

Protracted People's War in Nepal: An Analysis from the Perspective of Azar's Theory of Protracted Social Conflict

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Abstract

Edward Azar's theory of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC), characteristic of wider work being done in conflict resolution in the 1970s and 1980s, offered a genuinely original interpretation of prevailing patterns of conflict that was clearly at odds with mainstream international approaches at the time. When the attention of almost all of the specialists in international relations and conflict studies was focused on inter-state wars, Azar was one of those few who were focusing on intra-state conflict having communal content. Azar's work was rarely appreciated by the contemporary literatures of his time. However, only a few years after his death in 1991, conflict studies were being focused on internal wars – for which he used the term PSC - the concept that Azar had been advocating since 1970s. Azar's model still retains its relevance today. He identified four clusters responsible for the initiation of PSC, viz, communal identity, needs deprivation, governance and state's role, and international linkages. This paper attempts to analyze the Protracted People's War (PPW) started by Nepal Communist Party – Maoist (hereafter only Maoists) in Nepal that lasted for a decade. Firstly, the failure of government to address the fundamental needs of the people and engaging themselves in power politics resulted into the frustration among the people especially the rural mass that were suffering from acute discrimination and poverty. Secondly, discrimination of the people in terms of caste, ethnicity, and religion and their under-representation in the administrative and political echelon and the national army further added to the dissatisfaction of the people. The Maoists effectively exploited the frustration of the masses with regards to these disparities. Nepal's porous border with India facilitated the movement of Maoists to organize their activities and trainings in the Indian land and

co-ordination with similar groups in India. On the other hand, the provision of arms and ammunition to the ruling government by the international forces especially the US and India aggravated the conflicting situation. These factors explained by Azar's four clusters are significant to explain the violent conflict in Nepal. These factors are necessary but not sufficient to explain the uprising of Maoists and their strategy of the PPW. In addition to these factors explained by Azar's four clusters, exclusion of the Bhattarai-faction of United People's Front of Nepal from the general election in 1994 and political discrimination and suppression by the ruling political party (Nepali Congress) against the Maoists in 1995 also led to the violent conflict in Nepal.

1. Introduction

The term Protracted People's War (PPW) is a military-political strategy conceptualized by Mao Zedong. The Maoists use this term for their strategy of long-term armed revolutionary struggle. The basic concept behind PPW is to maintain armed struggle in the form of rural guerrilla warfare to construct a mass base-building so as to create guerrilla fronts to encircle the cities from the countryside (HDN, 2005). It generates a massive support from the population and launches a rebellion against the enemy through a combined strategy of mobile warfare and guerrilla warfare. The PPW (*Dirghakalin Jana Yuddha*) was declared in Nepal by the Maoists in 1996, which extended for a decade. The sources and reasons for escalation of conflict that led to the decade long PPW in Nepal can be well attributed to the four clusters identified by Edward Azar. Azar's theory of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) represents 'the prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for such basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation' (Miall et al., 2005). Azar identified four clusters of variables as preconditions for the transformation of such conflicts to high levels of intensity. Those four clusters are: identity groups such as racial, religious, ethnic, cultural and others; deprivation of human needs; failure of state to provide good governance; and international linkages. These clusters will be elaborated later in the paper. This paper aims to analyze the reasons for initiation and prolongation of the decade long PPW in Nepal from the perspective of these four clusters. The major research questions of this paper are: What were the major sources of PPW in Nepal and what were the factors responsible for its prolongation? The paper is divided into five sections. The second section presents a description of Azar's theory of PSC; the third section outlines a brief political history of modern Nepal, the major events associated with the PPW in chronological order, parties involved, their major issues, and the outcome of the PPW; the fourth section discusses the PPW from the perspective of Azar's theory of PSC; and the last part concludes the paper.

2. Azar's theory of Protracted Social Conflict

Edward Azar was born in Lebanon in 1938 and moved to the United States as a graduate student in international relations. Initially, his studies focused on the quantitative analysis of inter-state conflict. However, during the latter periods, he started to focus more on domestic or intra-state conflicts. He started publishing related works from the early 1970s. In the 1980s, together with John Burton, he set up the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland, where he died in 1991.

