Political Parties
of
Nepal

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

As part of its efforts to promote the social sciences in Nepal, Social Science Baha has initiated the publication of the Baha Occasional Paper Series and the Baha Working Paper Series. These series will provide opportunities for Nepali and foreign scholars to publish their works-in-progress and short monographs much quicker and in a format different from journals and books. We hope the series will benefit readers by providing early access to new research as well as authors who will be able to revise and improve upon their works in the light of discussions generated by their publications.

The first in the Baha Occasional Paper Series is by Krishna Hachhethu of the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University. 'Political Parties of Nepal' provides a concise overview of the history of the major political parties in Nepal. It describes the origins, development and profiles of Nepal's major political parties and analyses the cultures and structures of these parties, including the inherent factionalism, (lack of) internal democracy and funding besides examining the ideologies and policies of the parties. The main focus of the paper is the changes that were seen after the restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990 and especially in response to both national and international environments, including the Maoist insurgency from 1996 onwards and the royal takeover of October 2002. The writer contends that since all the parties have faced political crises, both internally and at the national level, they have not been able to devote much time to formulate meaningful policies. The paper concludes that the political parties have lost their credibility and that despite some major changes, the parties continue to be centralised, oligarchic, non-transparent and susceptible to internal conflicts and factionalism.

As the final manuscript was submitted in the autumn of 2003, the paper does not deal with more recent events, except in footnotes and the postscript. This, however, does not detract from the value of the paper since it is meant to be more a primer on the political parties than a document of contemporary affairs. We hope this publication will help readers understand better the structures, ideologies and policies of the political parties of Nepal, which in turn may provide fresh insights into the workings of Nepali politics and governance.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CC	central committee
CPN	Communist Party of Nepal
DC	district committee
HoR	House of Representatives
ML	Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist)
MP	member of parliament
NC	Nepali Congress
NPF	National People's Front
NSP	Nepal Sadbhavana Party
NWPP	Nepal Workers' and Peasants' Party
RPP	Rashtriya Prajatantra Party
SAD	State Affairs Department
ULF	United Left Front
CPN (UML)	Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)
UNPM	United National People's Movement
UPF	United People's Front

I. INTRODUCTION

Following King Gyanendra's assumption of executive powers on October 4, 2002, the multiparty system in Nepal, reintroduced in 1990 after three decades of partyless Panchayat regime, finds itself today in a state of uncertainty. From one perspective, the royal step may be viewed as a reaction to the failure of political parties and party governments on several fronts, particularly in dealing with the violent Maoist insurgency. The violent Maoist 'people's war', which began in February 1996, has been intensifying rapidly and spreading all across the country. Both multiparty democracy and the mainstream political parties remain trapped between the far-Right forces led by the Palace on one side and the ultra-Left armed Maoists on the other. Against this background, this paper—organised into three sections—tries to review, both intensively and extensively, Nepal's decade-long experience with the multiparty system. Section 1 has two components: a review of the political developments in the post-1990 period and brief profiles of the leading political parties. Section 2 focuses on the internal dynamics of individual political parties, such as party organisation, authority structure, factions, etc, from a comparative perspective. Section 3 deals with the convergences and divergences of political parties on ideological grounds and policy issues. It also analyses the positions of the parties on emerging political, social and economic issues.

Overview of post-1990 political developments

Politics in Nepal after 1990 can be divided broadly into three phases: construction of legal/political structures for a multiparty system; gaining of primacy by parties in politics, elections and governance; and recently, marginalisation of parties' role in state affairs.

With a view to crafting a new political structure, a *Jana Andolan* (mass movement) took place in February–April 1990, jointly launched by the Nepali Congress (NC) and the United Left Front (ULF)—an alliance of seven moderate communist parties—and supported by the United National People's Movement (UNPM)—a group composed of five radical communist splinter groups. The movement ended the three-decade-old Panchayat system (1960–1990) and restored the multiparty system in the country. (Nepal's first experience with multiparty system during the 1959-60 had ended in December 1960 with a royal coup.)

The new Constitution, framed by the representatives of the NC, ULF and the king and which was promulgated in November 1990, adopted the British model of parliamentary democracy and provided a system consisting of a bicameral legislature, representative government and an independent judiciary. The Constitution ensured the stability of the newly established democratic regime, stating categorically that popular sovereignty, constitutional monarchy, multiparty parliamentary system and fundamental rights of citizens are sacrosanct. Both the right-wing Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), formed by some followers of the dismantled partyless Panchayat system, and several leftist splinter groups, including the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), or the CPN (UML) pledged their support to the fundamental principles of the new Constitution despite their divergent ideological stances in the past. This indicated an assimilation of the major ideological and political forces into the mainstream parliamentary process.

Political systems and structures become functional when the parties in power represent the electorate. The 1991 elections, the first parliamentary election held after the restoration of democracy, heralded a democratic process based on popular mandate. It brought the NC into power while the CPN (UML) emerged as the main opposition. The second parliamentary elections, held in 1994, produced a hung parliament and resulted in a reversal in the positions of these two parties. The

CPN (UML), as the largest party in the House of Representatives (HoR), moved to the treasury benches, and the NC took up the mantle of the main opposition. In the third parliamentary elections, held in 1999, the NC returned to power with a comfortable majority. RPP, Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP), Communist Party of Nepal (Democratic), National Peoples Front (NPF), Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP) and the United People's Front (UPF) are some of the smaller parties that have managed to win the remaining parliamentary seats in one or more of the general elections.

Given that the NC and the CPN (UML) emerged as the two strongest parties contesting for power, it can be said that the three elections succeeded in creating a two-party system in Nepal—a situation generally considered ideal for political stability and institutionalisation of democracy. The results of the local elections also followed a two-party trend with the NC winning more than 50 per cent of the local government seats in 1992 only to lose out to the CPN (UML) in 1997. (For results of both general and local elections, see Annex 1A and 1B.)

Despite their popular legitimacy, the political parties and their leaders progressively lost their credibility, and, ultimately, political power to King Gyanendra, who took executive control of the country on 4 October, 2002. In the background of the royal takeover were acts of malgovernance, rampant corruption and abuse of state resources for self-aggrandisement by the power elite. The first elected majority government of the NC, led by Girija Prasad Koirala, collapsed following conflicts within the party long before its prescribed five-year tenure. After the 1994 mid-term elections, the CPN (UML) formed a minority government under Man Mohan Adhikari, but the country's first communist government also fell after just nine months. From then onwards, all governments survived for very short durations. During the period of the hung parliament, from November 1994 to May 1999, Nepal experienced seven minority and coalition governments of different types. The return of the one-party majority government of the NC after the 1999 parliamentary election did not help rectify politics either since the NC government saw three leadership changes before the party itself split in May 2002.

The politics of making and unmaking of governments introduced a

number of aberrations into the body politic of Nepal: intensification of power-centric intra-party conflicts, defiance of party whips, disintegration of parties, horse-trading of members of parliament, manipulation of constitutional loopholes, political intervention by the palace and the courts, and so on. These distortions are a direct result of the political developments over the last thirteen years which included parliamentary elections being called four times; recommendations for the dissolution of the HoR made six times, of which three actualised; special sessions of the HoR summoned seven times, of which all but one were for a no-confidence motion against the incumbent government; and the government changed 14 times (see Annex 2).

Political instability, chaos and crises prevailing in the country resulted in two contrasting situations. First, the Maoist armed insurgency, with its avowed objective of dismantling the monarchy and parliamentary democracy, intensified beyond the control of the state. The failure of the state under a party government to tackle the Maoist problem provided the rationale for another contrasting development. King Gyanendra, through a proclamation on October 4, 2002, took over executive powers, ignoring the constitutional provisions—though ambiguous—of popular sovereignty and constitutional monarchy.[1] The government under the king's command and the Maoists sat down to negotiate in April–August 2003, but the Maoists later resumed the armed insurgency and the government intensified its counter-insurgency efforts. The parties were sidelined during this period. In the absence of elected bodies following the dissolution of the HoR in May 2002 and the termination of local bodies in June 2002, parliamentary parties were, however, forced to take to the street in a movement against both the king's regressive act of October 4, 2002 and the Maoists' violent insurgency.

Political parties and the party system in Nepal are conditioned by three major interconnected paradoxical situations. One, the Constitution guarantees the stability of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary system, but the emerging trends—King Gyanendra's growing ambitions and assertion of power on the one hand and the escalation of the Maoists' armed insurgency all over the country on the other—pose a serious threat to the survival of democracy and the Constitution. The

present setback for democracy is rooted in the second paradox. Political parties have continually enjoyed electoral legitimacy, but they have largely failed to acquire performance legitimacy and, consequently, the popularity of the parties as well as that of their leaders has considerably declined. The gap between plebiscite legitimacy and performance legitimacy is an outcome of the third paradox. Political parties were formed for the pursuance of their own ideological goals, but once in a position to translate the ideology into public policy and governance, the party leadership has largely appeared to be self-centric and power-seeking, rather than as promoters of the party and the nation. Intra-party conflicts, factions and splits, prolonged political instability, decline in ideology, and erosion of democratic norms and values are all by-products of the contradictions between the parties' principles and leaders' interests. In order to understand how the political parties have situated themselves within the paradoxical situations obtaining over the last thirteen years, one needs to be familiar with the origins and evolution of political parties in Nepal. It is indeed necessary to know the continuity and changes in parties' ideology, organisation and functions, which is what we turn our attention to now.

Origins, evolution and profiles of Nepal's political parties
Nepal's political parties originated in the 1930s and '40s in opposition to the century-old oligarchic Rana regime (1846-1951). This marks a difference between the history of parties of Nepal and that of the West, where parties evolved within the parliament as a consequence of the extension of popular suffrage, or that of other Third World countries, where parties first appeared as part of the nationalist movement against colonial rule. Parties like the Praja Parishad and Prachanda Gorkha preceded the NC, but the latter, founded in exile in India in 1947, took the lead role in the 1950-51 armed insurrection. Consequently, it won a two-third majority in the 1959 parliamentary elections and formed a government. The Gorkha Parishad, created by former Rana rulers and their cohorts, succeeded in becoming the major opposition party in parliament. But the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN)—established in India in 1949—became a dominating actor in oppositional politics outside parliament, before and after the 1959 election, although it had only four

seats in parliament. The evolutionary process of parties and the party system was, however, cut short when King Mahendra, through a royal coup in December 1960, banned all political parties. Among the several political parties that emerged before and after the 1950-51 revolution, only eleven registered for the 1959 general election, and out of them, only two, the NC and some splinter groups of the CPN, survived the Panchayat period. In such unfavourable situations, only a few parties could sustain themselves, many disappeared and a few others came into existence. The restoration of democracy in 1990 was followed by a mushrooming of political parties[2], although only a few exist in a functional sense.

Nepali Congress

The Nepali Congress is the oldest among the currently functioning political parties. Unlike the CPN (UML) and the RPP, which tried to cloak their past hostility to multiparty democracy during the pre-1990 period, NC's greatest asset has been its history associated with its struggle for democracy. Founded against a backdrop of democratic awareness and movement in the 1940s, NC led the 1950-51 anti-Rana revolution and consequently gained a two-third majority in the 1959 parliamentary elections, forming a government under Bisweswor Prasad Koirala. Its democratic credentials remained intact after the ban on political parties in December 1960 as it exerted both violent (i.e. armed insurgency in the early 1960s and 1970s) and peaceful opposition against the partyless Panchayat regime. An NC leader, late Ganesh Man Singh, was the commander of the successful *Jana Andolan* in 1990. The primacy of the NC in the post-1990 politics became evident as it gained and regained majority of the seats in parliament in 1991 and 1999 general elections, despite a setback in the 1994 mid-term polls. The NC has been in power for substantial periods in the post-1990 period.

Till the 1990 *Jana Andolan*, the NC evolved as a missionary party rather than as an ideological group. Its mission, at the time of its inception, was to overthrow the oligarchic Rana regime, a goal later directed at the partyless Panchayat regime. Only in 1956—ten years after its establishment—did the NC proclaim its ideology of democratic socialism. The party's adherence to socialism was somehow reflected in some

progressive policy decisions taken by its government of 1959-60.[3] But the party leaders and workers have been socialised primarily to the philosophy of liberal democracy rather than to the economic principle of socialism. It is so mainly because of a change in the party's goals. Following the dismantling of the multiparty system, the NC's socialist objective was subordinated to its primary goal of the restoration of democracy. Its ideology, as understood by most of its leaders and workers, is commitment to the system of multiparty parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. Thus, its official position of being a socialist party has not hindered the NC governments' pro-privatisation and liberalisation policies in the post-1990 period. Following the achievement of its mission, i.e., the overthrow of the partyless regime and restoration of multiparty system, it suffers from a lack of clarity of vision in setting new goals and policies in the changed context.

