid, were introduced into the equation.

The fifth text, *Modernisation and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics* by Guillermo O'Donnell (1973), surveys Latin American politics during the 1960s and 1970s, when most Latin American countries were alternating between democracy and military dictatorship, to conclude that modernisation was leading not to democracy but to authoritarian centralism. More importantly, O'Donnell made that argument, favoured by many dependency theorists, that modernisation itself was the cause of authoritarianism inasmuch as modernisation of peripheral and semi-peripheral countries fed on dependence on core capitalist countries to begin with. Such dependence, in turn, strengthened the bureaucracy, a specific configuration of classes as well as state policies that were unfriendly to trade unions, popular control and democracy.

I wish to more briefly bring in two additional texts here even though they are not in the comparative historical tradition. As hinted above, Seymour Martin Lipset's 1959 seminal paper 'Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy', was the first among the post-World War II genre to explore the roots of democratisation. Lipset assayed considerable evidence and concluded that economic development and modernisation—as measured by economic wellbeing, industrialisation, urbanisation, education, communication and equality—led to stable democracy. Lipset also

argued that both the lower and upper classes had undemocratic tendencies and it was the middle class which had an interest in keeping democracy intact.

Increased wealth ... affects the political role of the middle class through changing the shape of the stratification structure so that it shifts from an elongated pyramid, with a large lower-class base, to a diamond with a growing middle class. A large middle class plays a mitigating role in moderating conflict since it is able to reward moderate and democratic parties and penalise extremist groups ... The wealth level will also affect the extent to which given countries can develop 'universalistic' norms ... [Also] associated with the greater wealth is the presence of intermediary organisations and institutions which can act as sources of countervailing power ... inhibiting the state or any other single major source of private power from dominating all political resources ... (pp. 83-84)

Lipset's 1994 paper extends but does not contradict these findings. It may be noted that quantitative analysis of correlation and causal relation between income, education, inequality, etc, on the one hand and revolution and democratisation on the other—based on much newer and larger data sets—are summarised, among others, by Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) and Carles Boix (2003). These two texts do not fall within the comparative historical genre either, but provide excellent game-theoretic treatments of democratic revolution and democratisation.

The last text is *Paths towards Democracy: The Working Class and Elites in Western Europe and South America* by Ruth Berins Collier (1999). Collier arrives at a more nuanced relationship between class and democratisation as also between two different historical peri-

ods of democratisation in Western Europe and South America. In the earlier, West European case the process of democratisation was drawn out and the political cleavage was more class based. In the more recent South American case, democratisation was far more rapid and it was based more on state-society cleavages—and not necessarily class cleavages, i.e., between authoritarians and democrats, the latter of which could be political parties or social movements. Collier argues that the ‘class-heavy’ or ‘class-only’ outlook has three faults (pp. 190-1): (a) it was not necessarily the lower classes who were the main actors even with regard to their own inclusion [in relation to democratic power and rights], (b) those already included may start initiatives to expand inclusion as a mobilisation strategy in a competitive context which has remained relatively politically restricted, and (c) the image of democratisation as expansion of inclusion of the lower classes may itself be overdrawn inasmuch as democratisation has involved many other components such as parliamentary sovereignty, national autonomy, reform of upper house, and so on.

V. Discussion: Democratic Revolution in Nepal within and around the Coordinates

A. Nepal and the capitalist mode

If capitalism furnishes the primary platform on which democracy can be erected and if our objective is to explore the roots of democratisation in Nepal, we are obliged to discuss the nature of the mode of production and assess the nature of capitalism there. I shall do this at some length so that the discussion can also provide a background for the rest of the sections of the paper.

What are the principal processes and features of the nature of

capitalist transition in Nepal? Nepal was a small-hold, peasant-pastoral economy for long (Blaikie, Cameron and Seddon 2005). Most agricultural farms were privately held and transferred. But the state could also award land and farms to newcomers, state officials and others on a permanent or temporary basis. The scale of organisation of production was largely limited to the household and the community, and self-sufficiency was prized. Illustratively, and like in much of the world, cotton was grown by many households. Almost all households engaged in a variety of crafts. Market towns had developed along densely populated areas, along internal trade routes as well as routes to Tibet and India. Some towns had also become industrialised. The three towns of the Kathmandu Valley were well developed.

Present-day Nepal was divided into at least 50 separate kingdoms, probably mirroring the small scale of the organisation of production. The hereditary kings and village chieftains extracted small-scale corvée labour. The society itself was stratified and ordered by class as well as caste. Ethnicity and gender were the other prominent bases of the social order.

The 'unification' of Nepal in the latter half of the 18th century, which at one time encompassed an area approximately double the country's present size, was a response to the extreme political-economic and military volatility created simultaneously by the demise of the Mughal empire and the arrival of the pre-eminent world-capitalist power in India and at Nepal's doorsteps. The arrival of the British East India Company (EIC) could have provided an opportunity for rapid capitalist growth. But both the EIC and the regime in Nepal often came to loggerheads on matters of defence, warfare, alignment of borders, loyalty of landlords, access to land rent, etc. The EIC, in addition, was bent on opening up the economy and in building an informational and political base which

could potentially help it to control the political, military and commercial domains in Nepal. Among others, the two sides fought a series of wars. Nepal lost the decisive one of 1814-6, along with a huge expanse of land on the east, west and south, and conceded to hosting a potentially intrusive British Resident in Kathmandu.

The expansionary EIC and the British Empire, which took over after 1857 following the 'Sepoy Mutiny' in India, led to a series of geopolitical, economic and political transformation of Nepal through wars, treaties, commodity transactions, land tenure systems, labour migration, military recruitment arrangement, transport, commerce, and a variety of other means. An extraverted (Amin 1974) mode of articulation of labour and commodities in and from Nepal took hold. This was hastened with the establishment of railheads along the Nepal-British India border during 1890-1910. Capitalism, the autocratic nature of the Nepali Rana state, and the institution of 'state landlordism,' in which the state was the owner of at least all uncultivated land and engaged in rent farming to officials or contractors (Regmi 1976), together, in a curious twist, led to the formation of a semi-feudal mode of production along the southern plains of the Tarai-Madhes for about 75 years, from approximately 1890 to 1965.

I have been partial to the view that capitalism began to take roots in Nepal at least since 1816 (Mishra 2007: 47-80, 2004: 125-54) (if not since the economically and culturally expansive Malla period which began in the 14th century), when it concluded a military, political and commercial treaty with the EIC. It should be noted that the EIC was the largest multinational company headquartered in the most powerful and expansionist capitalist country in the world. It was also a company that engaged not only commercially and diplomatically but also raised an army—which Nepal fought against on several occasions—in order to pursue its mercantile

capitalist interests. World capitalism not only arrived on the doorsteps of Nepal but increasingly enveloped it in the years thereafter.