At the time of Azar, international relations and conflict management studies focused more on inter-state wars. It was only after the end of Cold War that the focus shifted on intra-state conflict, variously termed as 'internal conflict', 'civil wars', 'new wars', 'ethnic conflicts' and so on by various analysts (Ramsbotham, 2005). However, one cannot deny the fact that, when the attention of most conflict analysts was diverted towards the

on-going inter-state wars and the politics of Cold War going on between the two supreme powers of the world, ethnic and other forms of inter-state conflict still existed. Contrary to the conventional notion of war prevalent during his time as overt, inter-state violence and conflict, Azar focussed his work more on the covert and latent conflicts that existed more in the developing countries. He used the term 'Protracted Social Conflict' (PSC) to emphasise that sources of such conflicts lay predominantly within and across rather than exclusively between states. For Azar:

The origin of PSC is mainly attributable not to clashes of national interests, but rather to conflicting socio-cultural-ethnic relationships amidst chronic underdevelopment. ... PSCs are endemic to a given society and are characterized by temporal protractedness, fluctuations in intensity and frequency, conflict spillover from one realm to another, a tendency toward partial equilibrium, absence of an explicit termination, and blurred demarcation between internal and external sources of conflict (Azar and Moon, 1986, 394-395).

Azar identified four clusters of variables as preconditions for the transformations of such conflicts to high levels of intensity. The first cluster is the 'communal identity'. As Miall et al. (2005) puts it the most useful unit of analysis in PSC situations is the identity groups – racial, religious, ethnic, cultural and others. In many societies the state machinery comes to be dominated by a single communal group or a coalition of a few communal groups that are unresponsive to the needs of other groups in the society, which strains the social fabric and eventually breeds fragmentation and PSC.

The second cluster responsible for PSC as identified by Azar is the 'deprivation of human needs' such as security needs (nutrition, housing, clothing, and physical security), access needs (political and economic participation), and acceptance need (recognition and identity needs). Deprivation of basic human needs such as food, shelter, clothing, medicine and education; physical deprivation through malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, poor health, handicap; political discrimination by failing to identify individual and/or collective identity all lead to structural victimization. When grievances resulting from such need deprivation are not addressed, it leads to PSC.

Thirdly, 'governance and state's role' has been identified as a factor responsible for PSC. Here Azar notes that, states which experience PSC are characterized by incompetent, parochial, fragile and authoritarian governments. In such countries, political authority is often vested in a single or few dominant groups, thus monopolizing the power. Decentralization of power is lacking in such countries where bureaucratic rule is often imposed from metropolitan centers. Also, PSC tends to concentrate in those countries where rate of population growth is very high with very limited resource base.

Final cluster is the 'pattern of international political and economic linkages'. Almost every internal conflict involves the neighboring countries in one way or the other. Their role may be either supportive or exploitative. Third parties may escalate the conflict by taking a biased support to one of the parties in conflict, or help in de-escalating the conflict by helping in peace negotiations.

With these ideas, Azar may be considered a pioneer in this field of internal conflict studies. Azar had been arguing for a radical revision of prevailing ideas regarding conflict analysis since 1970s, however the conceptualization of prevailing patterns of conflict offered by Azar was hardly noticed in the conventional literatures of his time. This paper attempts to credit Azar's work by taking PSC as an example of conflict resolution analysis from the late 1970s and 1980s, which anticipated much of the current preoccupation with the domestic social roots of conflict and failures of governance.

3. Background of PPW in Nepal: Brief Political History of Modern Nepal

Before we move into the descriptions of the Maoist-led PPW in Nepal, it is very important to understand a brief political history of modern Nepal. Before 1768, the territories of present day Nepal constituted of more than seventy small principalities ruled by separate kings. Then, Nepal referred only to the Nepal valley (Kathmandu valley). In 1768, Prithvi Narayan Shah, the then king of Gorkha started expanding his kingdom. After his victory over Kathmandu valley, his kingdom was named Nepal, and Kathmandu valley, formerly Nepal, was made the capital of the new kingdom. Since then the Shah dynasty has ruled Nepal directly or indirectly for more than 200 years. Conspiracy was a part of power struggle during this period that led to the severe upheaval in the power control (Maharjan et al., 2008).