Since its inception, the NC has relied more on the personality of its charismatic leaders than on party organisation. The party revolved around the personality of B.P. Koirala until his death in 1982. His death saw the emergence of a leadership troika comprising of Ganesh Man Singh, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Girija Prasad Koirala, resembling the earlier collective leadership of the Big Four of the 1950-60 period, namely B.P. Koirala, Ganesh Man Singh, Subarna Shamsher Rana and Surya Prasad Upadhaya. In contrast to the unity and cohesion of the latter group under the command of B.P. Koirala, the post-1990 troika competed amongst themselves for power, generating and regenerating internal conflicts and factions. The NC's failure to motivate its rank and file through ideological and policy incentives further contributed to personality-orientation in the leadership, aggravating the unity and cohesion of the party. Intra-party fighting was so bitter that it eventually led to the collapse of several NC governments: the Girija Prasad Koirala governments in 1994 and 2001, the Sher Bahadur Deuba governments in 1997 and 2002, and the Krishna Prasad Bhattarai government in 2000. Intra-party conflicts and factionalism caused splits in the NC twice: once in 1994 and again in 2002. Currently, the party is under the command of one top leader, Girija Prasad Koirala, but this change in party leadership has hardly addressed the long-standing problems in the organisational aspect of the party. The NC remains a largely

loose, *ad hoc* and personality-oriented organisation, although internal elections have been widely practised in the selection of party leaders of different ranks in the post-1990 period. The party has never been efficiently managed; neither has it made any serious effort to build an efficient organisational structure. Loyalty to individual leaders, rather than commitment to organisation-building, runs in the blood of the party's rank and file.

Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)
Against the backdrop of the Cultural Revolution in China, the Naxalite uprising in India and peasant-landlord cleavages in Nepal, the CPN (UML) came into existence in 1971 as the 'Jhapali Group'. Among the many splinter groups of the CPN—the distant parent organisation of all communist parties of Nepal which was established in 1949—the Jhapali Group, or CPN (Marxist-Leninist), or ML, as it came to be known later, was an ultra-Left group. (Coincidentally, the CPN [Fourth Convention], the parent body of the present Maoists and the People's Front, an extreme Left parliamentary party, was another party founded around the same time.) At the time of its inception, the Jhapali Group adopted the Maoist ideology of *Naulo Janabad* (New People's Democracy) and followed the Naxalite line of class annihilation. But the growth of the party, mainly through the amalgamation of several splinter communist groups and expansion of front organisations involved in open politics in the post-1980 referendum[4] period, pushed it towards ideological moderation and modification. The constant revisions of the party's ideology manifested in its dumping the Naxalite line of liquidation of class enemies in 1982, abandoning of Maoism in 1989 and ultimately participation in the 1990 democracy movement.

The CPN (ML) adopted the name CPN (UML) following its merger with the CPN (Marxist), a descendant of the old CPN, in January 1991. This new party was initially content with only considering the restoration of multiparty system as its primary tactical goal. But as the prospects of power in the prevailing system brightened following its emergence as the major opposition party in the 1991 parliamentary election, it distanced itself further from its old communist ideology. At its fifth national convention in 1993, it adopted a new ideological

position called *Janatako Bahudaliya Janabad* (People's Multiparty Democracy)[5]. As a result, the party also abandoned its previous goal of one-party communist system in favour of support for the multiparty system. It also changed its declared means to achieve its objective from the use of armed revolution to engaging in peaceful competition. Its commitment to the prevailing political system became even more evident with its application for membership of the Socialist International and its rejection later of the Maoist proposal for a broader Left alliance for establishing a republican system and holding elections to a constituent assembly.[6] The party has constantly sought to improve its position vis-à-vis other parties, and it has done fairly well. From being the major opposition in the first parliament (1991-1994), it went on to lead a minority government of its own and served as a partner in two coalition governments in the second parliament (1994-1999). It, however, lost any prospect of regaining power following a near-vertical split on the eve of the 1999 parliamentary elections.

The CPN (UML) is a relatively well-organised party since it gives priority to the expansion of its support base through organisation-building rather than the personality cult. The organisational system within the party, developed in the course of its three-decade-old history, has espoused militancy among the cadre, collective leadership, ideological ambiguity and a regimented organisational set-up. In the past, membership meant serious commitment since it meant total 'devotion, dedication and commitment' to the party. The party still retains a system of assigning specific responsibilities to individual party members. Following the transformation of the CPN (UML) into a catch-all, or 'big tent', parliamentary party in the post-1990 period, particularly after it tasted and re-tasted power after November 1994, the tendencies of self-centrism, privilege-seeking, opportunism and selfishness have heightened, leading some in the party to label this development as 'non-Marxist' and 'bourgeois'. However, it should be recognised that the weakening of organisational behaviour and management is but a natural corollary to the party's ideological swing. The CPN (UML)'s swing to the centre also created an ideological vacuum for the more radical elements in the party, a fact that worked to the advantage of the Maoists with the latter being able attract some of these radicals into their fold.

CPN (Maoist)

The approach adopted by the United National People's Movement (UNPM) during and after the 1990 movement for the restoration of democracy was indicative of the possible discontent with the system of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. The Maoist insurgents, who were part of this grouping, has implemented the UNPM's ideas of realising the Maoist model of a new democracy through armed revolution at an opportune time. This line of thought was first articulated by the CPN (Fourth Convention)—the immediate parent organisation of all radical communist groups professing Maoist thought, viz, the CPN (Masal) (Mohan Bikram group), the CPN (Mashal) (Mohan Vaidya group) and the CPN (Unity Centre), among others—at the time of its inception in the early 1970s.

The realignment of the leftist forces in the post-1990 period led to the formation of the CPN (Unity Centre), which consisted of several splinter groups of the erstwhile CPN (Fourth Convention). The party contested the 1991 parliamentary elections and the 1992 local elections through its political wing, the United People's Front (UPF), in order to, in their own words, 'expose the sham of parliamentary democracy'. The party, under the leadership of General Secretary Pushpa Kamal Dahal (popularly known as Prachanda), then upheld its faith in armed revolution against the prevailing system of monarchy and democracy. A split in the Unity Centre over the question of translating the idea of armed struggle into action led to the formation of the CPN (Maoist) as a separate group in February 1995.

Since February 1996, the Maoist party has been engaged in a protracted people's war. The insurgency has now spread across the country with only two of the seventy-five districts of the country, i.e., Manang and Mustang, untouched by the armed confrontation between the state forces and the Maoist guerrillas. Around 8,000 people have lost their lives in the period from February 1996 to September 2003.[7] The Maoists have reportedly grown from being an outfit with cadres and militia numbering 200 in early 1996 to commanding a 100,000-strong militia as well as an armed force comprising two divisions, seven brigades and seventeen battalions.

The CPN (Maoist)'s proclaimed goal is to establish a republican

system and a 'new people's democracy', similar to the one put in place by Mao in China. Even though they have put aside their republican agenda when at the negotiating table—once in August-November 2001 and again in April-August 2003—their demand for constituent assembly election may actually pave the way for it in the future. Meanwhile, they have also made a tactical change in their quest for a republican system. As opposed to its earlier ideological stance for a one-party people's democracy, they have now made provisions for competitive party politics in their newly proposed 'new model of democracy'. The Maoists' proposal for state restructuring includes components such as popular sovereignty, secularism, federalism, inclusive democracy and retention of the multiparty competitive system.

People's Front

There are some non-conformist but participatory communist parties in between the moderate CPN (UML) and the radical Maoists. The Jana Morcha, or People's Front, is one of them. Having started out as the UPF on the eve of the 1991 parliamentary elections, it is currently the political front of the semi-underground CPN (Unity Centre-Masal). The latter resulted from the merger between the CPN (Unity Centre) and the CPN (Masal). Although both parties had initially professed Maoist thought, the former had initially supported parliamentary democracy while the latter boycotted them. But the CPN (Masal) began participating in the parliamentary process from the 1992 local elections onwards. This narrowed the differences between the two parties, leading to their ultimate unification.[8]

The Maoists were earlier a part of the CPN (Unity Centre), with one its top leaders, Baburam Bhattarai, the convenor of the UPF. The Maoists split from the mother organisation in 1995 following differences over the question of whether or not to translate the party's principle of armed revolution into action. Following this split, the UPF, which had won nine parliamentary seats in 1991, failed to win any in the 1994 general elections.

This split also paved the way for a fresh realignment among the ideologically non-conformist communist parties although it took some time in coming. In July 2002, the Unity Centre and Masal and their

respective political fronts, UPF and NPF, merged to form the People's Front. With six members in the third parliament, the People's Front has been participating in the parliamentary process with its declared goal of ultimately weakening the parliamentary system itself. Although it is ideologically closer to the Maoists, it has strategically taken the side of the parliamentary system.

Nepal Workers' and Peasants' Party

The Nepal Workers' and Peasants' Party (NWPP) is another non-conformist group that has chosen to participate in the parliamentary process. It was founded in 1975 as a splinter group of the CPN (Pushpa Lal group) by Narayan Man Bijukchhe, popularly known as Comrade Rohit. Ideologically, the party has doctrinal links with Maoist thought but it enjoys stronger fraternal relations with communist North Korea. Since 1981, it has adopted the 'entryist' approach as a strategy to discredit the Panchayat system. The Newars of Bhaktapur constitute its support base, and it has always won seats from this district. It also won seats from the remote districts of Karnali zone in both the 1991 and 1994 parliamentary elections. But the defection by its representatives of the Karnali zone relegated its representation to just Bhaktapur in the 1999 general elections.

Rashtriya Prajatantra Party

The Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) came into being in 1992 following the merger of two separate parties of the same name having identical backgrounds and ideologies. Both the RPPs were formed following the restoration of democracy in 1990 and were led by former Panchayat prime ministers, Surya Bahadur Thapa and Lokendra Bahadur Chand. Though the party's image was closely associated with the backgrounds of its leaders and workers as well as their reputation as ardent advocates of an active monarchy and the partyless Panchayat regime, the party assimilated quite easily itself into the changing political context and declared its faith in the new system based on constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. A party of former *panchas*, it had borrowed some ideals (i.e., welfare state, class/caste coexistence, exploitation-less society, etc) from the previous Panchayat system. Its

proclaimed ideology was 'nationalism, democracy and liberalism'. Its credentials as a rightist and conservative party has been substantiated by its role following October 2002 when the king took over executive powers. The RPP's recent convention passed a resolution offering the king the position of a 'benevolent monarch' during crises, a position that contrasts sharply with that of other parliamentary parties calling for full-fledged constitutional monarchy.

In the 1991 elections, held against the backdrop of the end of the partyless Panchayat system, the RPP managed to win only four parliamentary seats. In 1994, it won 20. Following a hung parliament, the party participated in two successive coalition governments: in 1997 and 1998. Led by PM Lokendra Bahadur Chand, it forged an alliance with the CPN (UML) in March-September 1997. From September 1997 to March 1998, Surya Bahadur Thapa led a government in alliance with the NC. In the third parliament (May 1999-May 2002), the RPP, with ten seats, did not have as significant a role to play as in the second (1994-1999) parliament. In the post-October 2002 period, both Chand and Thapa received opportunities to lead governments nominated by the king.

The king's direct leadership of the *panchas* in the pre-1990 period and the RPP's traditional association with the monarchy impeded the emergence of consensually elected leaders within the party. Besides, the party's leaders and workers were bound together not by a common faith in a particular ideology or policy framework but only by a shared history of having been *panchas* in the former regime. Organisationally, the RPP was an aggregation of old *panchas* rather than an ideologically united party. Disagreements between the Thapa and Chand groups during the second parliament over party posts exposed the internal disunity and led to factional divisions. The party formally split in January 1998, and, following the electoral disaster of the Chand faction in the 1999 general elections, reunited in December 1999.[9]

Nepal Sadbhavana Party

The Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP), a Tarai-based regional party, is one of the several small parties founded along ethnic lines rather than on political ideology. Despite a constitutional prohibition on ethnic,

regional and religion-based parties, some such parties have been contesting polls after 1990. Of them, only the NSP has thus far succeeded in winning seats: six, three and five in the 1991, 1994 and 1999 elections, respectively. The precursor to the NSP was established in 1958 as the Tarai Congress and later revived as Sadbhavana Parishad in 1983. It champions the cause of *madhesis*, the people of the Tarai region. The major issues on its agenda include the restructuring of Nepal along federal lines; recognition of Hindi as the second national language; and reservations for the Tarai people in the government administration as well as in the police, army and other state organisations. As with the leader-oriented NC, the NSP also revolved around the personality of Gajendra Narayan Singh until his death in 2002. It has also suffered splits several times: in 1993, 1995 and 2003.

Nepal's political parties entered a new phase after the success of the 1990 movement. Prior to that, parties existed only as a symbol of opposition to the state, except during the first experimentation with the multiparty system during 1951-1960. With the reinstatement of the multiparty democracy in 1990, political parties transformed themselves from being illegal organisations to legitimate contenders for power and their functions and responsibilities relating to governance also increased. At the same time, the individual histories of the political parties also affected the newly established democratic system. Some of the major historical factors affecting the functioning of individual political parties as well as the overall party system in the post-1990 period are listed below.

- Nepali political parties originated and evolved as movements and underground organisations. As a result of this history, they have acquired certain common organisational characteristics, viz, a centralised structure, domination by the leadership personality, and secrecy.
- Political parties originated and evolved outside the parliamentary process. Experience from other countries shows such parties find it difficult to become oriented towards and driven by policies, and instead develop a strong tendency to become power-seeking

entities. This is true for Nepal as well.