I submit that there are three fundamental and distinctive markers of specific modes of production. One, we can distinguish among modes of production by the nature of the distribution of ownership of productive resources. Two, we can distinguish it by the way labour is organised and accessed by those with productive assets. Three, we can distinguish it by how expansively, ceaselessly and efficiently the bourgeoisie and the state run the capitalist cycle of profit-making, reinvestment and expanded reproduction. (These markers are not intended to deny that two or more modes may remain mutually articulated at any point in history. The identification of a political economic space in terms of mode of production is a matter of relative dominance and historical tendency.) I attempt below to characterise the nature of Nepal's economy using these three markers. In brief, I show that Nepal's mode of production is fundamentally capitalist as far as the first two, i.e., distribution of ownership and mode of organisation of labour are concerned. As for the third marker, Nepal has a long way to go, and, I shall argue later, the failure to run the capitalist cycle has also hurt democratisation.

a. As noted, the distribution of ownership of productive resources is a key indicator of the presence or absence of feudalism—and the existence of a platform for primitive accumulation and capitalism. In particular, the feudal mode is characterised by a few large landholders who command the labour of a sizeable army of landless or near-landless serfs or attached tenants. As hinted, even in pre-18th century Nepal, there was no evidence of a full-blown feudalism of the European kind where the lord had an independent political, military and legal standing. As noted, this came true for Nepal only for a short

period of approximately 75 years in a specific region, i.e., the Tarai-Madhes. Barring this, right till 1970, approximately 90 per cent of all households owned farmland. Ownership of farmland was unequally distributed though. The extent of inequality in household land-ownership has been higher in the Tarai-Madhes for long. While historical data is difficult to obtain, the coefficient of variation of household landholding, which is an indicator of the dispersal of the size of holdings from the mean, for Nepal, the Mountains, Hills and Tarai-Madhes in 2011 was 159.2, 117.6, 130.5 and 184.4 per cent, respectively (calculated from Government of Nepal 2011a). Nonetheless, the dominant mode was one in which numerous independent producers held sway.

Major initiatives to reform landownership were initiated in the 1950s and the 1960s which essentially led to the demise of whatever remained of the feudal system (cf. Regmi 1976). The forests were nationalised and tax-free and other privileged tenures abolished. *Corvée* labour was banned. Upper ceilings were instituted on landownership. The distribution of the produce share which accrued to a landowner and a tenant was regulated. In addition, a tenant was awarded the right to ownership of 25 per cent of the farm area cultivated. The institution of the landlord who mediated between the state and the peasant was abolished. The peasant henceforth became a *de jure*—and not merely a *de facto*—holder of a deed to his or her farm. Some of the initiatives were only partially successful. While some of these initiatives were taken by an autocratic regime, and therefore met with possibly undue criticism (e.g., Blaikie, Cameron and Seddon 2005: 57; but also see p. 218), these initiatives went some way in balancing the interest of the landowner and the tenant while also de-legalising privileged ownership. It may be noted that some of the initiatives were in keeping with the suggestions of Ladejinsky (1977), who had ad-

vised, among others, the Japanese government on land reform during 1945-54.

b. The form in which labour is organised is another key indicator of the nature of a mode of production. Two-thirds of all households farm with their labour and one-third hire-wage labour for farming (Government of Nepal 2006: 234). Inter-household exchange of labour during the peak periods yields the third largest supply of labour in terms of volume. Attached labour, which is a pre-capitalist form, is extremely small in scale. Eighty-six per cent of the holdings, which contained 83 per cent of the area of all farms, were owner-cultivated by 2001 (Adhikari 2008: 49).

To be sure, regimes of unpaid labour, extracted most often by the village landlord who most often served as a functionary of the state, were alive till approximately the middle of the 1960s. Thus, the 'peasant mode' was by far the dominant one, supplemented by foraging, craftwork, renting farm in and out, and local and migrant wage labour. Small-scale 'domestic' slavery was abolished in 1925. *Kamaiya* debt bondage was somewhat large even till the 1990s although concentrated in a particular region. However, attached labour of all forms were rapidly weakening due to various reasons, e.g., empowerment of tenants due to the land reforms of the 1950s and 1960s, enabling them to struggle against labour-repressive practices, access of landowners to other forms of labour, migration of labourers, access of labourers to other forms of labour, and organisation among labourers themselves. The expanded regime of international labour migration and the relative scarcity of labour it has generated nearly decimated labour-repressive practices. Dalits—almost always those from the older generation and women—and the very poor, sometimes do work at sub-market wage rates, particularly during the 2-4-month-long 'hungry season'.

A sub-market wage rate, however, is characteristic of capitalism as well.

A host of telling statistics is available on the recent transition in the structure of production and employment, which tells us of a story of a more rapid incorporation within the capitalist system. While 70 per cent of the GDP was sourced from agriculture two generations ago in 1970, the corresponding share of agriculture in 2013 was only 33 per cent, including industrial-commercial agriculture, e.g., green vegetable cultivation, fruit growing, poultry and pig raising, dairying, fishery, etc. 'Traditional agriculture' does not contribute more than a fourth of the total GDP. The service, construction, transportation and manufacturing sectors—the 'obviously capitalist' sectors—produce far more value than was the case in 1970. There has, thus, been a large-scale diversification of the structure of production, work and employment, and earnings. Agriculture remains the primary occupation of 64 per cent of all households (Government of Nepal 2011a). However, 48 per cent of all males between 15 and 49 years of age were engaged in non-agricultural occupations by 2006 (Government of Nepal 2007). This figure had reached 65 per cent by 2011 (Government of Nepal 2012). In addition, it has been reported that 76 per cent of male wage earners are engaged in non-agricultural occupations (Government of Nepal 2011a). The share of farm income in total household income has declined sharply. Farm income, which provided 61 per cent of all household income in 1995/96, made up only 28 per cent by 2010/11 (Government of Nepal 2011a).

'Ownership migration', under which households migrate to procure farmland, has been a longstanding routine—extending to least 300 years or more. It started in an east-to-west pattern within the Hills and later spanned out to Northeast India and, still later, from the Hills to the Tarai-Madhesh. So has labour migration. Migra-

tion to the EIC-organised forest clearance activities, road and railroad track construction, and tea, coffee and other plantations in India's Northeast drew sizeable labour for approximately 150 years beginning at around 1800. 'Military migration' was also very high, particularly during the two World Wars when Nepali recruits fought under the British Indian Army. The difference now is that it is much larger in scale than any other historical stream and is sourced not only in the Mountains and Hills but also the Tarai-Madhesh. As a proportion of the youth, it rivals those during the two World Wars. The implication is that both ownership and labour have been mobile for a long time and have been enmeshed in capitalist relationships. The de-ruralisation that much of this has entailed is momentarily large. Much of the labour migration now is international—to Southeast Asia, West Asia, India, and all across the world. The data on labour migration and international labour migration remains tentative. Estimates of the size of international labour migrants (including in India) put it in the range of 3 to 4 million. The government figure for absentees or migrants outside of Nepal for 2010/11 was 20 per cent (Government of Nepal 2011a). Another government source reports that, among those 15-24 years of age, a staggering 45 per cent reside outside the country (Government of Nepal 2011b).

International labour migration, of course, is not unique to Nepal. Demand for labour outside of one's settlement and country at a wage rate generally higher than locally available has undercut the remnants of feudal overtones in organisation of labour. Workers' relations of dependence upon local landowners and other employers has undergone large-scale transformation. Now, in a reversal of what was routine 40 years ago, it is not uncommon for an agricultural labourer to drive the wage negotiation. In some instances, landowners are obliged to provide the labourer an interest-free

advance payment in order to ensure future supply of labour. Large-scale de-ruralisation and labour migration constitute part of the power and command of world capitalism over cheap labour power. Much unhinging and uprooting in the peripheries, thus, has been moving apace with the expansion of capitalism in the cores and semi-peripheries.