Another major turn in Nepalese history occurred when Jung Bahadur Rana seized the power through *kot massacre* in 1846. The power of this family was consolidated through the institution of hereditary Prime Minister's position among the Ranas. During the Rana regime from 1846 to 1951, the king was the *de jure* figurehead, the *de facto* rulers being the Rana Prime Ministers. This era was characterized by autocratic family rule, corruption, repression, and complete absence of basic rights of people. Many rebellion actions against the Rana regime were held during this period, discussion of all of which is beyond the scope of this paper. The Rana regime came to an end on 7 February 1951, following the armed revolt started in September 1950 by Nepali Congress with support from other Nepalese political parties, the then King Tribhuvan and the Nehru government in India.

With mediation from India, a compromise was worked out between the King, the Ranas, and the Nepali Congress. This was called the Delhi Compromise, which guaranteed the establishment of democratic system of the country and mandate was given to interim government to conduct the Constituent Assembly (CA) to rewrite constitution of Nepal by elected CA members. This however, never materialized due to power struggle between political centers especially Nepali Congress and the king. The years between 1951 and 1961 is marked by unstable political practices where cabinets were formed and dissolved, advisory assemblies established and re-established, and parties created and fragmented. On 15 December 1961 King Mahendra, successor of King Tribhuvan, dissolved the first elected government and assumed direct authority of the country. In 1962, King Mahendra introduced the Panchayat system, in which the king became the head of the state and the government with all the political activities banned and people forced to obey the partyless autocratic Panchayat system.

The Panchayat system lasted till 1990. The Panchayat era is marked by autocratic rule of the king. In the name of promoting national unity, one language, one religion, and one culture was promoted, i.e. Khas (Nepali) language and Hinduism followers of which were mainly the Bahuns and Chhetris. Thus during the Panchayat era, the ethnic groups were marginalized as the government failed to give official recognition to their mother tongue (Maharjan and Maharjan, 2008). In this way the Bahuns and Chhetris came up to be the dominant groups in the bureaucracy of Nepal. This period is also marked by several political movements against the autocratic rule of the king, the discussion of all of which is again out of the scope of this paper. Some of the important movements were armed revolt by Nepali Congress in 1970s, *Jhapali* movement by the Communist Party of Nepal – Marxist Leninist (CPN-ML) in 1974, and the most important being the Peoples Movement in 1990 led jointly by Nepali Congress and United Left Front – allies of seven communist parties, which compelled King Birendra (successor of King Mahendra) to restore democracy in the country.

However, the restoration of democracy still failed to meet the aspirations of the people. The demand for direct elections of popularly elected CA to draft a new constitution was ignored. Instead the Constitutional Recommendation Commission having representatives from Nepali Congress, United Leftist Front and the king

drafted the constitution. The constitution still provided special provision to the King, such as the right to declare emergency on the advice of council of ministers, allowed to nominate the members of 'State Council' and was appointed the commander in chief of army. The constitution once again failed to recognize linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity prevalent among the ethnic groups in the country. Unstable governments marked the next two decades of Nepalese politics; the political leaders were busy with their own dirty political games and bargaining. The population living under utter poverty was even more marginalized, which brought severe discontentment among the people. While the major political parties were busy fighting for the seat of power, the rising frustrations among the masses was building a stronger foundation for a revolt against the ruling government. The next section of the paper briefly outlines the chronological events of the popular armed revolt by the Maoists, analysis of which will follow later in the paper.

3.1 Chronological events of PPW

Before moving into the chronology of the PPW, it would be appropriate to shortly mention here, the history of formation of the Maoist party. The history of the communist parties of Nepal is marked by many splits within the parties owing to clashes in personality and ideological interpretations among the leaders. Currently the count of communist parties in Nepal totals to nearly four dozens. The current influential leaders of the Maoist party Pushpa Kamal Dahal alias Prachanda and Dr. Baburam Bhattarai are referred to as hardliner communist leaders of Nepal. In the pre-context of general election of 1994, the Communist Party of Nepal – United People's Front of Nepal (UPFN) headed by the hardliner Dr. Baburam Bhattarai failed to get recognition of the Election Commission. The reason for that was not clear and was taken as a political insult. The party general convention was called to deal with this issue. After the convention, the party started giving trainings to their cadres to initiate effective revolutionary hard line path. With a lot of preparation they decided to start a radical movement by identifying themselves as Maoists (Maharjan and Maharjan, 2008).