- Parties of extra-parliamentary origin such as the NC and the CPN (UML) face the characteristic inherent weakness in democratically managing party organisations.
- The post-1990 identities of the political parties—conservative, democratic, communist, etc—have been carried over from their roles and ideological positions in the pre-1990 period.
- Communist parties had been polarised into moderate and radical blocs even before 1990. For the moderate Left, the original CPN founded in 1949, however, served as a role model to strike a balance between ideological opposition to a Westminster-type democracy and participation in the parliamentary process.
- Since the genesis of political parties in Nepal is tied to the accomplishments of democracy and modernisation, many have credentials of being agents of change. But their capacity to work as catalysts for radical change and transformation is limited by many factors, an important one being the existence of the monarchy as a symbol and vanguard of the status quo. Traditionally, the monarchy in Nepal has had problems in reconciling the spirit of constitutional monarchy with the concept of popular sovereignty.

II. PARTY CULTURE AND STRUCTURE

The principles of organisational dynamics suggest that a political party introduces new systems upon evolved traditions to adjust to the transforming national and international environments. Three cultures will be found to have influenced the functioning of parties in Nepal: a) the distinct culture of each party developed in the course of its evolution; b) the political culture acquired during the post-1990 period; and c) the general culture of the country. As mentioned above, secrecy, centralisation and oligarchy are some of the major inherited characteristics. Second, in the course of transforming themselves into competitive organisations during the post-1990 period, political parties have deviated from their original ideologies to become catch-all parties[1], while acquiring characteristics such as intra-party competition and factionalism. Finally, authoritarianism, based on the centuries-old patron-client system, forms the general cultural backdrop for all ongoing political developments in the country. With the possible exception of small and doctrinal parties, the organisational structures and functions of all parties display an interplay of all these three factors.

Structure of party organisation
The organisational structures of Nepali political parties, big and small, comprise of four basic units.

   1. The **core governing body**, called the committee, is organised on a territorial basis and is pyramidal and hierarchical in structure. It can broadly be separated into three levels: central, middle and grassroots. A central committee (CC) exists at the apex, whereas ward committees exist at the bottom *(see Annex 3)*. The CC is the nucleus of the entire structure. Below it, committees working at different levels are entrusted with diverse functions, like recruitment, training, mobilisation and so on. Apart from the central committee and the district committees (DCs), the others become active only occasionally such as during

party conventions, elections and protest programmes.

2. Party in public office is a forum consisting of the party's representatives in state bodies. Separate formal structures exist for elected representatives at both central and local levels. At the centre is the parliamentary party. The party in public office is expected to carry out two major functions: translate the party's principles and goals into state policies and programmes, and develop a common action plan and strategy vis-à-vis other parties to influence decisions made by the parliament and government.

3. Specific departments/committees carry out their work in line with the division of labour and functional specialisations within the party. Since 1990, the major political parties have set up numerous departments or subject-specific committees in their organisational structures at both the central and district levels. The CPN (UML) currently has 26 central departments, the NC 19 and the RPP 22. Small parties have fewer departments. The NSP, People's Front and the NWPP have four, six and four respectively *(see Annex 4)*. All of them relate to the management of the party's internal affairs, suggesting their lesser roles in public policy formulation. Their jurisdictions can broadly be categorised into three spheres: a) management of the party's internal affairs; b) business relating to the elected wing of the party; and, to a lesser degree, c) public policy formulation.

The CPN (UML), with its tradition of specialised departments for assigning specific responsibilities to its leaders and cadres, has more departments. This culture has, however, eroded substantially in recent years. In the NC, a similar departmental system exists, but only in name, and the party has had problems in ensuring a functional division of labour among its leaders and workers who have never been socialised to this kind of culture. The party has long been operating without proper delineation of responsibilities among its office bearers so that 'the responsibility of all has been the responsibility of none'. This also applies, by and large, to the RPP, which has yet to develop into a cohesive organisation.

The problems arising from the lack of job specification within the

parties become evident when the components of the organisation are viewed for their functionality. For instance, the inconsequential role of the elected wing of the party in public policy formulation, considering that it should be a crucial function of such a group, hints at the dysfunctional characteristics of the related departments.

4. Ancillary and affiliate organisations:[2] All political parties have set up various fronts, some formed in the pre-democratic period and others following the restoration of democracy in 1990. The early phase of the democratic period saw rapid politicisation of otherwise non-political social groups with parties forming ancillary and affiliate organisations based on caste, ethnicity, class and profession. The parties' influence expanded to new avenues and platforms. Party affiliates mushroomed in all segments of society, including among teachers, doctors, civil servants and human rights activists. The NC presently has eight ancillary organisations, apart from a number of affiliates while the CPN (UML), the RPP, the NSP, the People's Front and the NWPP have 11, 8, 6, 6 and 8, respectively *(see Appendix 5)*. Most of these ancillary and affiliate organisations have their own structural networks at the district level. The NC and the communist parties, including the CPN (UML), the People's Front and the NWPP, have had long experience in running ancillary organisations. The RPP is quite new to this process. Thus, although it has many formal ancillary organisations—as many as those of the NC and the CPN (UML)—its influence over middle-class and professional groups has been rather weak. The existence of most of its fronts has mostly been confined to paper.

The mobilisation of ancillary organisations is driven by an old mindset in both the NC and the communist parties. During the time of the Panchayat ban on political parties, frontal organisations played a crucial role in political recruitment and socialisation of cadre as well as in spearheading protest movements. The justification to carry out these conventional roles reduced considerably in the post-1990 period since the parties began to openly recruit party members and also because inter-party relations had changed from street confrontations to negotiations. In the changed context, instead of the party's ancillary and affiliate organisations being re-modelled as link institutions between the

party and social groups, their activities have often given too much weight to party interests and usually paid insufficient attention to the interests of the social groups and communities they ostensibly represent. Instead of exploring new roles and responsibilities for their frontier organisations, party leaders generally treated these organisations as subservient units and saw them as vehicles mainly to launch protest movements and election campaigns. That was most evident when the parties re-energized their ancillary and affiliate organisations while taking to the street following the king's takeover in October 2002.

Party authority system

The highest authority in all the major political parties of Nepal is vested in a form of collective leadership which appeared in all parties due to their respective histories. Since the death of its charismatic leader, B.P. Koirala, in 1982, the NC built up a system of a troika, comprising of the top three leaders, Ganesh Man Singh, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Girija Prasad Koirala, as the superstructure within the party (though it was never mentioned in the party's constitution) enjoying absolute power in taking decisions on behalf of the party. An understanding among these leaders, rather than the party constitution, was what regulated intra-party affairs.

Collective leadership in the CPN (UML), like in the RPP, was established on the fact that it is a unified party of several splinter groups. The party's top-ranking leaders are more or less contemporaries in terms of age, political career and competencies. The RPP is also a unified party of two groups, each led by former prime ministers, Surya Bahadur Thapa and Lokendra Bahadur Chand, and the rankings of the other leaders in the party follows more or less their previous positions under the Panchayat system. The People's Front—having been formed through the merger of the UPF and the NPF—also has a system of collective leadership unlike the domination by one single leader in other small parties, e.g., Narayan Man Bijukchhe in the NWPP and Gajendra Narayan Singh in the NSP. At present, however, the NC is also under the command of one dominant leader, Koirala, following Singh's death and Bhattarai's withdrawal from active politics.

The oligarchic tendency of the Nepali political parties—both big

and small—is particularly well reflected in the nomination of candidates for elections. In the last three general elections, 1991, 1994 and 1999, all contesting parties followed a standard format and procedure: constituting a parliamentary board of a few central leaders with formal authority for candidate selection, recommendation of three prospective candidates from a constituency by the party district committee (DC), and deputation of a team of central representatives in each district to seek the opinion of local leaders and workers. Such formal procedures suggested a wider space and greater involvement of party leaders and workers in candidate selection. It was also believed that the recommendations of the DC were largely respected by all parties while taking the final decision in candidate selection. But the actual practice of candidate selection was very oligarchic. The party's formal structures, the DC and the CC, played only a supplementary role to the top leadership's actual authority in the selecting candidates. Even the job of the parliamentary board was confined to putting a formal seal on the decision of the 'high command'. Such an oligarchic pattern was replicated at the local level with a small coterie of district-level party leaders monopolising the selection of candidates for the 1992 and 1997 local elections.

The differences between parties in terms of size, ideological identity and organisational pattern have hardly made them different in terms of variables for candidate selection. As the existence of all pre-date the advent of democracy in 1990, seniority and continuity are obviously considered important factors. The centralised characteristic of the political parties is also reflected in the granting of party tickets to all incumbent CC members, incumbent ministers and ex-MPs, except those who had voluntarily stayed away from the contest and those who were in the 'negative list'. Particularly in the 1999 general elections, the persons involved in the misuse of diplomatic passports and violations of party whip and discipline were disqualified for candidacy.

Most of the parties are also faction-ridden. Thus, candidate selection is more of a horizontal game than a vertical one. Individual and factional connections with top party leaders count for a lot in choosing electoral candidates. The overriding consideration in the choice of candidates for parliament is their prospect of victory in the election, a factor

that combines many components such as social status, education, wealth, mobility and popularity, all of which are important for vote mobilisation. Women and dalits are generally given short shift as candidates since they are perceived to be unfit from the criterion of 'winnability'.

The CCs of all parties are dominated by Bahuns, Chhetris and Newars. Nepotism, favouritism and kinship, which are part of Nepali political culture, also influence leaders' patronage distribution function. However, the party's electoral interests force the leaders to become 'liberal' while giving due weight to caste/ethnic factors of electoral constituencies. Caste/ethnic consideration is reflected in the fact that hill ethnic groups and people from the Tarai communities have greater representation in parliament than in parties' CCs. To be fair, it has to be mentioned that the smaller parties, viz, the People's Front, the NWPP and the NSP, have more disadvantaged groups in their leadership structures *(see Annex 6 A and B)*.

Though candidates are selected taking several factors into consideration, the decision-making authority is oligarchic. Oligarchic tendencies have been supplemented by the centralised structure of parties both in the party constitution and in practice. The NC, being a personality-dominated party, is seen as an oligarchic and centralised party. The RPP also largely operates in an oligarchic way, but the political socialisation and orientation of its rank and file to consider the king as their true leader has limited the party leaders' ability to control and command.

Unlike NC and RPP, the CPN (UML), an organisation-based party, is not under the exclusive control and command of one or a few leaders. It has long followed a system of collective leadership and collective decision-making processes. At the same time, however, it has adopted an oligarchic and centralised system. The centralised authority structure in the party is spelt out explicitly: 'Each party member is under the committee, each lower unit under its immediate higher unit, and all members and organisations are under the authority of the Central Committee.' Such a system of 'democratic centralism' has long been adopted by other small communist parties as well such as the People's Front and the NWPP.

The centralisation of parties' organisational life is reflected in the vertical relations between the higher and the lower units of the party. The subordinate position of the party's local organisation is distinct since each lower unit of the party has to report to the higher unit; the higher committee has the right to supervise and evaluate the lower unit's performance; and each lower-level committee has to abide by the decisions and directives of the party's higher-level committees. Moreover, all local organisations are subject to the party CC's power to dissolve the subordinate units. The NC's CC dissolved 18 of its DCs on the eve of its tenth national convention, held in Pokhara in 2000. Similar instances are found in the CPN (UML).

Party factions and splits

Despite the centralisation and oligarchic structure in all parties, the authority of dominant leaders is now no longer unchallenged, except perhaps that of Narayan Man Bijukchhe of the NWPP. Of the several factors leading to the erosion of the authority of the leadership, the development of internal factions has played a vital role. Internal conflicts and factionalism have emerged with intra-elite struggles for power, status and resources rather than over the question of party's ideology, policies or programmes. In the major political parties, factional conflicts have mostly taken the form of discord between the organisational and elected wings of the party.

Nepal's political parties have adopted different models to regulate party-government relations although even the NC, which has repeatedly suffered gravely from tense party-government relations, has not yet devised a proper mechanism for managing it.[3] In the case of the NC, the personal interests of the leaders and internal equations of power have shaped party-government relations. Ganesh Man Singh and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai's early efforts towards a system of party control over government were motivated by their personal interest in expanding the authority of the troika over the power and resources of the government then headed by Girija Prasad Koirala. Initially, Koirala advocated for greater autonomy of the government wing. Later, however, when he was president of the NC, he tried to put a short leash on the NC governments of Sher Bahadur Deuba (September 1995-March

1997 and July 2001-May 2002) and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai (May 1999-February 2000). This exemplifies that a person took two different lines, following a change in his role and position, on the question of party-government relations.

The RPP has suffered much dissension within the party, particularly when the party was in power. In the second parliament (1994-1999), the division between the Thapa and Chand groups, apparently on the choice of coalition partners—earlier with the NC and later with the CPN (UML)—surfaced. It was but a clash of interests between Lokendra Bahadur Chand and Surya Bahadur Thapa on who would become prime minister, although, ultimately, both succeeded at that. The internal conflict in the RPP manifested in the defiance of the whip, floor-crossing, two different whips being issued at the same time, and some of its MPs sitting on the treasury benches while others sat with the opposition.