What is also different in this phase of labour migration is that it has become the lifeblood of the state, communities and households. Fifty-six per cent of all households in Nepal derived part of their living from remittance sent by close relatives, once again providing stark proof of the power of capital over labour power. It has been reported that, in 2011, 28 per cent of all household income accrued from agriculture, 37 per cent from non-farm enterprises, and 17 per cent from remittances. In addition, an income equivalent to 16 per cent of total household income was derived by from the use of one's house (Government of Nepal 2011a).

As is usual during transitions to capitalism, the proportion of the self-employed and the wage employed in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors is shifting rather rapidly. Based on the Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS) data, which is a high-quality, national sample survey data, between 1996 and 2011, the proportion of those self-employed in agriculture went down by 8 per cent (from 60 to 52 per cent) (Government of Nepal 2011a). The proportion of the self-employed in the non-agricultural sector, on the other hand, went up by 10 per cent (from 10 to 19 per cent) (Government of Nepal 2011a). Similarly, the proportion of the wage-employed in the agricultural sector declined by 8 per cent even as the proportion of the wage-employed in the non-agricultural sector increased by 8 per cent. Even those with 'adequate' farmland often find better returns for labour in non-farm, urban or international jobs.

A lowered demand for children's labour on farms – not the least

because farms are often sub-divided inter-generationally, the emphasis households put on non-farm jobs, together with a relatively successful policy of promotion of literacy and education had led, by 1990, to a situation in which nearly 90 per cent of all primary-level children were within a 30-minute walking distance from a primary school. The literacy rate had climbed from approximately 20 per cent in 1970 to 65 per cent in 2011.

At the same time, shifts in the structures of schooling, production, employment as well as intensified migration have created a differentiated structure of opportunities and outcomes at multiple levels. One consequence of this has been exacerbation of inequality among caste, ethnic, gender, etc, groups. While some dimensions of such inequality are being bridged, such as caste, ethnic, gender inequality in schooling, several gaps remain. Another consequence of this world-scale transition has been the discourse on the demise of the community (for Nepal, see Pigg 1992). Still another consequence has been the increasingly individualised nature of capability, earnings and assets (Mishra 2014b). The relative homogeneity of labour power, work, earnings, and assets in communities stands much weakened. The heterogeneity introduced by these processes, in turn, has led to a shift in the structure of belonging, including at the household level. While it is usual for households to shed dependents in times of economic stress (Anderson 1980: 316), during 1996-2011, which have been relatively prosperous years for Nepal--during which the incidence of household poverty decreased from 42 to 25 per cent--the mean size of the household came down by approximately 15 per cent.

c. The profit-making, reinvestment and expanded reproduction cycle, as noted earlier, has been the Achilles' heel of capitalist development in Nepal. The expansiveness and speed of this capitalist

cycle is, expectedly, diverse across sectors and regions. The overall infirmity of this capitalist cycle in Nepal, however, has to do with the mutual disarticulation of the elements of expanded reproduction. Essentially, a significant-to-large proportion of wage, rent, profit and other streams of income, resources and capabilities, such as education, skill and productive age, fail to be reinvested within sectoral, local and national bounds. Wages, rent, profit, etc. seep through a rural area, the agricultural sector, the poor, and the country as a whole such that these sectors and locations experience disinvestment or low levels of investment rather than expanded reinvestment. Capital flight is a significant component of this feebleness. Broadly, the blockage now resides in the forces rather than the relations of production. Blockage now also resides in the nature of the political parties, some of which continue to wish to implement capitalism through ad hoc orders and through the seat of the political party and the government rather than through impersonal, transparent and expertise-based regulations. Blockage finally resides in the idea and practice of patron-client relationships, state capitalism, and crony capitalism. The world and regional capitalist system, in addition, erect powerful blockage against peripheral economies even as it also offers a host of opportunities.

To summarise, it is these features of the regimes of production and generation of livelihood, i.e., widespread ownership of independent and small holdings, empowerment of agricultural tenants, including through the award of rights to a portion of the farm, free and unattached labour, a rapid weakening of the labour-repressing landlord (in relation to the Tarai-Madhes region), enhanced labour mobility and the consequent unfettering of older labour forms, that has been accelerating the demise of pre-capitalist modes and the strengthening of the capitalist form.

It was noted earlier that more than 60 per cent of all male workers

were engaged in the agricultural sector. If we were to define most of these non-agricultural workers as the working class, in the sense that they work for others, and connect it with RSS's finding that 'The working class was the most consistently pro-democratic force' (p. 8), the implications for Nepal's democratisation would seem clear enough. It is necessary to also note that RSS find both the independent and 'small' peasants to be of a democratic bent. Marx had realised that the small holding peasants were like 'a sack of potato' only in a historical-structural context when 'each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption, and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society' and when peasant households have not entered 'into manifold relations' (Marx 1954: 105). Small-holders in Nepal, however, have been living in a society with a high level of penetration of commodity, labour, finance, etc, market relations. They also live in a society with the presence of a state and in a society where communication is becoming dense. While Nepal has historically been a small-holder economy, it is also to the credit of the land reforms initiatives of the 1950s and 1960s, the impact of successive inter-generational subdivision of landholding, and, possibly, the more recent rise in prosperity that the size of the small and independent owner-cultivators has increased. Ninety-five per cent of all households own land, however large or small the farm may be (Government of Nepal 2011a). The size of the pro-democratic force can, thus, be interpreted to be very large indeed.

Further, increasing individualisation of assets, capabilities, incomes and determination of goals in life, unhinging of social relationships based on pre-capitalist forms and labour-unfriendly production regime that has recently received a jolt with the expansion of the international labour migration regime have all fortified

the capitalist form. De-ruralisation and the increasing urbanisation of the rural – which has a series of economic, political and belongingness-related implications; expansion of literacy and education; and increasing incidence and scope of claims, including the much up-scaled ethnic claim-making; increasing diversification, demise of older leadership structures, etc, are some other components of an enhanced capitalist mode. It has to be emphasised that these are also among the attributes that have been discussed as contributing to citizenship, public-hood, and bourgeois democracy.

B. Class structure, caste and ethnicity

For Marxists of almost all hues, a valid handle on class and class contradiction and struggle has remained the key to the innards of a society. This was also the handle which was effectively utilised both by comparative historical and cross-sectional studies of democratisation. Of the authors reviewed here, Lipset, Collier and Acemoglu and Robinson all make use of this handle. So do Marx and Engels, Moore, Skocpol, O'Donnell and RSS. RSS believe that 'social class ... is ... a master key to understanding the social structuring of interests and power in a society [and] the organisation of class interests is constitutive of major collective actors' (p. 5). Clearly, class and class coalitions are expected to exert a singular impact on democratic revolution and democratisation.

There are several theoretical issues that need to be settled before the nature of class structure in Nepal can be fruitfully discussed. The first is that, unlike in the classic revolutionary portrayals and in portrayals in the literature on democratisation, classes are not always polarised into the corners of a ring. Marx and Engels understood that a strict two-way polarisation was a feature of a mode of production at its peak. In the early stages, what takes place is differentiation, not polarisation. The class structure during an early

stage of a mode of production is fluid and under formation. Differentiation takes time to cluster together.