The history of PPW can be traced to the "Forty-Point Demand" submitted to the then Government on 4 February 1996 by the Maoists (Appendix-1). The demand list was divided into three categories as demands related to nationalism, demands related to public welfare, and demands related to the people's livelihood. Nationalism, new democracy, and livelihoods of huge masses together with the abolition of special privileges of the King and the royal family, and the promulgation of a new republic constitution by the CA consisting of elected representatives were some of the main agenda set in the forty-point demand. When the Government did not address the demands seriously, they declared a nationwide-armed struggle on 13 February 1996. First several years the Maoist struggle drew scant national and international attention and was limited to a relatively small geographical area. However, the PPW rapidly spread all over the country within very short span of time mainly due to the deeply rooted socio-economic grievances in the Nepalese society, which was effectively addressed in their manifesto. When the Maoists declared armed conflict in February 1996 they were very limited in number (ICG, 2005). They used light weapons like *khukuri* (traditional Nepali knife), sticks, few guns (mostly looted from the police) and hand made explosives. By 2005, the PPW had spread to all the districts except Manang and Mustang, remote Himalayan districts of Nepal. At first the Maoists were able to capture the public image with strong opposition to social malpractices such as polygamy, child marriage, gambling, and drinking. They effectively addressed the discriminations based on gender, class, caste, ethnicity, and region. They also dealt harshly with individuals who they identified as corrupt, which often would include village elites, 'petite bourgeoisie', and police. However, much of this goodwill squandered when they resorted to indiscriminate violence (Upadhyay and Sherchan, 2003; Sharma, 2006).

In the initial days, force mobilization by the government to control Maoist activities was limited with the

police mounting campaigns. However, as the violence spread, the government widened the power of the police and established a paramilitary wing known as Armed Police Force in 2001 (Bhattarai, 2005). It was only after the Dunai (the headquarter of Dolpa District) attack by the Maoists in 2001, the then government mobilized the army against the Maoist insurgency. Also, it was only after this attack that the government showed eagerness to begin the peace talks with the Maoists (Sharma, 2006). Though Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba formed the first dialogue committee back in 1997, it just made informal public call to the Maoists to come to the negotiating table but never issued a formal letter. The first peace talks were held with the second dialogue committee formed in August 2001 after the Maoists announced temporary ceasefire. However, this peace talk ended after three rounds of discussions in November 2001. The major contending issues responsible for the breakdown of peace talks were the demands for election of CA and declaration of republicanism by the Maoists, to which the dialogue committee could not agree. After the breakdown of the ceasefire in November 2001 and the subsequent Maoist attack on Dang military camp, the State of Emergency was declared in the country (Bhattarai, 2005). Exasperated Deuba government declared Maoists as 'terrorists' and went as far as announcing rewards for the captured heads of Maoist leaders.

Amidst the political chaos and escalating insecurity situation, the King dissolved the Parliament in October 2002. The King ruled the country since then through handpicked Prime Ministers of different political parties. The second peace talks started in April 2003 by the government under Lokendra Bahadur Chand appointed by the King. This dialogue had earlier agreed with the Maoists to confine military forces within five kilometers circumference from their respective barracks. However, this agreement became very controversial within the government itself and the committee members were changed by the King. This new committee flatly refused to materialize the earlier agreement of confining the military forces. In the meantime, 19 Maoists were killed by military forces in Doramba, a place in Eastern Nepal, which ended the dialogue process after three rounds. Simkhada et al. (2004) reports that the peace talks failed due to rigidity of both parties. While the Maoists stuck to their demand for an unconditional CA, the government was unwilling to relent. Furthermore, the lack of faith upon one another caused the Maoists to leave the negotiation table and resume back to violent conflict.