The CPN (UML) has a clear perception, at least in rhetoric, of party-government relations. It prescribes the principle of organisational supremacy and has devised several practices along those lines.[4] But this principle was largely discarded, particularly when the party was in power at the centre for nine months during 1994-95. The party constituted a State Affairs Department (SAD) as a device to manage party-government relations. Moreover, ministers were instructed to follow the decisions of SAD in their administrative work, i.e., appointments, transfers, promotions, etc. But such exercises were limited to paperwork as party organisational leaders felt the domination of leaders in the government. Party-government relations operated in different ways when the CPN (UML) was in power, again as a partner of the coalition government headed by RPP leader Chand (March-August 1997). The CPN (UML) government team, led by Bamdev Gautam, was not given functional autonomy by the party's dominant leader and faction. Party-government conflicts manifested in many ways during that period, with the party General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal directing five CPN (UML) ministers to relinquish their posts and the ministers refusing to oblige.

Factional conflicts have resulted in a split of almost all the major parties. The NC (Democratic) split from the NC as a consequence of a

power struggle between the Koirala- and the Deuba-led factions. After Koirala became prime minister in March 2000, Deuba had been pressuring Koirala to relinquish either the post of party president or of the prime minister following a much-talked-about but hardly-ever-followed principle of 'one person, one post'. After Deuba took over as prime minister from Koirala in July 2001, the latter's ambition to take back the prime minister's post from Deuba led him closer to the communist opposition vis-à-vis a government headed by Deuba, albeit an NC one, over the question of the king's interventions from the sidelines, growing militarisation, and the Maoist insurgency. The Deuba government's decision to extend the emergency over the party leadership's objection was the immediate cause for the split of the NC. Nine of its 37 CC members and nearly 50 MPs went over to the new party at the time of its formation in May 2002. But the new party has continued to lose prominence in the wake of subsequent events, viz, the decision of the Election Commission in favour of the parent party in the dispute over the party's election symbol; the sacking of the Deuba government by the king in October 2002; the alienation of the splinter party from the alliance of five parliamentary parties; and the return of NC (Democratic) general secretary Khum Bahadur Khadka and his allies to the parent party.

The CPN (UML) also faced a major split in March 1998. It was the culmination of a struggle for power and position—roots going back to the CPN (UML) government of 1994-1995 and which was revived after the party regained power as a coalition partner in 1997—between factions led by Madhav Kumar Nepal and Bamdev Gautam. Before the formal split of the party in 1998, there was a failed attempt to remove Nepal from the post of general secretary by the Gautam faction. Factional division was publicly presented as conflicts over the party's policy, particularly in relation to India. Twenty-seven of the CPN (UML)'s MPs had defied the party whip in September 1996 while voting on the ratification of the Mahakali River treaty with India, and at the party's sixth convention held in March 1998, deletion of words 'expansionist' for India and 'imperialist' for the USA from the party's documents was the key issue in the tug-of-war between the majority and minority factions. As the convention failed to resolve the crisis, the minority faction, led by Gautam, formed a separate party and adopted the

original name, CPN (Marxist-Leninist). Eighteen CC members and 46 MPs from the CPN (UML) joined the new party. The failure of the break-away CPN (ML) to gain any seat in the 1999 parliamentary election paved the way for the reunion of the party in February 2001 and many leaders have since returned to the parent party. For the rank and file of the splinter group, the ideological division was, however, a powerful factor. A number of workers from the splinter group revolted against their leaders' decision to reunite with the CPN (UML) and joined the Maoists. Only C.P. Mainali and his loyalists retained the name of the splinter group and revived the old ideological position—'new people's democracy'.

The RPP also has had similar experiences of factions, splits and merges. Similar to the case of the NC, ideology had nothing to do with the development of factional politics and the subsequent split of the party in January 1998. In the background was a bitter clash between the Thapa and Chand groups, both in parliament and at the party conven-tion of November 1997. Eight of the 19 MPs and nearly half of the CC members left the parent party to constitute the RPP (Chand) as a sepa-rate party. After the splinter group, like the CPN (ML), to win even a single seat in the 1999 elections to the HoR eventually led to the reunification of the party later in the year.

Small parties are not an exception to the politics of power-centric party factionalism and splits. The NWPP is an exception, although two of its MPs did defect to other parties at a time when politics was domi-nated by a recurrent game of government making and unmaking dur-ing the second parliament (1994-1999). But, unlike other parties, it has not undergone any formal split. The recent division of the NSP in March 2003 into two groups—one led by a former *pancha*, Badri Prasad Mandal, and the other by Anandi Devi, widow of late Gajendra Narayan Singh—has some ideological content on the position of the monarchy. The former, like the RPP, supported the king's October 2002 action whereas the latter allied with other parliamentary parties to fight against the King's assertion of power.

The cost of factionalism and party split has been high. Seven of the eleven governments between May 1991 and October 2002 collapsed due to the internal conflicts with the ruling party. As an impact of a

minor split in the NC following the launching of a Jana Jagaran Abhiyan (mass awareness campaign) on the eve of the 1994 mid-term elections, the party was relegated to the opposition despite being ahead of the CPN (UML) in terms of popular vote. Similarly, in the 1999 parliamentary election, the RPP's strength in the HoR shrank from 20 in the second parliament to 11 while the CPN (UML) failed to gain power. The breakaway groups fared rather miserably with both the CPN (ML) and the RPP (Chand) failing to win even a single seat. The results, however, proved a blessing in disguise for it paved the way for a reunion with the mother parties.

Internal Democracy

Factionalism is one of several factors that contribute to the breaking of the monopoly of one or a few leaders in the party and induction of new dimensions into the organisational life, internal election being one in particular. Against the background of a bitter conflict between the two factions of the NC—one led by the party supreme, Ganesh Man Singh, and the other by the then prime minister, Girija Prasad Koirala, the demand for the election of half of the CC members against the tradition of nomination of all by the party president first appeared at the 1992 Jhapa convention. Later, through amendments of the party constitution in 1995 and 2000, the NC adopted the RPP model: election of half of the CC members and not allowing a leader to hold the party president's post for more than two tenures. The Party Regulation Act 1999 also makes it mandatory that at least half of the total CC members to be elected. The CPN (UML) constitution is more democratic as it provides for the election of all CC members. The same system has long been adopted by other communist parties, viz, the People's Front and the NWPP, retaining the provision of the nomination of just a few members to the party CC.

Irrespective of the related provisions in the party constitutions, the old practice of nomination and cooption was adopted by all parties in the selection of their party leaders at the first post-1990 party convention. But, at subsequent conventions, the posts of party leaders and CC members were filled through internal elections, as prescribed by their own constitutions. The change in leadership building from selection to

election had some effects with 20-25 per cent new faces entering the CCs of the NC, RPP, CPN (UML) and other communist parties. Growth in the size of the party with diverse support base among various segments of society, multiplication of factions of various kinds in the party, decline in party ideology and leadership, and intensification of internal competition to hold party posts are new trends. The cumulative effects of all these developments have indeed created a space for internal elections and democracy in the centralised organisational structure of Nepal's political parties.

Funding

The financial management of many of Nepal's political parties is completely non-transparent and neglected. Only from 2000 onwards did the NC start a system of internal auditing and reporting to the party's national convention. The RPP has yet to introduce a budget and audit system. The CPN (UML) has a relatively sound financial system. The party's financial department prepares an annual budget of incomes and expenditures, and brings it into action after approval by the party CC. Besides, it has an audit committee for internal auditing.

As mentioned in the constitutions of the parties, party incomes are derived from a variety of sources—membership fees, levies and donations. The CPN (UML) and other communist parties have a long list of those who pay levy, including party activists holding jobs in the bureaucracy, corporations and other offices. The government budget of the current fiscal year (2003) has a provision for the state providing financial grants to political parties at the rate of annual Rs 20 per vote received by them in the last general election, but it is unlikely to be implemented for some time to come. Internally-generated funds contribute but marginally even in meeting the cost of the regular administration of party central offices. The CPN (UML) has additional expenditure as it continues a system of full-time paid office holders who draw salaries from Rs 1,000 to 5,000 per month according to their rank. So, parties depend largely on other income sources, donations and state resources. The ruling party has the advantage of abusing state resources since ministers' discretionary power to distribute certain amounts of their ministry budget under the heading of 'Welfare' has been mainly used

for running their party's programmes. Another invisible, unaccountable and non-transparent income of parties is donations from business houses. Moreover, parties collect large amounts of money from dishonest traders while unholy nexuses exist between party leaders and economic criminals involved in smuggling, drug trafficking, illegal trading, commission agents in development projects, etc.[5]

As of now, there is no state law, except the election law, to regulate party funds. The election law has three general provisions: prohibition of vote buying, ceiling on election expenditures for each candidate and submission of statement of election expenditures. The party regulation law—submitted to the king for approval but still pending as subsequent political developments, viz, dissolution of the HoR in May 2002 pushed the case in the background—is likely to reform the party's financial system. Some of its provisions seek transparency in party's income and expenditures to bring the parties' accounts under the national auditing system and the Election Commission.

To recapitulate this section on party culture and structure, the following major trends can be seen in the developments in the parties' organisational behaviour and management:

- Nepal's political parties, while transforming themselves from movements to competitive parties and responding to the multiplication of their roles and responsibilities, have innovated new devices and systems, i.e., constituting the party's formal units along spatial lines in accordance with the administrative and electoral divisions of the country, creating several ancillary and affiliate organisations, and introducing a system of structural diversification and functional specialisation.
- They have largely retained their own respective traditions, conventions and cultures so far as organisational management and behaviour are concerned. They, therefore, continue to remain centralised in nature.
- Factionalism is a dominant characteristic of party politics in the post-1990 period. Intra-party factions are, by and large, a product of a clash of interests and egos and hunger for power among party

leaders. The emergence and development of factional politics in the parties have both positive and negative impacts.

- The introduction of internal elections is quite recent but it has succeeded in replacing selection with election in the process of leadership-building in political parties.
- Since most of the time and energy are spent on factional conflicts and in managing internal crises, parties' function of public policy formulation has been negatively affected.

III. PARTY IDEOLOGY AND POLICY

Ideology

As far as the ideological spectrum among Nepal's political parties is concerned, each has a distinct identity which is largely shaped by its own history and avowed philosophy. The NC, because of its long struggle for parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy since its formation in 1947, has been treated as a democratic and centrist party. The CPN (UML) is considered a moderate left party since it has given up its earlier faith in a one-party system despite retaining some communist rhetoric. The People's Front and the NWPP are relatively radical communist parties as they have maintained their nonconformist stand vis-à-vis multiparty democracy despite their participation in the parliamentary process. The RPP, being a party of former *panchas,* is known as a conservative and rightist party.

Ideological divergences among parties appear more on hard issues, i.e., the political system (partyless, one-party and multiparty system) and the position of the king (active monarchy, constitutional monarchy and republican) than on soft issues such as social, economic or foreign policies. Looking back at the doctrine enunciated by each party at the time of its formation, three different ideological groups are evident. The NC symbolises the multi-party system; the Left believe in a one-party communist system; and the RPP is a party of former *panchas* with a political background of being ardent advocates of the partyless system. In the post-1990 ideological polarisation vis-à-vis the newly established political system, the RPP and the CPN (UML) stood for parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. The radical Left has retained their non-conformist ideological stand despite their participation in mainstream politics.

The debate on the position of monarchy in Nepal has been revived with the emergence of the Maoists as a powerful force, and more so with the reassertion of power by King Gyanendra since October 2002. In the new ideological polarisation vis-à-vis monarchy, the RPP and the NSP

(Mandal group) stand in favour of an active monarchy, at least during crises. At the other end of the spectrum, the CPN (Maoist) has the avowed objective of establishing a republican system. Five parliamentary parties—NC, CPN (UML), People's Front, NWPP and a splinter group of the NSP—have adopted a common position for a full-fledged constitutional monarchy. Their 18-point programme, drawn up in mid-2003, includes confining royal titles only to the king, the queen and the crown prince, and giving power to parliament to decide on the question of royal succession.[1]

The CPN (Maoist), with its strategy of armed rebellion and a goal of establishing a republic, has forced the political parties to adopt positions vis-à-vis the insurgency. At the outset, differences were noticed between the two major parties, the NC and the CPN (UML). But this variance had nothing to do with their ideological positions as centrists and leftists, respectively; it was rather determined by their position in parliament—in the government or the opposition. While in opposition, both the NC and the CPN (UML) took a populist stand by interpreting the Maoist issue as a political question and pleading for a peaceful resolution of the problem. On the other hand, irrespective of the RPP's official stance on the need for a political resolution of the Maoist issue, the party has always sided with the state's policy of repression, taking into account the fact that its workers are second only to the NC in being targeted by the Maoist actions of individual killings. The People's Front and the NWPP condemn both the Maoists' violent actions and the state's repression. Their balancing role between the state and the insurgency was manifested in their refusal to consider the Maoist proposal floated during the 2001 ceasefire calling for a broad Left alliance on a supposedly common agenda of Nepal as a republic and elections to a constituent assembly while at the same time voting against extending the state of emergency in February 2002.

The CPN (UML), like other small communist parties, rejected the Maoist proposal for a Left alliance. But it also endorsed the policy of armed mobilisation in the state's counter-insurgency efforts (albeit with exceptions on the declaration of emergency in November 2001 and its extension in February 2002). This position of the CPN (UML)'s was the result of the formation of the Maoist people's government at different

levels. Of the 25 districts where the Maoists had formed district-level governments before prior to the announcement of the July 2001 truce, 21 were controlled by the CPN (UML) in terms of the composition of district development committees (DDCs).