Second, the notion of class and class formation is almost always, including in the comparative historical literature on democratisation, conceptualised as a nationally-bound entity and process. It has remained a highly 'nationalistic' concept. Of the literature reviewed here, both Skocpol and RSS seem to hold this view notwithstanding the fact that both highlight the significance of the transnational context for democratisation. The 'nationalistic' understanding did hold some water during the early days of world capitalism. Capitalism and its contradictions as well as democratic revolutions could possibly have been regarded at that time as 'national' affairs. So was class, both as an outcome of a mode of production and as a cause of democracy. The 'nation bound' conceptualisation of class, it should be noted, is an outcome of the 'productionist' school of Marxism where a mode of production is nationally determined. The world-system perspective, which visualises the world as a single integrated and hierarchised entity, on the other hand, makes exchange the driver of production rather than the other way around. This 'exchangist' perspective bears important implications for the determination of class structure in a country. It demands that the roots and restructuring of class be sought far and wide beyond the national borders. It should be noted that O'Donnell, to his credit, did visualise that a dependent political economic formation also had its class structured in a dependent manner. The comparative historical perspective, which is 'nation bound,' thus, can make sense only within the world-systemic.

Third, there is a powerful tendency in Marxist class analysis – which, again, has a Soviet and Stalinist stamp, equating the working class primarily, if not exclusively, with manufacturing workers. The dependency perspective is also somewhat imbued with such a

tendency. Thus, RSS's and O'Donnell's findings that dependence generates anti-democratic tendencies by tending to keep the working class small and weak is valid—if the 'working class' is defined primarily in manufacturing terms. This would strongly support the 'disarticulation and blockage argument' I made earlier in the section on 'Nepal and capitalism' in order to explain the feeble nature of the cycle of profit-making, reinvestment and expanded-reproduction in Nepal for a rather prolonged period. This would also explain the feeble, prolonged and uneven but nevertheless ongoing process of democratisation in Nepal. Indeed, this would fit the situation of most peripheral economies fairly well. But the 'working class' could be defined to include not only those involved primarily in the manufacturing sector but also the semi-proletarianised wage workers, 'informal' self-employed workers (Smith and Wallerstein 1992), and international labour migrant workers. The 'working class' in the 'next circle' could also partially include the independent small landed and other producers inasmuch as most derive a substantial proportion of their household income from sources other than the farm. Further, the large number of those who have look for work but cannot find it or find it only intermittently, i.e., the unemployed and the underemployed, could constitute the 'third circle' of workers.

The 'primarily manufacturing' argument does have some merit in that the manufacturing worker is more likely to be a full-time worker as well as one who depends almost fully on wages—a classically authentic proletariat (see Smith and Wallerstein 1992, however). In addition, manufacturing workers are probably easier to unionise because of their geographical concentration, the immediacy of exploitation, the consequent sense of class-in-itself, which is presumably relatively easily transformed into class-for-itself.

This may not be the case though. There is very probably no

household of a 'small' peasant, non-manufacturing worker or the underemployed and the unemployed worker which does not engage in substantial exchange on the market or earn a wage and is, in consequence, exploited. As such, it is more prudent to expand the classical notion of 'worker' to include large sections of non-manufacturing workers, international labour migrants as well as 'small' peasants into the fold. The unemployed and the underemployed may also be included. All of these categories are tied to the market and do not derive substantial profit which enables them to engage in reinvestment and expanded reproduction. To go a bit on a tangent, if the 'primarily manufacturing' definition of a worker were to hold valid, the prospects of democracy even in core capitalist economies and states, where the bulk of the workers are engaged in the service sector, would become tenuous indeed.

Finally, it is necessary to comprehend class not only in the 'objective' sense but as one in which the activities, struggles and aspirations, i.e., the agency, of the members of a class are also valorised (Thompson 1991, Wood 2007). The 'objective' reading has also often been a reified reading, a reading imposed by dogmas and political parties (McNally 1993). This is particularly the case, I think, in the case of a mode of production in which the structure of production is making a rapid shift and diversification and differentiation is rapidly taking hold. A mode of production, as everything else, is always in a process of re-creation but it is more so when it is coming into being than when it is maturing or has matured. Indeed, when the structure of production is rapidly transforming and diversification and differentiation are rapid, and at a meso and micro levels of analysis, the notion of mode of generation of livelihood, rather than of mode of production, which has often been vested with an unwarranted stolidity and fixity, may be more illuminating.

The nature of shifts taking hold in the structure and mode of

production in Nepal has been discussed in the preceding section. It was argued that there was a huge shift in the structure of production and the dominant mode was broadly capitalist in nature. These shifts, it was noted, has lead to tumultuous changes and 'a million mutinies'. Now, if that was the template of how production was being re-organised, the nature of the evolving class structure is relatively easy to put a finger to.

Essentially, Moore's and others' 'labour repressive' landlord class was historically tiny in the Hills even though it had a definite presence in the Tarai-Madhes. Unlike the Hills, the Tarai-Madhes did have large holdings, a relatively high level of landlessness and a higher level of inequality, the brunt of which was shouldered by the landless and Dalits. The carpet under the landlord class was pulled by the land reforms of the 1950s and 1960s, as discussed earlier. This does not necessarily mean, particularly in the Tarai-Madhes, that there is no large holding or that large-holding-based privileges are altogether dead. But it does mean that political clout and labour repressiveness cannot be sustained by large holders any longer. The classically identified enemy of democratisation has, thus, been on the deathbed for long. The 1960 democratic elections in which the then-left-of-centre Nepali Congress Party won 74 of the 109 seats speaks amply of the weak political clout of the landlord class which, as noted, was historically very small. While landholding has remained a correlate of election to a leadership position since, landed interests do not seem to weigh heavily in policy making whether in the political parties or in the government. The 1960s land reforms not only fixed the product share between the landowner and tenant but also awarded landownership rights to the tenant. In addition, it also dismantled the institution of 'state landlordism' which had allowed intermediary landlords some privileged access over farm and labour. It led to the maturity of the

small and independent peasant citizen. Inter-generational subdivision of holdings also had the effect of multiplying the ranks of the small peasant producer.

The landlord was on his deathbed not only because of land reforms and sub-divisions but also because the structure of production was changing rapidly and agricultural productivity was very low. Wages, rents, interests and profits were often higher in the non-agricultural sectors than in the agricultural. Urban and 'organised sector' jobs were, of course, the most prized ones. Terms of trade were weighed against rural areas and the agricultural sector. The clout of the rural diversifiers, non-agricultural wage workers, market town and urban workers, etc., grew as well. It also led to a non-agricultural and urban imaginary and agency in which movement away from rural areas and agriculture was regarded as a better passport to the future. The rural was continually intruded into by the urban and the urban began to be valorised far higher than the rural. Among the fortunate, farming was relegated to the older generation. The younger would attempt, or just wish, to move away from rural locations or at least diversify their engagement while living in rural locales. They would seek tie-ups with businesses or industries in nearby market towns and cities. This, of course, is a world-scale process that we have been witnessing in the semi-peripheral and peripheral areas in particular ever since the end of World War II.

The rapid expansion of schooling beginning the 1970s had a similar effect. It tended to draw the young further or away from farming and generated an imaginary among the young and old alike that the schooled should better not soil their hands. It helped that most of the first generation of the newly schooled were from the upper castes and the landed upper classes. While the economic policies required to open up non-agricultural and urban jobs

did not materialise, most of the schooled found themselves in a limbo. Some of them started to fill up the towns and cities, moved to Indian towns looking for jobs, and beginning the 1990s, increasingly enrolled in labour migration to East Asia, West Asia and beyond. Diversification, urbanisation, migration all further undercut the landed class. It also created a huge mass of the under-employed estimated at approximately 48 per cent in 2003/4 (Government of Nepal 2004). It also created a large body of young persons who, at least for part of their life, muted or shed their attachment to the family farm and became part of the semi-proletariat in towns and cities in Nepal and elsewhere.