The King sacked his hand-picked political Government on 1 February 2005, and assumed the direct autocratic rule of the country. In response, the major political parties, namely Seven Party Alliance (SPA), joined with the Maoists in signing the "*Twelve-Point Agreement*" on November 2005 aimed at the resurrection of democracy and paving the way for long-lasting peace in the country (Sharma, 2006). In April 2006, the SPA declared pro-democratic movement against the King. The general masses supported this movement and came out to the streets for protests without caring about their lives, hoping that finally the country will move towards peace, and a new Nepal will be reconstructed that will address all the previously unaddressed issues of discrimination. Assuming the role of head of the state with all the executive power including Supreme-Commander-in-Chief of the army, the 150,000 security forces (army, police, and armed police force) were directly under the command of the King. The security forces had an obvious role in suppressing the 2006 April uprising, hundreds of people being arrested and injured, and claiming 20 lives for which they were heavily criticized by the civil societies and political parties. After the 19-days long people's popular and historical uprising (which received the Maoists active, but unarmed support), the King relinquished his role as head of government and returned power to the people on 24 April 2006 (Sharma, 2006). An interim prime minister was appointed, and the previously dissolved parliament was reinstated. The government started peace talks with the Maoists. On 25 May 2006 SPA and the Maoists signed a 25-point code of conduct, and then signed 8-point agreement on 16 June 2006. Following these two agreements, on 21 November 2006, the government and the Maoists signed the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA). The CPA addressed the issues of progressive restructuring of the state to resolve the existing problems. Commitment to hold

CA and manages of arm and army under the supervision of the United Nations are the important issues in the CPA. Signing of CPA formally ended the decade long PPW after which the Maoists joined the mainstream politics. The Interim Constitution was promulgated in January 2007, interim parliament with representatives of Maoists was established in 15th January 2007, and Interim Government was formed in March-April 2007 which also included representatives of the Maoists. For detailed breakdown of members of interim parliament and interim cabinet according to the parties, see Appendix 2 and 3.

The politics and peace process of Nepal has seen many ups and downs since then. The interim government of the SPA and the Maoists failed to incorporate important aspects of self-determination, ethnic autonomy electoral system and federal governance suggested by different ethnic organizations and federation of *Dalit* communities in the interim constitution. This agitated the ethnic communities; they started demonstration and protests against the interim government. Furthermore, the political scenario of Nepal took a major turn when the *madhesis*, a minority ethnic group of people living the lowlands or Terai belt bordering the Indian states of Bihar, Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh, started a movement against the government demanding establishment of federal democratic republican political system, proportional representation for *madhesis* in all state structures, and proportional representation for *madhesis* in the CA election. Initially, the government started to repress the sporadic Terai agitation in the course of which security forces killed some people as acts of mob control. This approach aggravated the situation and the movement spread like wildfire. This created a threat to the newly found peace in the country.

Delayed process to materialize all the understandings right from the agreement of CPA to inclusion of the Maoist on the interim parliament and interim government resulted into postponement of the CA election twice before it was finally held on 10 April 2008. On 23 December 2007, a 23-point agreement was signed by the SPA. It committed the parties to an amending of the interim constitution to state that Nepal shall be a federal democratic republic, and that the republicanism shall be implemented at the first meeting of the CA. Until the writing of this line, the CA election has been successfully held and Maoists have emerged as the largest party in CA. The country was declared a federal republic on 28th May 2008. The ex-King has already evacuated the palace, and bid farewell to the throne held by Shah dynasty for 240 years. In his speech given in the press conference organized before leaving the palace, he said that he respect the verdict given by people, will contribute in whatever capacity he can to promote peace in the country, and will not leave the country in an exile. He also added that his step of 1st February 2005 was not taken with any ill motive. The major political parties are now in the way of forming a new government, and choosing a new head of the state.