Over time, a consensus was gradually built amongst the parliamentary parties on the question of mobilising the army against the Maoists irrespective of divergences in their respective public positions. Paradoxically, they were also looking for an alternative option and peaceful negotiation with the Maoists. Following the king's assumption of executive power in October 2002, parliamentary parties have vociferously championed a peaceful settlement of the Maoist problem through negotiations. Their positions remain unchanged even after the resumption of violence in the last week of August 2003.

Both the pre- and post-October 2002 governments sought a military solution to the Maoist problem, but they also kept open the option of peaceful negotiation. But the palace and parliamentary parties have failed to reach any consensus on this issue. The elected government of the pre-October 2002 period blamed the army for its non-cooperation with the government's counter-insurgency plans. The then prime minister, Girija Prasad Koirala, resigned in July 2001 because of the army's non-cooperation in the Holeri incident.[2] The army became involved in the conflict only after the Maoists attacked army barracks in Dang district in November 2001. Government-military relations were further aggravated by the palace's separate dealings with the Maoists.[3] Since October 2002, parliamentary parties have been following the policy of non-cooperation with the successive governments nominated by the king in dealing with the Maoists. Nevertheless, they condemned the Maoists for breaking the ceasefire in August 2003.

Policies

Minimising the differences among the parties on a number of key political issues, the monarchy and the Maoist insurgency in particular, would also help bring them closer in policy matters. The 18-point programme of the five-party alliance is proof of the development of a common approach to a number of previously contentious issues, such as those concerning religion, language, gender, etc.

Commonality on some major policy goals had already been demonstrated in the election manifestos of the parliamentary parties. Irrespective of ideological or political identity (rightist or centrist or leftist) and size, all stressed mixed economy, decentralisation and balanced regional development. Their approaches to the development of rural areas, the agricultural sector, industrialisation, promotion of tourism, and harnessing of hydroelectricity did not diverge much from each other. The problems of exclusion and minorities' issues, gender equality, distribution of land to the landless, abolition of bonded labour system, abolition of untouchability and welfare of the disadvantaged sections of society were common issues for all parties contesting elections. Candidates across the party lines launched campaigns with promises to provide social security and infrastructure development.

Differences among parties were also hardly noticeable in governance either. The party in power largely followed the policies of its predecessor. For instance, the CPN (UML), as the major opposition party in the first parliament (1991-1994), had criticised the NC government for its policy of privatisation and collaboration with India in harnessing water resources, but when it reached the helm of power as a minority government in late 1994 and as a coalition partner from March to October 1997, it adopted those very policies. The NC and the RPP were vociferous critics of the CPN (UML) government's populist programmes to provide some measure of social and economic security to the needy people, to distribute land to the landless and to provide direct grants from the centre to village development committees (VDCs). But all successive governments followed the same policies. The quest for power also narrowed ideological cleavages among the major parties as it was evident in the formation of a number of coalition governments between the Right and the Left, between the Right and the Centre, and between the Centre and the Left in the hung parliament of 1994-1999.

In unusual situations like the hung parliament and during crises, factors of convergence overshadowed divergences. Upon closer scrutiny, however, there appear to be several policy differences within the broader common goal. The existing consensus among different parliamentary parties is, by and large, a product of their own political compulsions rather than due to policy changes. Differences between parties

on policy matters will certainly re-surface whenever a normal situation returns. The following section focuses on commonalities and differences between the parliamentary parties on some major policy issues.

Economic policy

The NC's declared ideology is democratic socialism. Land reform is obviously a central issue in the agriculture-based economy of the country. Two NC governments, both under the prime ministership of Sher Bahadur Deuba, took two major policy decisions related to land: one in January 1996, to abolish dual ownership of land, and the second in August 2001, to reduce the size of land holdings. Discontent emerged within the NC and the RPP—a partner of the coalition government of September 1995-March 1997—against such reform measures. Resistance by a section within the NC forced the government to raise the ceiling on land ownership from the initially proposed 6 to 12 *bighas* per family. Hence, its objective of land distribution to the landless ended in a fiasco.

Although part of the opposition in both cases, the communist parties voted to end dual ownership of land and impose a new ceiling on land holdings. That was only to be expected given the pet slogans of the CPN (UML) and other communist parties such as 'end of feudal exploitation', 'land to the tiller', 'confiscate land from landlords' and 'redistribution of land to the landless'. Surprisingly, however, the CPN (UML) did not take any policy decisions on the land issue while it was in government for a total two years during the second parliament.

The NC, too, has constantly deviated from the socialist line. The party's 1991 election manifesto simply considers the role of the private sector under the purview of its mixed economic policy. But once it assumed power, its government adopted a policy of privatisation and liberalisation with great enthusiasm, considering it imperative to integrate the Nepali economy with the global competitive market economy. In concurrence to the policies of privatisation, liberalisation and an open market economy, the NC government introduced a number of policy measures, especially in the areas of trade, commerce, industry and joint ventures. Except for the nine-month-long CPN (UML) government in November 1994-September 1995, these policies have continued unhin-

dered, mainly because privatisation and liberalisation is also a major policy plank of the other major party in the post-1990 governments, the RPP. Besides the sale of some sick public enterprises to the private sector, the effects of the liberal economic policy have been evident in the boom in financial institutions and commercial banks.

The communist parties are obviously against the privatisation policy. By prescribing a policy of 'selective privatisation', the CPN (UML) stands between the NC and the RPP's focus on a market economy and the ideologically driven disposition for a state-controlled economy and nationalisation of big industries espoused by the radical Left, i.e., the People's Front and the NWPP. During the time of its minority government in 1994-1995, the CPN (UML) had a formal policy document to continue with the privatisation and liberalisation policy initiated by its predecessor, the NC. But, the policy of promoting a liberal market economy and privatisation was frozen by the CPN (UML) minority government. Thus, as a communist party, albeit only in name, the CPN (UML)'s commitment to market economy was, and still is, open to question.

Ethnic policy

Differences between the political parties on some policy issues spring from the previous positions of those parties. As the political transformation of 1990 is equated with the achievement of the NC's mission of multiparty democracy, the party resisted pressures for more changes. Its status quoist position was reflected in its acceptance of Nepali as the national and official language, along with its affirmation of the continuation of Nepal as a Hindu state. The RPP was not different from the NC in supporting status quo on the question of language and religion. In contrast, the communist parties have advocated a secular state and equal treatment for all languages.

On the question of the minorities, the NC did not have any policy agenda in the initial phase of democracy, except for advocating for resolution of the citizenship problem in the Tarai. But the NC governments, formed at different times in the post-1990 period, should be credited for taking several decisions in the interest of minorities, among others, on news broadcast in different languages of the nationalities over the state-run radio, abolition of the bonded labour system, and amendment of the

civil code to eliminate discriminatory provisions against women. The communist parties supported the NC government's policy measures related to the interest of minorities.

Although on some social and cultural issues the Right-Left cleavages remain as strong, their divergences on the question of the minorities have been narrowing. Accommodation of minorities' interest by political parties is distinct in their party apparatuses[4] and in the amplification of their policy platforms related to ethnic issues in each succeeding election to the HoR. Policy platforms on ethnic issues, as embodied in their election manifestos, has risen in prominence over time, except for that of the NWPP, which had almost no policy on this score. The NC, like the RPP, incorporated several demands of ethnic activists, i.e., provision of special programmes to promote the languages, arts and cultures of minorities, empowerment of *dalits* and *janajatis* by ensuring their representation and participation in governance and decision-making and so on in their manifestos for the 1994 and 1999 elections.

The CPN (UML), like the People's Front, has long been championing the causes of minorities. Its ideological stand for a secular state and equal treatment of and opportunities for all languages brought it closer to the concerns of minority communities. Its 1991 election manifesto included calls for an end to discrimination against minority communities and representation of *janajatis* and backward communities in the Upper House. However, the CPN (UML)'s pursuit of pragmatic policies has forced it to take less radical positions, including on issues related to minority groups, even as it upheld the ethnic agenda it had proposed in subsequent parliamentary elections. But, surprisingly, while in government, the CPN (UML) did not take any policy measure in the interest of ethnic groups.

Sensitisation of the problems of excluded groups is also evident from the fact that the problems of *dalits* were almost left out by the parties in their manifestos for the 1991 election, but was invariably included in their manifestos for the 1994 and 1999 elections. The emerging trend indicates inclusion of caste, ethnicity, language, religion and other issues of exclusion in the parties' policy platform. Yet, ethnicity remained a low priority matter in electoral politics in

comparison to other seemingly more weighty concerns.

Foreign policy

Polarisation of the parties does not necessarily stretch to their foreign policies. Nepal's communist parties, since the founding of the CPN in 1949, have continuously been championing a nationalism that is inherently anti-India and anti-West.[5] The RPP has inherited the dismantled Panchayat regime's anti-India nationalism even though that does not extend to the West. Thus, the rightist RPP and the communists stand together for restructuring Nepal-India relations through the abrogation or revision of the 1950 treaty and regulation of the open border. Both took a tough stand against the NC and the NSP's position in favour of retaining special relations with India. A year-long protests and agitations inside and outside the parliament on the Tanakpur treaty with India by both the RPP and all communist parties against the then Koirala government was manifestation of their past legacy. Differences on the question of relations with India are also reflected in their approach to the country's hydroelectricity development. The NC and the NSP stress bilateral cooperation with India, whereas the RPP and the Left emphasise multilateral cooperation.

The CPN (UML) minority government formally proposed a revision to the 1950 treaty with India. At one point, the RPP, while in power as a coalition partner, succeeded in driving the NC-led government to revive the proposal for the revision of the 1950 treaty. But the absence of any follow-up to carry through either proposal demonstrated the propensity of the ruling elite and major political parties of Nepal to avoid taking any risks when it came to the crunch. India, which does not want to amend the 1950 treaty or its traditional relations with Nepal, has always been perceived as one of the key interventionist actors in the power politics of Nepal, forcing the parties to adopt a low-key approach vis-à-vis India, especially when in power. The ratification of the controversial Mahakali River treaty, at a joint sitting of both houses of parliament, by 220 against 8 votes is indicative of a change in the CPN (UML) and the RPP's traditional attitude towards India. Nevertheless, dissident factions in both the CPN (UML) and the RPP defied the whips of their respective parties by abstaining from the voting. Among the others

who opposed the treaty were the MPs from the People's Front and the NWPP.

Small parties have maintained a distance from the major parties on a number of policy questions. For instance, the People's Front has always campaigned for secularism, republicanism, anti-India/West-based nationalism, radical land reforms, nationalisation of big industries, etc. The NWPP often talks about nationalism and communism in vague terms, but hesitates to bring its doctrine of secularism and republicanism into play during election campaigns and people's mobilisation. The possible reason is repercussions from the party's support base, the Hindu Newars of Bhaktapur District. On the other hand, the NSP has projected itself as a movement party fighting for the cause of excluded groups, the Tarai people in particular. Its one-point agenda is the upliftment of the Tarai people against the age-long exploitation and discrimination by the hill groups.

Do ideological divergences and policy differences between parties matter for different segments of society? As mentioned above, each party has a distinct ideological and political identity, despite a clear dilution of ideological factors in inter-party relations and governance. The people socialised with, and oriented to, liberal democratic values feel themselves closer to the NC. The majority of the poor (except peasants), disadvantaged groups, landless and minority communities standing for a secular state have a sense of affinity for the Left, the CPN (UML) in particular. Committed activists of the dismantled Panchayat system feel a strong affiliation with the RPP. The degree of citizens' identification with a particular party was revealed in the findings of a pre-1999 election survey that showed uncommitted voters accounted for only 14 per cent of the electorate.[6] This shows that Nepalis are largely stable party voters. The margin of difference in popular vote received by the NC in the last three elections was only 4.37 per cent, with a minimum of 33.38 per cent in 1994, when it was the least popular, and a maximum 37.38 per cent in 1991, when its popularity was at its peak. The CPN (UML)'s share of the popular vote in the last three general elections has been stable at around 28-31 per cent.

The NC and the CPN (UML) are broad-based parties and their sup-

port bases cut cross the social, cultural, religious and caste/ethnic divisions of the people. But the results of the last three general elections show that both the parties have their own strongholds in particular geographical areas *(see Annex 7)*. The CPN (UML) gained more seats in the eastern and central hills in the last three general elections, while the NC did better than the CPN (UML) and other parties in the Tarai and the hills of Western, Mid Western and Far Western Regions. Several factors, along with party's history, ideological identity and policies contributed to the popularity of the parties in particular regions. Prior to 1990, unlike the visibility of the NC's oppositional activities in cities and Tarai, the CPN (UML), in its previous incarnation as the CPN (ML), concentrated on building an underground organisation, particularly in the eastern and central hills.

The parties' position on ethnic issues further explains the geographical variation of their support bases. The CPN (UML)'s high-pitched propaganda for a secular state and equal treatment of all languages brought it closer to the concerns of minority communities. Ethnic upsurge is more pronounced in the eastern hills. The NC has constantly shown its concern for the citizenship problem of the Tarai people, but the Left parties are reluctant to be liberal on this issue due to the country's geographical proximity with India. The RPP, the third largest party, is also a national party as its support spreads all over the country, in both the hills and the Tarai. The party, however, has shown greater presence in the districts surrounding Kathmandu valley, an area dominated by the Tamang indigenous people.