The tumult discussed above was one generated by the under-employed mass, the rural household which could not earn its living, the somewhat-enlarging landless in the Tarai-Madhes, the rural worker who could not fully rely on an inherited farm and had diversified, the schooled with a non-agricultural and urban imagination and ambition, and the international migrant labour. Each had either experienced a squeeze in the generation of livelihood, had been diversifying or shifting the source of generation of livelihood, and/or aiming for a brighter future. The old principal force of production, i.e., the landed resources, given the state of technology, industry and market linkages, was, in general, shedding not only the landless, agricultural workers, and marginal holders but also medium and larger holders. (There were several exceptional pockets where agriculture was profitably tied up with commercial and industrial enterprise; see Fitzpatrick 2011, Luintel 2010, Mishra, Uprety and Panday 2000.) Certainly, the last two categories were in a different position than the rest. But old agriculture could not retain many of them. The brighter future, regarded of class, was not a landed and rural future. It was an urban and semi-proletarian future. The medium and large holders, should they fail in the new

world, were 'insured' in that they had a farm back home. The rest, on the other hand, had to face a risk.

There was a high level of dislocation of livelihood all around. The prospects of a move to Northeastern India had ceased long ago. The extension of farms to the forestlands—for those already in the Tarai-Madhes—and the move from the Hills to the Tarai-Madhes had ebbed by the 1980s. Moving to towns of capitalist growth in Nepal and India were attractive options. An even attractive option was labour migration to East Asia, West Asia and beyond, where burgeoning capital was beckoning the cheapest possible labour. This was the class basis of the 2006 democratic revolution.

This was the general class background to the 1990 democratic movement as also to the 1996-2006 'people's war'. It is invalid to attribute a specific class position to those youth who mobilised themselves for the 1990 democratic movement and an entirely different class position to those who supported the Maoists. The class basis of the two political movements was very similar if not the same.

Despite professions that '[i]n a semi-feudal agriculture-based economy like Nepal, the New Democratic Revolution means basically an agrarian revolution' and '[t]he main policy of the revolution would be to confiscate ... the land that has been in the hands of the feudal ... and to hand them over to progressive forces ...' (Bhattarai 2003: 158 and 155, respectively), the Maoist movement was not an agrarian movement. Even in the early years of the movement, agrarian questions received so low a priority that a CPN-M review in 1998 found that the emphasis remained only on paper (CPN-M 2013a: 387). The emphasis had shifted to 'poor peasants' and not to agrarian relations as such by the end of 2001. The exhortation on behalf of 'poor peasants' in the 2001 document was serious. But it remained no more than a paper exhortation. A

cursory review of the CPN-M collected documents (CPN-M 2013a: 342-779) indicates that the phrase 'agrarian relations' and 'poor peasants' is a rare occurrence. In essence, the 'people's war' was so heavily militarised that agrarian or even broader political considerations rarely came to the fore. In any case, all other considerations were merely of tactical significance. The Maoist movement, based on the 40-point demands (Karki and Seddon 2003: 182-87) made immediately prior to the declaration of the 'people's war', started out as a nationalist, statist, 'anti-feudal,' anti-poverty, and petty bourgeois movement. It was only the instigation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), within the context of a long-dormant Maoist new democratic imaginary, which militarised it to such an extent that few other agendas mattered. It was to be the capture of the state or nothing.

The CPN-M 'agrarian reading' was almost completely invalid as far as the Hills region was concerned. It did possess a marginally higher validity for the Tarai-Madhes given the somewhat high incidence of 'large' holdings there. But because the CPN-M leadership as well as the party as a whole was a Hills-dominant formation, the larger landholders in the Tarai-Madhes were better organised against CPN-M onslaughts, and the Indian government would not tolerate such an intervention along the adjoining southern strip, the CPN-M did not intervene systematically to restructure agrarian relations in the Tarai-Madhes notwithstanding its stand on agrarian relations. Except for stray cases of 'land capture', there was no sustained agrarian movement or revolt during the 11 years of the 'people's war'. In addition, and more broadly, the CPN-M's 'people's war' was not a class war at all. Sans the large landholder, who was its would-be enemy, it was at a loss to identify a foe in class terms.

In the 'classless' implementation of the 'people's war' the

CPN-M, nonetheless, sought to address a highly salient and undemocratic political-cultural structure, i.e., those related to caste and ethnicity. The pressure put by the CPN-M on inclusion has been leading to a deep democratic socio-political transition. The large-scale and tumultuous changes discussed earlier had indeed been leading in this direction. But the Maoist intervention on ethnicity in particular has been cathartic. It is also politically potent. It has been forcing the 'upper caste' groups to confront the extremely undemocratic nature of the caste system. It is also forcing them to concede political, educational, occupational and several other measures of positive discrimination. Not all members of the 'upper caste' groups are privileged (Mishra 2012) and there are several other groups who are equally or more privileged. Nonetheless, a democratic structure cannot be erected on a platform of the caste system: The two are mutually contradictory. The invalidation and dismantling of the caste and ethnic system is going to be a long process – unless the issues are ceaselessly and deeply politicised and incorporated into the policies of the state as well as political parties and other political forces. It is noteworthy that almost all the political parties have welcomed the state initiatives on positive discrimination. Politicisation among the Madhesi, which further fed the 2006 transition, was also a deeply democratic initiative by the Madhesi leaders. It is another matter that an essentialist and racist rendering of ethnicity and ethnic groups by CPN-M leaders (cf. Dahal 2003: 83, 110) and leading ethnic activists (Malla, Shakya and Limbu 2005, Tuladhar 2007), has fed, among ethnic activists, near-frenzied calls not for equality but for ethnic self-determination, privileged political and economic rights, and essentialist markers of identity.

There is a resonance, in the preceding discussion on the relationship between class and democratisation, with both Skocpol

and RSS. Skocpol's finding that a revolution cannot seize the economy and the state where there is widespread ownership of sources of livelihood, for example, in 1789 France, and that such a seizure is more likely where that is not the case, for instance, in 1917 Russia and 1949 China, finds support from 2006 Nepal. The finding of RSS's that small holders are pro-democratic, as in the experience of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands and France, is also upheld.

C. Nature of state

The pre-1990 state in Nepal was a developmental autocracy. The king was above the constitution inasmuch as it was the king who delivered it to 'his subjects'. The state was ruled by the king with the help of the bureaucracy and the security forces. Political parties were banned and the elected but politically emasculated legislature largely followed royal guidance in legislative, administrative and other matters. The palace operated with a parallel and sizeable secretariat which oversaw the legislative, executive and judicial domains. The military secretariat in the palace oversaw the security domain. Economic policies and even large business deals required approval from the palace secretariat as did the management of external affairs. Several armed political initiatives were quashed relatively swiftly. As could be expected, the state was largely autonomous from class interests. There were only two potential sources of effective dissent: large landowners and political parties. As discussed, the land reforms of the 1950s and 1960s had largely cut the large holders, who could be the potential challengers, to size. In addition, the regime often successfully co-opted the rest of the large holders. Externally, while autonomy vis-à-vis the Indian state was difficult to ensure, it did attempt to ease relations through a variety of means. Certainly, the state was more

autonomous vis-à-vis India by the 1980s than was the case during the 1950s.