3.2 Major parties in the Maoist conflict and their issues

During the PPW, the major conflict of the Maoists was not against any of the particular political parties. Rather, the war was against the state. Thus, the conflict was always between the Maoists and the ruling party. The major parties involved in the conflict have been modified accordingly over the duration of PPW. Prior to October 2002, the major parties involved in conflict were the constitutional government (i.e. the political parties and the King) and the Maoists. The end of constitutional monarchy through the election of the CA, abolition of the 1991 constitution and promulgation of new republic constitution were the major issues of the Maoists insurgency. However, for the political parties and the King, multiparty democracy and the constitutional monarchy remained prime importance. The political parties were only willing to make some amendments to the 1990 constitutions to accommodate the major demands of the Maoists (Acharya, 2003). The issue of the CA always remained the major issue of debate. The political parties always defended against the CA in the name of multi-party democratic parliamentary system with constitutional monarchy.

After the King sacked the elected Prime Minister in October 2002, the government led by the King and the Maoists were the two parties who were in direct-armed conflict. These two parties were, in turn, indirectly in conflict with the political parties. Thus, the conflict of Nepal became tri-polar in nature, with three forces involved: the palace, the Maoists, and the political parties (Dahal, 2004; Sharma, 2005). At this stage, the King declared himself as a 'constructive monarch', the political parties demanded for 'constitutional monarchy' while the Maoists were fighting for 'republican state' (Dahal, 2004; Maharjan et al. 2008).

After the King took absolute authority in February 2005, which was also opposed by political parties and civil societies, the major parties of conflict were the King on one side and the joint forum of the Maoists plus the SPA on the other. The SPA were by now convinced in the main issue of the CA. Series of huge mass demonstration inspired by this understanding between the Maoists and the SPA forced the King to resume the dissolved parliament and handover the executive power to the Prime Minister nominated by the parliament in April 2006. In the context of successful successive talks between the Maoists and the government led by Nepali Congress resulted in agreement of the CPA, after which the Maoists declared ceasefire and entered into mainstream politics.

3.3 Outcome of PPW

During the decade long PPW, Nepal had to bear unparalleled amount of losses in terms of human life of 12,595 of which almost two-thirds (8,133) were killed by the security forces and the remaining (4,462) by the Maoists (Sharma, 2006). The violent conflict of the past ten years has devastated the social, political and economic structure of the country, with long lasting impacts. In addition to massive death toll, thousands have been wounded and handicapped. Human rights situation worsened and it is believed that as many as three thousand people disappeared as of April 2006 (Sharma, 2006). The conflict has also claimed a huge toll on Nepal's physical and economic infrastructure. The unpredictable security situation caused the withdrawal of many foreign aided development projects from rural areas, closure of schools and factories. About 200,000 people suffered displacement from their homes (Dahal, 2004). Direct violence preoccupied the government's attention to law and order, and weakened the base of policy reforms for poverty alleviation. Further, most of the budget was funneled to the security sector, thereby lagging the development aspects far behind. As reported by Upreti (2005), successive Nepalese government sharply increased defense expenditure by almost 300 percent from 5.16 billion Nepali Rupees in 1997/98 to 15.09 billion Nepali Rupees in 2002/03. Most of the budget is shifted from social sectors like health and education. According to Ministry of Finance, from 2001/02 to 2005/06, Ministry of Defense expenditure grew from US\$51.5 million to US\$109.9 million (Library of Congress, 2005).

4. PPW from perspective of Azar's theory of PSC

4.1 Need deprivation and poor governance as the source of PPW

The combination of third cluster, i.e. 'governance and state's role', and second cluster, i.e. 'human need deprivation' identified by Azar can be considered as the most important factors responsible for the PPW in Nepal, and hence is discussed in the beginning. As Azar notes

PSCs tend to be concentrated in developing countries, which are typically characterized by rapid population growth and limited resource base and also have restricted political capacity often linked to a ... legacy of weak participatory institutions, a hierarchical tradition of imposed bureaucratic rule from metropolitan centers, and inherited instruments of political repression: 'In most PSC laden countries,

political capacity is limited by a rigid or fragile authority structure which prevents the state from responding to, and meeting, the needs of various constituents' (cited from Miall et al., 2005, 87).