The small parties are more or less localised parties irrespective of their ideologies. The People's Front has a strong support base in the adjoining western hill districts of Baglung, Arghakhanchi and Pyuthan. The NWPP is popular among Hindu Newars, a dominant group in terms of population distribution, in Bhaktapur District. The NSP's presence has been felt mainly in the Tarai hinterlands of the Central and Western Development Regions, inhabited by Maithali and Abadhi-speaking peoples, respectively.

Some of the major points regarding party ideology and policy enumerated in this section are:

- Each party has its own distinct ideological identity despite a decline in the role of ideology in inter-party relations and governance.
- Divergences in ideological identity and differences of policy issues among political parties influence where the parties find their support bases.
- The major political parties seeking power have their own imperatives to be pragmatic and hence find ways to reduce policy differences among themselves.
- Small parties are distinct from the major parties in terms of ideological and policy positions.

IV. CONCLUSION

Nepali political parties have now been marginalised from political centrality as the new power equations that have developed over the past few years favour the forces holding the gun—the palace and the Maoists. Deadlock over the constitutional process and the absence of elected bodies have naturally placed them in an uneven situation, although certainly not pushed them to the pre-1990 position.

Since their genesis in the 1930s and 40s, political parties had generally existed as movements and their struggles culminated in attaining the objectives of the 1990 Jana Andolan, i.e., the restoration of a political system based on constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. With the broadening of their roles and responsibilities in the changed context, political parties had to find ways to adapt to the new situation. Revision of ideologies in concurrence with the 1990 constitution, adoption of a system of structural diversification and functional specialisation, introduction of elections against the old practice of nomination of party leaders, and decline in ideology contributing to the development of a culture of cooperative competition among parties are some of the remarkable positive developments in the post-1990 party system in Nepal. However, centralisation, oligarchic control and non-transparency remain features common to all parties.

The transformation of parties in 1990 into power-seeking organisations with new challenges to face, viz, internal conflicts, factionalism, erosion of ideology and decline in leadership credibility, have constrained the institutionalisation of parties and the party system. The leadership, involved as it is in power struggles, appears least bothered about policy matters. The policy content of difference parties has indeed been overshadowed by continuous political crises and turmoil. Thus, party leaders are preoccupied more with responding to political events than with making policies for socioeconomic development.

Even when actual attention is devoted to their programmes, although they have become somewhat responsive to societal pressures,

particularly with regard to policies related to ethnic and other minorities, several problems remain. Self-contradiction is a major issue. For instance, the NC professes socialism as its ideology yet has consistently pushed for a market economy policy; similarly, despite the CPN (UML)'s populist programmes on paper, it has pursued rather conservative policies while in power.

The reformation agenda and socioeconomic issues have been overshadowed by the return of politics as the utmost important issue following the palace's regressive step of October 2002 and the earlier intensification and escalation of the Maoist armed insurgency. Power equations in the coming days will definitely be different from those of the 1990s or the present. The revival of political parties, sooner or later, in the new context is inevitable. The present political crisis and the foreseeable political scenario in the future suggest that political parties would best go through a two-step course. The first should be to bring back the people content in politics through the reactivation of and amendment of the present constitution or an election to a constituent assembly. Accommodation of the Maoists through such a process is the only way to prevent further political crises and violence. For practical reasons the survival of the institution of the monarchy should also be addressed at the same time. The second step—to be optimistic that the present setback may prove to be a blessing in disguise for the parties to rectify their past mistakes and misdeeds—would be to give priority to the reformation agenda.

V. POSTSCRIPT

Political parties have come back to power at the head of the successful popular uprising of April 2006. The major post-movement political developments have been: reinstatement of dissolved HoR on 24 April; formation of an SPA government with Girija Prasad Koirala as prime minister on 27 April; declaration by the HoR on 18 May to go for an election to a constituent assembly and reduction of the monarchy to a ceremonial role for the time being; beginning of negotiations between the SPA government and the CPN (Maoist) on 26 May; and a summit meeting between the CPN (Maoist) and the SPA on 16 June that concluded with an agreement on an eight-point programme that included the formation of a committee to draft an interim constitution, the dissolution of the HoR at an appropriate time, and the constitution of an interim government consisting of the SPA and the CPN (Maoist) in the near future.

The recent mass movement is a manifestation of the popular rejection of rule by the monarchy. The royal takeover of October 2002, when King Gyanendra dismissed an elected government led by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, was the beginning of a period of monarchical rule. Lokendra Bahadur Chand, Surya Bahadur Thapa and Deuba himself successively served as prime ministers nominated by the king. The climax of royal control of government came on 1 February 2005, when King Gyanendra dissolved the government he himself had nominated and assumed the position of chairman of the Council of Ministers.

For the three and a half years between October 2002 and April 2006, the parties reverted to becoming movements once again. This was also the time that saw a sea change in the parties' positions vis-à-vis both the monarchy and the (CPN) Maoist. Before the royal takeover of October 2002, the major political parties had held fast to the idea of a constitutional monarchy. They had strongly countered the Maoist republican agenda, asserting that there could be no compromise on the issues of constitutional monarchy and multiparty democracy. After October 2002, parliamentary parties—hoping to regain power through

a reconciliation with the king—confined themselves to pressure politics against what they termed 'royal regression'. Their main demand was amendment of the 1990 constitution. But as their hopes of rapprochement with the monarchy were dashed after February 2005, they adopted a radical position vis-à-vis the monarchy. In subsequent days, the CPN (UML) passed a resolution to declare *loktantrik ganatantra* (democratic republic) to be the declared goal of the anti-regression movement. Similarly the NC, at its national convention, deleted the phrase 'constitutional monarchy' (an article of faith since the time of its formation in 1947) from its party constitution. The two major parties, thus, advanced from their earlier stand of constitutional amendment to the election of a constituent assembly.

February 2005, thus, made possible a new political equation in which the parliamentary parties and the CPN (Maoist) came together against royal rule despite parties' initial reluctance to make common cause with the CPN (Maoist) because of its declared objective to overthrow of the present polity based on multiparty parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy through armed revolution and its replacement with a Maoist 'new people's democracy'. Both sides had indicated they could work together provided each respects the fundamental position of the other. The CPN (Maoist) leader, Baburam Bhattarai, had declared years earlier that his party's 'constant appeal to all the parliamentary parties' had been: 'you accept republicanism, we will accept multipartyism'.[1] In conformity with this line, and contrary to its earlier ideological stand, the CPN (Maoist) had now included the component of competitive party politics in its recent proposal of a 'new model of democracy'.

While the political parties (and others) have doubts about whether the CPN (Maoist)'s revised ideological position is only a tactical manoeuvre or evidence of real commitment, they have nevertheless shown considerable flexibility in recognising the CPN (Maoist) demand that an election to a constituent assembly is the bottom line for a negotiated settlement to the insurgency. This is a far cry from 2001 when the CPN (UML) and other communist parties flatly rejected the Maoist proposal to form a loose coalition of the Left on the agenda of republicanism and election of a constituent assembly. The 12-point understanding reached in November 2005 between the SPA and the CPN (Maoist) is a

landmark event since it not only united all the popular forces in their fight against 'absolute monarchy', but also because the mainstream parties endorsed the election of a constituent assembly while the Maoists reciprocated by accepting multiparty politics. This understanding between the SPA and the Maoists provided the basis for the unprecedented popular mobilisation during the April 2006 movement.

In the aftermath of the successful popular movement, one of the main contentious issues within and among the political parties, including the Maoists, is the future of the monarchy. The removal of any reference to the monarchy from the formal titles of the institutions of the Nepali state could indicate the direction Nepal is headed towards. The exit of the monarchy from state affairs coincides with the entry of the pro-republic CPN (Maoist) as one of the dominant actors in the making of the future of Nepal. Notwithstanding the present republican wave and despite the silence of the pro-monarchists, there are still many who would want to retain a role for the king, not least of all Prime Minister Koirala, who had indicated his preference for a ceremonial monarchy.

Also on the political agenda now is the universal realisation for the need of a radical transformation of the Nepali state. A restructured state is seen as the remedy to address the problem of exclusion faced by women, dalits, ethnic groups and the madhesi. However, although parties from across the political and ideological spectrum have expressed their commitment to this principle, they have not actually conceptualised how this is to be achieved or even debated the issue fully. As a result, most political parties, including the CPN (Maoist), have been pushing for a federated state, an electoral process that combines elements of majoritarian and proportional representation systems, and affirmative action for marginalised groups. While these could be the answers to the problems plaguing Nepal, the political parties seem little aware of the modalities and consequences of such actions since these could have unfortunate consequences for Nepal down the road.

How far the present political changes would affect the internal affairs of individual political party is yet to be seen. In Nepal, internal democracy in political parties entails five key aspects: 1) election of office holders; 2) management of horizontal relations between the organisational and elected wings of a party; 3) participation of the party's

rank and file in public policy-making; 4) transparency in party funding; and 5) broad-based representation of different segments of society in the party structure. These are issues expected to be the key subjects of public discourse once the present state of transition is over.

NOTES

I. Introduction

1   The constitution ambiguously places the king in the position of a constitutional monarch. In addition to granting discretionary power on subjects related to royal succession and royal affairs, the king can prevent the cabinet's decisions on the dissolution of parliament, declaration of an emergency and mobilisation of the army. There are several instances of the monarch exercising executive powers ignoring Article 35 (2) of the constitution, which vested all executive power in the cabinet. The dismissal of prime minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, on 4 October, 2002 and subsequent nominations of prime ministers and ministers by King Gyanendra were instances of blatant violation of the constitution.

2   Mushrooming of political parties is evident from the increase in the number of parties registered with the Election Commission: 44 in 1991, 65 in 1994 and 100 in 1999. However, fewer than 50 per cent of the officially registered parties—20, 24 and 38 respectively in 1991, 1994 and 1999—contested elections and only few of them succeeded in gaining seats in parliament.

3   Some of the remarkable policy measures taken by the NC government (1959-60) were the nationalisation of forests and *birta* (tax-exempt) land, legislation abolishing the *raja rajauta* (small feudal principalities) system, introduction of property tax, provision of increased budget for education, health services and communications.

4   In a referendum in which Nepalis were asked to choose between the partyless Panchayat system and a multiparty system, 55 per cent voted for the retention of the Panchayat system. The CPN (ML)'s official position was to boycott the referendum altogether but in a broad ideological polarisation between the supporters and opponents of the Panchayat system in the aftermath of the referendum, the CPN (ML) gradually allied itself with the pro-multiparty system camp.

5   Some principles of liberal democracy adopted in the CPN (UML)'s programme of *Janatako Bahudaliya Janbad* are: guarantee of fundamental rights of citizens, peaceful competition among political parties, periodic elections, rule of the majority party and the rule of law.

6   The CPN (UML) changed its position after King Gyanendra's coup of 1 February 2005. It was a partner in the coalition government led by Sher Bahadur Deuba which was dismissed by the king's proclamation of 1 February. Thereafter, the CPN (UML) realised the need for an election to a constituent assembly and formally adopted the line advocating a 'democratic republic' against its previous support for a constitutional monarchy.

7   Before democracy was restored as a consequence of the April 2006 popular movement, the loss of human life in connection with the CPN (Maoist)'s armed insurgency and the state's counter-insurgency stood at around 13,000.

8   Internal differences on an alliance with the CPM (Maoist) led to a split in the People's Front, or CPN (Unity Centre-Masal), and the opposing faction, led by Mohan Bickram, formed a separate party in April 2006.

9   The RPP has suffered two more splits since. A group led by Surya Bahadur Thapa branched out to form the Rashtriya Janashakti Party in the middle of 2004, and, when both the RPP and the Rashtriya Janashakti Party appeared critical of the February 2005 royal takeover, a faction of the RPP led by the then Home Minister Kamal Thapa formed a new party, also called the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party, on the eve of the February 2006 local elections.

II. Party Culture and Structure

1   For more on the concept of catch-all parties, see Otto Kirchheimer, 'The Transformation of the Western European Party System' in Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, ed, *Political Parties and Political Development*, 1966.

2   The difference between the two appears to be only of status. For instance, the NC's student wing, the Nepal Students' Union (NSU), is acknowledged in the NC's constitution, and so it is an ancillary organisation. But groups in the professional sectors such as university teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, etc, (some of which are formal, while others are informal but organised nevertheless) are not mentioned in its constitution, and so are affiliated organisations. In essence, however, the purpose and functions of both types of organisations are the same.

3   The NC occasionally subscribes to greater independence of the elected wing, but it has also passed several resolutions for the ascendancy of the organisational wing. These are, however, contradicted by the constitution of the NC parliamentary party, which allows a minimal role to the leaders of the party organisation in its parliamentary business. In the absence of any precise rule, the NC has tried to regulate party-government relations by inventing a new mechanism and forming a 'coordination committee'. But this committee had always failed to bring out working modalities acceptable to both the leader of the party and the leader of the government.

4   Of several devices compatible to the ascendancy of the organisational wing over the elected wing in the CPN (UML), one is the heavy levy drawn from the party's representatives in state apparatuses. Besides, the party has introduced a system under which party candidates are required to submit a resignation letter in advance before they receive party tickets. And after getting elected they are required to obtain permission from the party to go abroad on visits. Even the constitution of the CPN (UML) parliamentary

party has enunciated the party's control over its elected representatives. This constitution provides for a parliamentary department constituted under the CC. The parliamentary department is more powerful than the parliamentary party, which is supposed to take all important decisions, except on the formal selection of the leader of the parliamentary party.