The 1990 democratic transition was preceded by considerable liberalisation in 1980, following a petty bourgeois urban movement initially spearheaded by student wings of the banned political parties. Under the 1990 transition, the king was placed under the constitution. The 1991 constitution also legitimised freedom of speech and association, a regular system of free and fair adult franchise as well as a host of other democratic rights. The kings no more managed the regular affairs of the state. The king, however, did continue to hold de facto control over the armed force. In addition, the king also held emergency powers. The 1990 transition, significantly and potently, expanded the space for claim-making.

As it turned out, with the declaration of the 'people's war' by the CPN-M, the 1990 compact led to the birth of a power triad of the democratic parties, the king and the CPN-M. Each strategically attempted to undo the other two but one at a time. Because none of the three was strong enough to simultaneously wrestle down the other two, each tactically sought assistance from one of the other two in order to pin down the third. Because none of the three could independently impose its will, and in the sombre and numbing din of prolonged armed violence, there was no autonomous civil state as such. There were merely distinctive and contesting imaginations of would-be states. There was the Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA) and there was the Royal Nepalese Army and other security forces which functioned as proxies of the respective would-be states. It may be noted, however, unlike that reported by Skocpol (1979: 285) for France 1789, China 1911, and Russia 1917, the military power of the old state had not broken down even as administrative power had. The democratic parties and, for a time, the governments

the parties ran merely went through the motions but could not rule. Eventually, the king usurped state power and ruled by himself. The old state, except for the armed forces, had collapsed in much of the jurisdiction of the state. Civil and social life had become limited to very narrow circles. Public-hood was severely circumscribed. In a sense, in a reversal of Skocpol's notion of autonomy of state, the state under the king had become much too autonomous from the constituent political forces. It had withered its roots away. Essentially, it appears that excess of both autonomy and embeddedness can be fraught with revolutionary potential.

In a sense, the 2006 revolution was a product of both the successes of the 1990 transition and of the contradictions it bred. The post-1990 state delivered democracy but failed to contain the long-standing political and economic contradictions it had inherited. The post-1990 state failed to anticipate both that armed insurrection would begin within the next six years and that the king would seriously flout constitutional limits. The government failed to realise early on that the king would forbid the elected government to mobilise the military against the PLA. Second, the new state failed to address the political contradictions arising out of new-found democratic assertiveness on the one hand and underemployment, poverty, etc, on the other. While the growth rate during the early years was at a reasonable level, the rate fell during subsequent years. Redistributive efforts were puny. Third, the post-1990 state failed to realise that democracy was not merely a matter of governing existing institutions democratically but also of identifying and addressing deeper political, economic and cultural roots and components of un-democracy. The long-standing ethnic, caste, regional hierarchies and divides were difficult to struggle against within an autocratic set up. Not so in a democracy. The failure to bridge the gap between citizenship and 'low caste-hood' and that

between a 'high-caste' citizen and marginalised ethnic person was not something democracy could tolerate and contain.

Increasing urbanisation and the urbanisation of rural life posed another problem. Essentially, this was a problem of expanding the political and economic space for the burgeoning urban bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. The bourgeois and the petty bourgeois urban residents in a democracy, as the principal constituents of the civil society, media, the professions and the business, possess powerful political clout. While the 2006 democratic-republican revolution had a much wider base than in 1990 and preceding political movements, it was the residents of the towns and cities who fostered the later stages of the republican revolt. The urban bourgeois political and moral ethos was in contradiction to authoritarianism, in this case a monarchy.

The new king, who had acquired the position because of a 'royal massacre' in which his brother and the brother's two sons—who were directly in line to the monarchy—were killed, was also widely regarded as an illegitimate king. He was also widely reported to be a 'hardliner' who wished to 'undo 1990' and resurrect the old autocratic monarchy unlike his brother who was reported to be a 'softliner' (cf. O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Indeed, the hardliner-softliner contradiction has been played out on several occasions in Nepal's successive democratic transitions, e.g., the 'A-class' and the rest of the Ranas in 1951, and the hardline and softline Panchayat political leaders in 1980 and 1990. Essentially, at historical points when contradictions between wider political forces become sharp and polarisation accelerates, factions among the 'state-holders' are often forced to seek suitable allies. In Skocpol's terms, the state and the ruling elite then begin to diverge.

In November 2005, the political parties and the Maoists who were at opposite ends of the armed conflict for almost a full decade

almost suddenly entered into an agreement which valorised 'full democracy'. Broadly speaking, in the final days the independent peasantry, the semi-proletarianised wage worker, the non-agricultural sector worker, and the urban bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie coalesced together under the CPN-M and democratic-party flags and forced a republican order. The CPN-M and its PLA was crucial to the birth of a republican order, although not for a democratic order thereafter. The royal state, emptied within, fell within a span of three weeks.

D. World and international context

There is unanimity both in the comparative historical and the world-systemic accounts that the world and international power balance bears powerful implications for democratisation in a country. It was earlier noted that Moore, Skocpol, RSS, and O'Donnell emphasise that this link can be powerful. Marx and Engels, in their call for the workers of the world to unite and struggle together, clearly implied that the world was a single entity – or, at the least, was becoming one. Moore noted that democratisation in 'smaller' countries was highly contingent on the international context. He noted: 'The fact that smaller countries depend economically and politically on big and powerful ones means that the decisive causes of their politics lie outside their own boundaries' (1966: 2). It is possible that transnational linkages have been further fortified since the texts were composed due to the intensification of globalisation and the end of the Cold War. Similar arguments have been made by several others (see RSS, 1992: 18-19).

Much more specifically, Skocpol has argued that revolutions are invariably connected to the international context. In particular, she argued, international military and economic competition was fundamental to revolutions. In addition, revolutions occurred in

states which were losing the competition ‘... modern social revolutions like the French, Russian, and Chinese have invariably occurred in countries caught behind more economically developed competitor nations’ (Skocpol 1979: 286).

All of the authors have been theoretically prescient as far as Nepal 2006 is concerned. Indeed, the international context has weighed very heavily in Nepal in matters ideological, political, military, economic, etc. In addition, Nepal is not only a ‘small’ country but also one which is wedged between two giants, India and China, both of which have recently become globally and regionally more powerful and look forward to a world super-power status. Nepal is also tied to a defence treaty with India. The treaty came into effect in 1950, i.e., just after the People’s Republic of China was born and when the capitalist core states were in gripping fear of a ‘communist domino effect’. Further, the fact that Nepal lies between two powerful states and, in particular, adjoins Tibet—one of the key political and security underbellies of China—has pushed it into a globally significant strategic space. Nepal also operates on a visa-free regime with India. The borders are long and porous. The two countries are, thus, mutually open in a variety of ways.

Nepal is also a debtor country which has received grants or concessional assistance right since the 1950s. The scale of international intervention utilised to shape ideological, political-economic, fiscal and developmental policies, therefore, is substantial. The autonomy of the various Nepali states has, thus, been a seriously compromised one. The state has transitioned but the international order remains a constant, and an overwhelmingly powerful, presence. Further, it is not only powerful states which intervene. Less-powerful states, international and multilateral organisations, international non-governmental organisations, and even lobbying

groups have long shaped or influenced key policies and compromised the autonomy of the state.

A peripheral formation in the capitalist world-system is often a frail, fluid and dependent one. Revolution in such a formation is related not merely to the relative autonomy of a peripheral state as such but to the relative embeddedness and autonomy—and dependency—of all major constituent political, economic and cultural forces within it. The frailty of all the constituent political institutions in Nepal saw a sudden spurt on the eve of the three-cornered contest which wracked the post-1990 Nepali state following the CPN-M's initiative to launch a 'people's war'. One specific facet of this weakness was evident in the nature of the relationship between the CPN-M and the RIM. The RIM, which is a toothless, if not altogether benign, presence in the capitalist core countries, suddenly acquired a much-larger-than-life status in Nepal just prior to the declaration of the 'people's war'. The RIM, at that time, was seeking a cause célèbre following the debacle of the Shining Path in Peru. It was highly successful in almost forcefully goading a faction of the CPN-M to declare a 'people's war' (Mishra 2007: 81-146). Other facets of such prodding can be witnessed in a variety of other contexts. In fact, the power imbalance between the core and the periphery is extremely high, and there is often only a thin line between goading and an exercise in hegemony. Illustratively, Western governments as well as far too many Western non-governmental organisations and consultants initially advised the Nepali government on how to counteract the CPN-M offensive. A few years later, when the death toll began to mount and the state security organs were in several instances found to have violated human rights, almost all international governments stopped the sale of military hardware to the state security organs. Eventually, an agreement (known as the '12-point agreement') was brokered in

November 2005 by the Indian government between the political parties and the CPN-M. A comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) to be monitored by the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) was then agreed upon in November 2006. The UNMIN was active for four years. It was charged by some political and civil society forces for illegitimately seeking to broaden its mandate, and, thus, further infringing upon the autonomy of the government.

The Indian government has a long story of involvement in politics in Nepal. It has also been involved in the 'people's war' in a variety of ways. Among others, it provided refuge to the CPN-M leadership for most of the 11 years of the 'people's war' (while also putting the more radicals among the CPN-M leaders behind bars for several years). This was notwithstanding the fact that the Indian government had officially declared the CPN-M to be a terrorist group. While there are more sinister explanations doing the rounds, a liberal explanation of such behaviour is that the Indian government, besieged by 'its own Maoists,' which it regards as the biggest security threat, was seeking to contain the CPN-M and making sure that the CPN-M did not 'connect' with the Maoists in India. In addition, by nudging and forcing the CPN-M towards electoral politics, it was not only helping Nepal to stabilise but also sending a message to the Indian Maoists to opt for a similar outcome. Regardless of the explanation, however, India's involvement does seriously compromise the autonomy of the Nepali state. The Indian government, in addition, has been charged with seeking to 'micro-manage' political affairs in Nepal by almost all Nepali political parties (see Sharma 2013 and Jha 2014 for independent reports which substantiate such charges.) More importantly, perhaps, it has recently also been reported by an Indian intelligence insider (Yadav 2014) that the chief of Indian intelligence, immediately following the Indian annexation of

Sikkim in 1975 (cf. Datta-Ray 1985), suggested to the Indian prime minister that India should 'disintegrate the Tarai area of Nepal ... much to the discomfiture of the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi ... However, merger of Tarai of Nepal was deferred in view of the political turmoil in India ...' (p. 263).

The actions of the Indian government as well as of other governments in the core countries, largely in keeping with the arguments made by Moore and others, have heavily shaped the nature of political transitions in Nepal. This is particularly the case in times and episodes of domestic conflict, which is always the case in transitional times. The facts that the 'people war' was not class based and that it did not focus on agrarian relations, that it was far less concentrated in the Tarai-Madhes and locations along the Nepal-India border, and that the agreement that brought the democratic parties and the CPN-M together was brokered by India also indicate how a powerful state can shape a democratic revolution in a less powerful state. Indeed, in the aftermath of the revolution, and within a legitimate context of serious Madhesi political-cultural grievance against the dominance of the Hills, the Indian government highly probably played a singular role in the subsequent Madhesi rebellion which was addressed by means of a constitutional amendment. The Indian government, in fact, appears to have been successful twice over in putting up a politically cordon sanitaire in the Tarai-Madhes region – in limiting both the scale of 'people's war, which was likely intended to thwart the 'contamination effect' of the 'people's war' across the border as well as in limiting the number of votes and CA seats won by the Maoist in the region in the general elections. The Madhesi nationalist uprising, in this sense, was a product both of legitimate Madhesi grievance and of an intervention by the powerful Indian state. The uprising obviously came in handy in order to severely constrain the electoral

success of the Maoists. It may, of course, generate other contingent implications in the medium and longer term.

That the Indian state was more powerful does not at all imply that the process was easily managed and accomplished. And, it is highly probable that not everything that the Indian government wished to accomplish was, in fact, accomplished. But the larger connection between the international context and a democratic revolution in a weaker state is clear enough. Powerful states and forces, e.g., the RIM in the preceding discussion, can potentially shape a revolution right from the ideological level to the level of implementation as well as during the aftermath of a revolution.

On a larger scale, capitalistically more developed states do, as RSS and O'Donnell argue, also reshape the class structure of a weaker state. A key reason for the historically weak and retarded development of capitalism in Nepal, as argued earlier, must be sought in the structure of disarticulation of resources, labour and investment in a peripheral formation that a core formation can potentially impose upon. This disarticulation necessarily impacts on the nature of the class structure in a peripheral state by blocking the growth of the bourgeoisie. But this need not necessarily be the case. Peripheral economies can and have moved up. Thus, while the stronger economies do exert a 'blocking' effect on capitalist growth or at least force it into dependent growth, peripheral states can potentially avert and thwart such disarticulation and 'blocking'.

VI. Looking Immediately Ahead

The nature of the present Nepali state remains highly fluid. It is a state under formation. That a constitution is currently being drawn up and the 'constitutional wrangle' has been going on for the last seven years is a testimony to this fluidity. The key areas of contention have been narrowed lately but a constitution is not in sight. A constitution has been repeatedly promised but not delivered.

But, if we look at it from a long 20-year perspective, we can say that a new state with fairly definite features is taking shape. There are, yet, diverse and severely contradictory imaginations of a state. But the contradictory diversity has, for now, been largely pushed to the margins. Twenty years ago, there was a constitutional monarchy which had nonetheless retained control over the armed forces (and, following the 2001 regicide, would seek to make a comeback and become an autocracy). Twenty years ago, a 'people's war', intended to establish a one-party, new-democratic state, which would be a precursor to a socialist state, was just being implemented. Then, there was a set of rather toothless democratic parties which had not been able to tame either the king or the Maoists. At times, both the Maoists and the democratic parties sought to undo the other and collaborate, at least for an interim period, with the king. But when the king usurped all state power, the CPN-M and the democratic parties put up a common front against the king on the basis of an agreement to uphold a democratic order. The monarchy was cornered and abolished. The accord leading to the 2006 revolt stated that the democratic parties and the CPN-M agree that 'peace, progress and prosperity in the country [are] not possible until and full democracy is established by bringing the absolute monarchy to an end' (South Asia Terrorism Portal).

The situation now is still fluid but far less so. The 'people's war'

is over. A comprehensive peace treaty between the warring sides, the government and the CPN-M, was signed and executed. General elections have been held twice. The monarchy is no more. There is a functioning, albeit ineffectual, popularly elected assembly. Peace has returned after the violent decade of 1996-2006.