5   Four out of several instances are presented here to show the nexus between nefarious elements and party leaders. The NC government (1991-94) sold government-owned industries to private parties, allegedly at cheaper prices. Second, its last cabinet meeting decided to restore the confiscated property of former army officer, Bharat Gurung, who had earlier been court-martialed for his involvement in drug trafficking, smuggling and other serious crimes. Third, the CPN (UML) government (November 1994-September 1995) exonerated an industrialist-cum-commission agent, Mohan Gopal Khetan, who had been indicted for violation of foreign exchange rules. Fourth, two financiers of the CPN (UML), Anand Agrawal and Prakash Tibdewala, the chief culprits in the largest fiscal scam of deflecting US\$ 36.1 million through abuse of Letter of Credit facility during the CPN (UML) government, were released from prison once the party came to power in March 1997.

III. Party Ideology and Policy

1   Parliamentary parties came together once again in the middle of the year 2005 with a six-point agreement among seven parties. The initial five-party alliance had become redundant as a consequence of the CPN (UML)'s participation in the king-nominated government of Sher Bahadur Deuba (June 2004-January 2005). But the royal coup of February 2005 paved the way for a realignment of parliamentary forces. The new Seven Party Alliance (SPA) included the Nepali Congress (Democratic) and the United Left Front, both of which had been excluded from the previous protests led by the five-party alliance. The six-point agreement marked a departure from the earlier quest to amend the 1990 constitution to the new position seeking elections to a constituent assembly. The significance of this change was that it paved the way for an alignment between the mainstream parties and the CPN (Maoist), culminating in the 12-point understanding between the SPA and the CPN (Maoist) in November 2005. The key contents of the agreement were: joint peaceful movement against the royal regime, commitment to competitive multiparty politics, and election of a constituent assembly. This partnership between anti-monarchical forces provided the background for the mass movement called by the SPA to begin on 6 April 2006. Nineteen days of popular uprising in almost all the urban areas of the country led to the reinstatement of the HoR and formation of an all-party government, among other developments.

2   The government sent the army on a mission to rescue the 76 police personnel taken hostage in Holeri, Rolpa District, by the Maoists, but the army,

disobeying the order, showed a reluctance to act.

3   Maoist leaders, Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai, have claimed their party had an 'undeclared alliance' with late King Birendra and that the king was not in favour of the government's plan to mobilise the army against the rebels.

4   For instance, the amendment of the NC constitution in 1995 made it mandatory to have at least 10 per cent representation from excluded groups, including women and *dalits*, in the party committees at all levels, from the village to the centre. Similarly, the RPP constitution requires the head of the party organisation at all levels to give priority to minority and unprivileged groups while nominating 50 per cent of the total committee members.

5   The CPN (UML) has been eagerly seeking goodwill and legitimacy from western countries. Most indicative of this perhaps is the deletion of 'imperialist', a term that has been traditionally used to describe the USA, from the party document in 1998.

6   Sudhindra Sharma and Pawan Kumar Sen, *1999 General Election Opinion Poll: How Voters Assess Politics, Parties and Politicians*, Kathmandu: Himal Association, 1999.

V. Postscript
1   Baburam Bhattarai, 'Nepal: Triangular Balance of Forces', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 16 November, 2002.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS (1990-2006)

1990

8 April	Ban on political parties lifted.
19 April	Eleven-member interim government formed under Krishna Prasad Bhattarai (the then NC acting president) consisting of representatives from NC and ULF, king's nominees and independents.
29 May	Two separate RPPs, led by Lokendra Bahadur Chand and Surya Bahadur Thapa, established.
31 May	Nine-member Constitution Recommendation Commission formed under Bishwo Nath Upadhaya and representation from NC, ULF and king's side.
9 November	Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 promulgated.
23 November	Three radical splinter communist groups, CPN (Fourth Convention), CPN (Mashal) and Sarbahara Srameek Party (known as Rup Lal group), unify as CPN (Unity Centre).

1991

8 January	CPN (ML) and CPN (Marxist) merge to become CPN (UML).
15 January	National convention of NWPP held and Narayan Man Bijukchhe elected party chairperson.
12 May	General elections to HoR held; twenty political parties participate, only six gain seats; NC wins 110 seats, CPN (UML) 69; Krishna Prasad Bhattarai defeated.
29 May	NC government formed under Girija Prasad Koirala.

1992

8 February	Two RPPs amalgamate with Surya Bahadur Thapa as party chairperson and Lokendra Bahadur Chand as party leader.
13 February	NC holds 8th national convention; Krishna Prasad Bhattarai re-elected party president uncontested.

28 and 31 May	Local elections held in two phases.

1993

27 January	CPN (UML) holds 5th national congress; all CC members elected without contest; adopts programme of People's Multiparty Democracy.
17 April	NSP's 2nd national convention held.
16 May	CPN (UML) leaders Madan Bhandari and Jivraj Ashrit die in jeep accident; Madhav Kumar Nepal becomes CPN (UML) general secretary.
11 June	RPP's national convention is held.
29 June	CPN (UML) expels Jagat Bogati, a rebel candidate elected to the National Assembly, and takes disciplinary actions against 22 of its MPs for defying party whip in election of members of Upper House.
14 November	Small communist faction known as the CPN (Amatya) merges with CPN (UML).

1994

7 February	NC President Krishna Prasad Bhattarai defeated in by-election to HoR, allegedly because of internal sabotage; Bhattarai had contested amidst bitter factional conflicts in the NC and a secret under-standing between leaders of the NC and the CPN (UML) to oust Koirala.
16 February	CPN (UML) petitions for special session of HoR and tables a no-confidence motion against the govern-ment in the backdrop of intensified factional split in the NC following defeat of Bhattarai.
7 March	Government survives no-confidence motion by 113 to 81 votes.
22 May	UPF splits into two groups, one led by Niranjan Govinda Vaidya and the other by Baburam Bhattarai.
10 July	HoR dissolved and mid-term poll recommended by Koirala, following the defeat of the government's annual plans and policies in parliament due to the absence of 35 dissident NC MPs.

14 July	Vaidya group of UPF holds convention and decides to participate in mid-term election.
10 August	Bhattarai group of UPF decides to boycott mid-term election.
16 September	Ganesh Man Singh quits NC and his new forum, Jana Jagaran Abhiyan, is used against NC candidates of the Koirala faction.
15 November	Mid-term poll to HoR held; CPN (UML), with 88 seats in the HoR, emerges as largest party in parliament.
29 November	CPN (UML) minority government formed with Man Mohan Adhikari as prime minister and Madhav Nepal as deputy prime minister.
2 December	Sher Bahadur Deuba elected NC parliamentary party leader.

1995

8 June	NC MPs call special session of parliament.
9 June,	King summons special session on 16 June; HoR dissolved and mid-term poll recommended by Adhikari.
11 June	77 NC MPs table no-confidence motion against Adhikari in HoR.
13 June	King dissolves HoR on the recommendation of Adhikari.
14 June	NSP splits with the formation of the Nepal Samajbadi Janata Dal.
5 July	Bhattarai faction of ULF holds national convention; Baburam Bhattarai elected convenor and Pampha Bhusal, secretary.
18 July	NWPP expels its MP Binod Kumar for defecting to CPN (UML) and dissolves party's district committee of Dailekh District.
16 Aug	Jana Jagaran Abhiyan is dissolved for re-entry of its leaders and workers into NC.
28 August	Supreme Court orders revival of dissolved HoR.
10 September	No-confidence motion against CPN (UML)'s minority government passes.

| 11 September | Coalition government of NC, RPP and NSP formed with Sher Bahadur Deuba as prime minister. |

1996

1 February	NSP expels two of its MPs, Hridayesh Tripathi and Rameshwor Raya, founder of the Nepal Samajbadi Janata Dal, a splinter group of the NSP.
13 February	CPN (Maoist) formally launches 'people's war'.
28 February	CPN (UML) MPs, in understanding with Chand faction of ruling coalition partner, RPP, petition for a special session of HoR.
22 March	CPN (UML) MPs table no-confidence motion against Deuba-led coalition government.
24 March	Government survives no-confidence motion with 106 against 98 votes.
30 April	NC's 9th national convention opens in Kathmandu; Girija Prasad Koirala elected party president with 1,154 votes against Chiranjibi Wagle's 254.
26 June	CPN (UML) removes post of deputy general secretary, created at time of its minority government and held by Bamdev Gautam, generating new form of factional conflict in party.
19 September	Mahakali River treaty with India endorsed by parliament with 220 against 8 votes; 26 CPN (UML) MPs defy party whip by abstaining from voting.
8 December	102 MPs, including 11 from RPP Chand faction, petition for a special session of HoR.
24 December	Government survives no-confidence vote. But since it receives only 82 votes in a house of 205, government has to prove confidence of parliament in next session.

1997

| 25 January | Twenty-three CPN (UML) CC members table proposal for removal of Madhav Kumar Nepal as general secretary. |
| 6 March | Deuba-led coalition government collapses, obtaining only 101 votes; two NC MPs abstain from voting, |

	allegedly as part of conspiracy to replace Deuba with Koirala.
9 March	Koirala elected NC parliamentary party leader unopposed.
12 March	Lokendra Bahadur Chand appointed prime minister of new coalition government of the RPP, CPN (UML) and NSP.
17 and 26 May	Local election held in two phases.
22 September	NC MPs petition for special session of parliament.
2 October	NC MPs table no-confidence motion against Chand government.
4 October	Vote of no-confidence passed with 107 votes, including those from MPs belonging to Thapa faction of RPP, against 94.
6 October	Surya Bahadur Thapa appointed prime minister of new coalition government of RPP, NC and NSP.
12 November	RPP's national convention re-elects Surya Bahadur Thapa party chairperson over Rajeshwor Devkota.
26 November	Nepal Samajbadi Janata Dal dissolved and reunited with NSP.

1998

8 January	CPN (UML) MPs file no-confidence motion against Thapa government.
9 January	RPP (Chand) formed with support of 40 per cent MPs of undivided RPP.
16 January	RPP (Chand) splinter group formally recognised as separate party.
25 January	CPN (UML)'s 6th national congress in Nepalgunj re-elects Madhav Kumar Nepal as general secretary.
20 February	Special session of HoR convened against Thapa's recommendation to dissolve HoR following court verdict; government survives no-confidence motion with 103 against 100 votes.
5 March	Forty-six CPN (UML) MPs of minority group led by Bamdev Gautam apply to form new party, CPN (ML).

6 March	CPN (ML) formally recognised.
25 March	Thapa resigns.
26 March	Koirala appointed prime minister.
28 March	NSP's 3rd national convention convened in Biratnagar.
14 June	National convention of the RPP (Chand) convened.
26 August	CPN (ML) included in Koirala government.
10 December	CPN (ML) quits government and Koirala recommends mid-term poll.
25 December	CPN (UML) included in Koirala government.

1999

3 and 17 May	General election held in two phases.
27 May	NC government formed with Krishna Prasad Bhattarai as prime minister.
30 December	RPP (Thapa) and RPP (Chand) reunite.

2000

15 February	Fifty-eight NC MPs file no-confidence motion against Krishna Prasad Bhattarai in parliamentary party office.
13 March	Number of NC MPs supporting no-confidence motion rises to 69.
16 March	Bhattarai resigns.
18 March	Koirala elected leader of NC parliamentary party with 69 votes over Sher Bahadur Deuba's 43.
20 March	Koirala appointed prime minister.
13 December	National convention of CPN (ML) held; Sahana Pradhan and Bamdev Gautam elected party chairperson and general secretary respectively.
28 December	Fifty-eight NC MPs file no-confidence motion against Koirala as prime minister.

2001

| 4 January | NC parliamentary party vote on no-confidence motion against Koirala boycotted by MPs from rival (Deuba) faction; Koirala survives. |

19 January	NC's 10th national convention re-elects Koirala president with 936 votes against rival Sher Bahadur Deuba's 507.
1 June	King Birendra along with his entire family and 10 other royals assassinated, allegedly by Crown Prince Dipendra.
4 June	Gyanendra, brother of late Birendra, declared new king.
19 July	Koirala resigns on account of non-cooperation from army in Holeri incident.
22 July	Sher Bahadur Deuba elected leader of NC parliamentary party with 72 against Sushil Koirala's 40.
23 July	Deuba becomes prime minister and truce is announced by the new prime minister and Maoist leader Prachanda.
16 August	Maoist leaders meet with leaders of the parliamentary communist parties in Siliguri, India.
30 August	First round of government-Maoist talks held in Kathmandu.
14 September	Second round of government-Maoist talks held in Bardiya.
21 November	Maoists declare unilateral end of ceasefire.
23 November	Maoists attack army barrack in Dang District.
26 November	Emergency declared.

2002

15 February	CPN (ML) reunites with CPN (UML).
21 February	Parliament endorses government decision to extend emergency by 194 votes against 7.
3 March	NC and CPN (UML) leaders agree to amend constitution and reach secret agreement to replace incumbent NC government led by Deuba by all-party coalition government.
17 May	Rift in NC following party organisation leaders' dismay over government's decision to convene parliamentary session for second extension of emergency.

22 May	Deuba dissolves HoR and recommends mid-term poll; King Gyanendra promptly consents.
26 May	NC suspends Deuba from party membership for three years.
16 June	Meeting of NC's Deuba faction convenes and new party, NC (Democratic), formed with Deuba as president.
10 July	People's Front formed following the unification of UPF and NPF.
3 October	Deuba, with consent of parliamentary parties, recommends postponement of mid-term elections.
4 October	King sacks Deuba and takes over executive power.
12 October	King nominates Lokendra Bahadur Chand as prime minister.
15 December	RPP's third national convention in Pokhara passes resolution for position of 'benevolent monarch' during crises. Pashupati Shamsher Rana elected party chairperson over Prakash Chandra Lohani and Rabindra Nath Sharma.

2003

29 January	Government and Maoists announce ceasefire.
1 February	CPN (UML)'s 7th national congress re-elects Madhav Kumar Nepal general secretary.
25 March	NSP's 4th national convention held; party splits into two, one led by then Deputy Prime Minister Badri Prasad Mandal and other by Anandi Devi.
24 April	First round of formal talks between government and Maoists held.
8 May	Alliance of five parliamentary parties formally launch protest movement against the king's 4 October, 2002, takeover.
9 May	Second round of talks between government and Maoists held in Kathmandu.
30 May	Chand resigns.
4 June	Surya Bahadur Thapa nominated prime minister.

11 August	Third round of talks between government and Maoists held in Nepalgunj and Dang.
26 August	Maoists announce unilateral announcement of end of ceasefire.

2004

7 May	Surya Bahadur Thapa resigns.
2 June	Sher Bahadur Deuba nominated prime minister
4 July	UML, RPP and NSP (Mandal) joined Deuba-led government

2005

1 February	King Gyanendra dismisses Deuba government and names himself chairman of Council of Ministers; imposes emergency; and leaders of political parties put under house arrest or detained.
14 February	Tulsi Giri and Kirti Nidhi Bista, two former prime ministers under the partyless Panchayat system, appointed as vice-chairmen of Council of Ministers.
16 February	Royal Commission for Corruption Control formed.
13 March	Splinter group of RPP led by Surya Bahadur Thapa forms new party, Rashtriya Janashakti Party.
18 June	SPA passes six-point common agenda, including demand for the reinstatement of the dissolved HoR and election of constituent assembly.
26 July	Sher Bahadur Deuba imprisoned by Royal Commission for Corruption Control for alleged corruption in Melamchi project.
25 August	CPN (UML) adopts 'democratic republic' as its agenda in movement against royal rule.
30 August	NC's 11th national convention passes resolution deleting 'constitutional monarchy' from party constitution; Girija Prasad Koirala re-elected party president.
22 November	SPA and the CPN (Maoist) reach 12-point understanding.

2006

10 January	Splinter group of RPP led by Kamal Thapa forms new party with the same name, RPP.
8 February	Election of municipalities; most political parties, including RPP, boycott; voting turnout only 20 per cent.
13 February	Supreme Court dismisses Royal Commission for Corruption Control and Deuba released from the prison.
6 April	SPA launches peaceful mass movement.
24 April	Royal proclamation reinstates dissolved HoR.
27 April	Girija Prasad Koirala becomes prime minister in SPA government.
18 May	HoR passes unanimous political declaration; the phrase 'His Majesty's' deleted from names of state insti-tutions; election to constituent assembly announced; Nepal declared secular state.
26 May	Negotiations between SPA government and CPN (Maoist) start; code of conduct for ceasefire adopted.
16 June	Summit meeting between SPA and CPN (Maoist) concludes with eight-point agreement; agreement includes announcement of interim constitution drafting committee, dissolution of HoR, formation of interim government of SPA and CPN (Maoist), and 'arms management' under UN supervision.

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Constitutions of:
1. Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)
2. Nepal Sadbhavana Party
3. Nepal Workers and Peasants Party
4. Nepali Congress
5. People's Front
6. Rashtriya Prajatantra Party

Election manifestos of:
1. Communist Party of Nepal (UML), 1991, 1994, 1999
2. National People's Front, 1999
3. Nepal Sadbhavana Party, 1991, 1994 and 1999
4. Nepal Workers and Peasants Party, 1991, 1994 and 1999
5. Nepali Congress, 1991, 1994 and 1999
6. Rashtriya Prajatantra Party, 1991, 1994 and 1999
7. United People's Front, 1991, 1994 and 1999.

ANNEXES

Party positions in first, second and third parliamentary elections

Parties	Number of Seats Elected			% of Popular Vote		
	1991	1994	1999	1991	1994	1999
Nepali Congress	110	83	112	37.75	33.38	36.14
CPN (UML)	69	88	70	27.98	30.85	30.74
Rashtriya Prajatantra Party	4	20	11	11.94	17.93	13.46
Nepal Sadbhavana Party	6	3	5	4.1	3.49	3.13
National People's Front	-	-	5	-	-	1.36
Nepal Workers' and Peasants' Party	2	4	1	1.25	0.98	0.54
United People's Front	9	0	1	4.35	1.32	0.83
Communist Party of Nepal (Democratic)	2	0	0	2.43	0.38	0.06
Independents	3	7	0	4.17	6.18	2.83
Other parties	0	0	0	6.04	5.49	10.92*
Total	205	205	205	100	100	100

Source: Election Commission, *House of Representative Members, 2048 (1991): Final Results*; *House of Representative Members, 2051 (1994): Election Results*; and *House of Representative Members, 2056 (1999): Election Results*.

* This includes the CPN (ML)'s popular vote total of 6.38 per cent which, however, failed to win the party any seats.

Annex 1 (b)
Party positions in local elections

Parties	Local elections (% of seat)			% of Popular Vote		
	1992			1997		
	VDCs	Municipalities	DDCs	VDCs	Municipalities	DDCs
Nepali Congress	50.24	50.84	64.80	29.47	28.92	14.32
CPN (UML)	26.05	22.33	17.94	50.10	55.98	68.05
RPP	9.73					
NSP	2.94	10.32	7.63	12.22	8.15	9.94
NPF	5.09	3.38	1.96	1.21	1.59	1.42
NWPP	Included in the section of independent and other parties	1.50	3.54	-	-	-
UPF						
CPN (Democratic)	5.93					
Independents						
Other parties		11.63	4.10	4.93	5.36	6.27
Total	99.98					

VDC= Village Development Committee, DDC=District Development Committee.
Source: Pancha Narayan Maharjan, 'Local Elections in Nepal, 1997', CNAS Professional Paper, Kathmandu: CNAS, 1998.

Governments in Nepal since 1990

SN	Prime Minister	Parties	Length	Dates
1	Krishna Prasad Bhattarai	Interim government—NC, ULF and king's nominees	13 months	19/4/90-25/5/91
First Parliament (1991-1994)				
2	Girija Prasad Koirala	NC majority	43 months	26/5/91-28/11/94
Second Parliament (1994-1999)				
3	Man Mohan Adhikari	CPN (UML) minority	9 months	29/11/94-10/9/95
4	Sher Bahadur Deuba	NC-RPP-NSP coalition	18 months	11/9/95-11/3/97
5	Lokendra Bahadur Chand	RPP-CPN (UML)-NSP coalition	8 months	12/3/97-5/10/97
6	Surya Bahadur Thapa	RPP-NSP-NSP coalition	6 months	6/10/97-25/3/98
7	Girija Prasad Koirala	NC minority	5 months	26/3/98-26/8/98
8	Girija Prasad Koirala	NC-ML-NSP coalition	4 months	26/8/98-22/12/98
9	Girija Prasad Koirala	NC-CPN (UML)-NSP coalition	5 months	23/12/98-26/5/99
Third Parliament (1999-2002)				
10	Krishna Prasad Bhattarai	NC majority	10 months	27/5/99-9/3/00
11	Girija Prasad Koirala	NC majority	28 months	10/3/00-22/7/01
12	Sher Bahadur Deuba	NC majority	14 months	23/7/01-4/10/02
King-nominated governments (October 2002-January 2005)				
13	Lokendra Bahadur Chand	RPP and small parties	8 months	12/10/03-30/5/03
14	Surya Bahadur Thapa	RPP	11 months	4/6/03-7/5/04
15	Sher Bahadur Deuba	NC (D)-CPN (UML)-RPP-NSP coalition	8 months	2/6/04-31/1/05
Kingís direct rule (February 2005-April 2006)				
16	King Gyanendra Shah as Chairman of Council of Ministers		15 months	1/2/05-26/4/06
Post-movement				
17	Girija Prasad Koirala	Seven Party Alliance government		27/4/06-

Annex 3
Vertical structure of parties
(top-down)

	NC	NC (Democratic)	CPN (UML)	RPP	People's Front	NWPP	NSP
Central executive committee	✓	✓	✓ *	✓	✗	✗	✓
Central committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development regions committee	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Zonal committee	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
District committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Constituency committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Area committee	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
Village/city committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ward committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓*: CPN (UML) uses the word 'standing committee' for this level of committee

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Annex 4
Departments under party central committees

Departments	NC	NC (Democratic)	CPN (UML)	RPP	People's Front	NWPP	NSP
Related to organisational management							
Coordination	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Finance	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Law	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Election	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Publicity and publication	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓	✓
Party school	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Planning and research	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Organisation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Public relations	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Training	✓	✓	✗	✓*	✗	✗	✗
Evaluation	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Disciplinary	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
Extra activities	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Related to elected wing of party							
Parliamentary	✓*	✓*	✓	✓	✓*	✗	✓
Local elected	✓*	✓*	✓	✓	✓*	✗	✗
Related to public policy formulation							
Industry	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Agriculture	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Ethnic	✗	✓	✓	✓*	✗	✗	✗
Trade union	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Professional	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Ex-army	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Women	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Youth/student	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
External affairs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education	✗	✓	✓	✓*	✗	✗	✗
Cooperative	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Culture	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Social service	✗	✗	✓	✓*	✗	✗	✗
Health	✗	✗	✓	✓*	✗	✗	✗
Ngo	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Dalit	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Administration	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Peasant	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Law and human rights	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Water and natural resources	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Law and order	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Judicial	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Population and environment	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Tarai	✗	✗	✗	✓*	✗	✗	✗
Citizenship issue	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Maoist problem inspection	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗

✓*: Integration of two-three departments into one.

Ancillary organisations	NC	NC (Democratic)	CPN (UML)	RPP	People's Front	NWPP	NSP
Women	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Youth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Students	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Democracy fighters	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Peasants	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dalits	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Ex-servicemen	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
Ethnic	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Trade Union	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Cultural	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Professional	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Legal	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Local elected bodies	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Muslim	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Teachers	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓

Annex 6 (a)
Caste/ethnic composition of central committee members (in number)

	NC	NC (Democratic)	CPN (UML)	RPP	People's Front	NWPP	NSP
Hill caste							
Bahun	18	9	30	9	17	2	✗
Chhetri/Thakuri	3	12	2	10	3	2	✗
Sanyasi	✗	1	✗	✗	3	✗	✗
Newar	1	2	6	3	4	5	û
Hill ethnic	4	5	4	7	8	û	û
Tarai communities	3	7	1	5	2	✗	31
Dalit	✗	1	✗	✗	2	✗	✗
Total	**29**	**37**	**43**	**34**	**38**	**9**	**31**

Annex 6 (b)
Caste/ethnic composition of members of House of Representatives (in percentage)

Caste/ethnicity Total number	1991/205	1994/205	1999/205
Bahun-Chhetri	37.619.1	42.019.5	37.620.5
Newar	06.8	06.3	06.8
Hill ethnic groups	15.2	12.2	14.7
Tarai communities	21.0	20.0	19.5
Others	2.9	2.0	2.5
Total	100	100	100

Source: IIDS. 2000. *The Fourth Parliamentary Election*. Kathmandu: Institute for Integrated Development Studies.

Annex 7
Party positions in elections by ecological and development regions

	NC			CPN (UML)			Other parties		
Mountain	1991	1994	1999	1991	1994	1999	1991	1994	1999
Eastern Development Region	1	2	2	4	3	3	✘	✘	✘
Central Development Region	✘	1	2	4	2	3	2	3	1
Western Development Region	1	2	3	3	1	✘	✘	✘	✘
Mid-Western Development Region	3	2	✘	✘	1	5	2	3	✘
Far-Western Development Region	4	1	4	û	3	✘	1	✘	✘
Total	*9*	*8*	*11*	*11*	*10*	*11*	*5*	*6*	*1*
Hill									
Eastern Development Region	2	4	6	16	11	8	✘	2	2
Central Development Region	7	6	8	15	17	18	6	6	3
Western Development Region	24	13	16	6	14	9	✘	1	3
Mid-Western Development Region	8	9	4	1	✘	4	3	3	4
Far-Western Development Region	9	3	7	✘	2	✘	✘	2	✘
Total	*50*	*35*	*41*	*38*	*44*	*39*	*9*	*14*	*12*
Tarai									
Eastern Development Region	13	13	13	11	13	11	2	2	4
Central Development Region	22	18	20	5	8	7	3	5	3
Western Development Region	7	6	7	1	3	2	5	4	4
Mid-Western Development Region	5	2	13	2	4	✘	✘	3	✘
Far-Western Development Region	5	1	7	✘	6	✘	✘	✘	✘
Total	*51*	*40*	*60*	*20*	*34*	*20*	*11*	*14*	*11*
Grand Total	**110**	**83**	**112**	**69**	**88**	**70**	**26**	**34**	**23**