Yet, the nature of the under-formation state has remained contentious. Most importantly, it is not certain if the CPN-M has completely shed its 'new democratic' imagination and the strategy of revolt. It has been transforming itself through the years but the imagination of a revolt would seem to have been powerful at least until 2013, notwithstanding the CPN-M's engagement with the elected constituent assembly. At several party meetings, the CPN-M leadership hinted as much. The abortive effort made to fire the army chief was directed towards a similar end. The attempt in 2011 to impose an indefinite strike on the Kathmandu Valley, which sought to re-enact the classic strategy of 'rural areas encircle the city', had the objective of revolt as well. The call made by the CPN-M at the end of the tenure of the first CA to leaders of 'ethnic groups' to occupy the streets probably had the same goal. In addition, two apparently more radical factions have broken away—in the last three years—from the CPN-M precisely on the question of 'new democracy'.

The CPN-M has been transforming. The splitting off of two separate hardline groups seems to imply that the 'mainline' CPN-M has been shedding the political programme of 'new democracy'. The successive CPN-M central committee meeting and party convention of August 2013 and December 2013 do seem to substantiate this transformation. Essentially, the documents (CPN-M 2013a: 773, 2013b: 46-9), which are caught between simultaneously legitimising both a radical past and not-so-radical a future—and, thus, obliged to perform a political Houdini act—would seem to claim that

specific components of 'new democracy' have already been achieved while aiming 'to eventually attain socialism by currently pursuing capitalism'.

Lesser hurdles remain. It has been agreed by almost all the parties represented in the CA that the would-be Nepali state will be transformed from a unitary state to a federal one. There is far less unanimity on the platform on which a federal structure is to be erected. The CPN-M and the 'ethnicist parties' from the plains Tarai-Madhes region are bent on an ethnic platform while the other main parties wish to give a nod to ethnicity even while erecting a federal structure on economic, fiscal, developmental, watershed-related and other grounds. There is an overall agreement among the different parties that ethnicity has remained a salient feature of politics and culture. There has been agreement also that the Nepali state will be an inclusive one. In pursuance, electoral laws, laws on positive discrimination in schooling and government employment along with a host of other measures have come into implementation.

The CPN-M has transformed and climbed down from its earlier stand on the positioning of ethnicity in the federal framework. It had been pushing for 'ethnic autonomy and self-determination' for quite some years even after end of the 'people's war' along the lines of the shadow 'states' created along ethnic lines during that period. In addition, a CA advisory commission had called for privileged rights on access to natural resources—also based, apparently on Convention 169 of the ILO. The commission had also recommended that the chief executive of a federal province belong to a specific ethnic group. More extreme ethnicist positions advocated the formation of a legislature composed, in equal parts, of a council of ethnic elders. Some even argued for wholesale transfer of members of specific ethnic groups from one province to another. The ethnicist forces are fairly powerful within and outside of the CA. The

claims necessarily raise questions on the nature of 'democracy' in the state currently under formation.

The positions within the CA, including from the CPN-M, have since become softer. CPN-M party documents, however, continue to speak of ethnic self-determination and privileged rights (CPN-M 2013a: 369, 2013b: 50-1). In essence, the CPN-M, as far as the party line on ethnicity is concerned, is in need of another Houdini act. The CPN-M promise of 'ethnic self-determination', like in the old Soviet Union and in keeping with the Leninist dogma, as against the arguments made by Rosa Luxemburg, might have been an excellent political strategy for a new democratic and/or socialist one-party state where all provinces, 'ethnic' or otherwise, would be ruled by the same party. Now that the CPN-M finds itself agreeing to a multiparty democratic political set-up, ethnic self-determination would surely be an incongruent and undemocratic initiative. That the CPN-M seems ready to grant a much softer salience to ethnicity in the federal framework probably constitutes recognition of the contradiction. More recently, the CPN-M has also seemed ready to accept hyphenated, multi-ethnic, ethnic-geographical or other similar formulae for naming. But the CPN-M has flip-flopped several times on this and other contentious issues.

While the overtly political has hogged attention in the political parties, the CA and the government, there has been a serious lack of deliberation on strengthening the access of citizens to the state. It has been 18 long years since the last elections for local governments, which is a key site for the exercise of popular democratic control. Corruption, which erodes the trust and ownership of the citizen in the state and in the democratic and 'fair' political process, on the other hand, has been reported to be widespread not only in the bureaucracy but also among political party officials.

There has been a similarly serious lack of deliberation on

strengthening the cycle of investment and expanded reproduction, promotion of employment, ownership and use of agricultural land, and enhancement of agricultural productivity. These issues are of fundamental significance for both democratisation and sustainability of democracy. Przeworski and Limongi (1997: 167), it should be noted, have concluded that '... once established, democracies are likely to die in poor countries and certain to survive in wealthy ones'.

There have been some bright lights, however, through the last several decades. Health and education indicators have made rapid progress. Indeed, the UNDP (2010: 29) reports that Nepal made considerable achievements through 1970-2010: progress in overall human development index was second only to that of China and, in non-income HDI, second only to that of Oman. More recently, there has also been substantial reduction in the proportion of the poor, which came down from 42 per cent in 1994/95 to 25 per cent in 2010/11 (Government of Nepal 2011a). In recent years, agricultural wage rate has increased considerably: mean daily farm wage rate in 1995/96, 2003/04 and 2010/11 were NPR 40, NPR 75 and NPR 170, respectively (Government of Nepal 2011a). Further, and very importantly, there has been a great rise since the 1990 democratic transition in the critical gaze of citizens and in claim making. As is often pointed out in the literature, the effects of liberalisation and democratisation have a longish lifespan. Sometimes, such effects outlive an authoritarian interlude only to be re-asserted again. In as much as all of these improvements potentially lead to the centre-staging of assertive citizenship in state affairs, the result can be a promotion of democracy.

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- 2003 Harka Gurung – **Trident and Thunderbolt: Cultural Dynamics in Nepalese Politics**



Mahesh Chandra Regmi
(1929-2003)

The Mahesh Chandra Regmi Lecture was instituted by the Social Science Baha in 2003 to acknowledge and honour historian Mahesh Chandra Regmi's contribution to the social sciences in Nepal. The 2014 Mahesh Chandra Regmi Lecture was delivered by prominent sociologist, researcher and teacher, **Chaitanya Mishra**, former Professor of Sociology at the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu.

In an academic career spanning 37 years, Professor Mishra has made significant contributions to the academic community, including as the founding head of the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology of Tribhuvan University. His wide-ranging interests cover social, political and cultural issues affecting Nepal and beyond. He is a highly sought-after commentator on contemporary debates and also engages regularly through newspaper articles.

Professor Mishra is a recipient of the Colombo Plan fellowship for graduate study in India (1969-71) and the Fulbright-Hays fellowship for graduate study in the United States (1973-1977). He has authored and edited several books and contributed articles to international journals. Among his publications are *Ethnicity and Federalization in Nepal* (co-edited) (2012), *Badalindo Nepali Samaj* [Changing Nepal Society] (2010), *Essays on the Sociology of Nepal* (2007), and *Nepal ra Punjibad* [Nepal and Capitalism] (2006). His forthcoming books include *One Hundred Lives in Transition*, a collection of life histories of people from different walks of life, and *Debates on Ethnicity in Nepal* (editor).