The attempt to install democracy against the partyless and autocratic Panchayat System began in 1990 in Nepal. The consequential change of system to a multiparty democracy and a constitutional monarchy gave rise to high expectations among Nepalese population, mainly among the marginalized sections. However, the failure of the government to address the fundamental needs of the people and engaging themselves in power politics resulted into the frustration among the rural mass that were suffering from acute discrimination and poverty (Kraemer, 2003). Gender discrimination was wide, denying women the rights to pass citizenship to their children & equal inheritance rights. Also women were highly marginalized from bureaucracy (Table 1) and politics as well. Traditional power relationships persisted, the old elites remained in power, poverty, corruption, and exploitation did not change. Nepal's unstable politics created 12 governments within 13 years of multi-party rule and the structural problems of society remained unaddressed. Deviation of main political parties from their ideologies and opportunistic coalitions for power eroded their images. In contrast, communist ideology of the Maoists served as a powerful tool to attract poor people nearly half of them caught in poverty and historically subordinated to feudalistic and structural hierarchies. Exclusion of marginalized and oppressed people, lack of democratization in the bureaucracy, growing political instability and poverty became issues with which the Maoists could gain popular support especially among the rural youths (Bhattarai, 2005; Sharma, 2006). Table 2 summarizes the position of the Maoists on governance, economic, social security, and gender issues.

4.2 Communal content as the source of PPW

The next important reason for the initiation and prolongation of the PPW was the first cluster, i.e. 'communal content' identified by Azar. Nepal's new Constitution of 1991 established a more inclusive state, describing Nepal as "multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and democratic" and declaring that all citizens are "equal irrespective of religion, race, gender, caste, tribe or ideology". However, it still retained some ambiguities. It created religious divide by declaring Nepal as a Hindu Kingdom, and placing lesser respect for other religions. The constitution explicitly protected the traditional practices of Hindu Caste System, placing Bahuns and Chhetris at the top and marginalizing the *Janajatis* (ethnic groups) and *Dalits* (suppressed people, the untouchables). Also Bahuns and Chhetris dominated the bureaucracy (Table 3).

The constitution also contained several discriminative provisions like recognizing Nepali as the only official language. All the above stated discriminations were also some of the reasons for the Maoist movement. As Azar points out

... most states in PSC laden countries are hardly neutral in that political authority tends to be monopolized by a dominant identity group or a coalition of identity groups and these groups tend to use the state as an instrument for maximizing their interests at the expense of others... the means to satisfy basic human needs are unevenly shared and the potential for PSC increases (cited from Joao, 2002, 26).

The Maoists were able to energize and motivate the feelings of neglect of *Janajatis*, women, *Dalits*, disadvantaged and jobless youths. Maoists declared to create a new constitution that is inclusive of all groups, and declare Nepal a secular state, thus protecting rights of all religions and ethnic groups (Dahal, 2004). The Maoists

Table 1. Female participation in civil service of Nepal, 2003

Group	Male	Female
Special	41 (97.6%)	1 (2.38%)
Gazetted First	304 (98.70%)	4 (1.30%)
Gazetted Second	1399 (96.42%)	52 (3.58%)
Gazetted Third	4909 (94.17%)	304 (5.83%)
Non Gazetted First	12816 (91.11%)	1250 (8.89%)
Non Gazetted Second	18169 (91.76%)	1623 (8.24%)
Non Gazetted Third	5830 (81.85%)	1293 (18.15%)
Non Gazetted Fourth	1781 (96.85%)	58 (3.15%)
Class Less	23885 (94.34%)	1432 (5.66%)
Not Available	47 (95.92%)	2 (4.08%)
Total	69181 (91.98%)	6028 (8.02%)

Source: Mathema, 2003, 23

Table 2. Position of the Maoists regarding the issues of system of governance / state structure, economic issues, social security, and gender

Position of the Maoists	Position of the state
1. System of governance / State structure	
Multiparty democracy – guarantee of fundamental rights – new constitution to be written by elected members from CA.	Multiparty democracy – guarantee of fundamental rights as embodied in the 1991 constitution.
2. Economic issues	
Landless and poor peasants to be freed from all debts – guarantee of employment.	Position not clear.
Freedom of bonded labor with full guarantee of housing and employment.	Partially implemented – employment guarantee lacking.
Ensuring cheap and easy availability of irrigation, seeds, fertilizer, and appropriate prices and market for agriculture.	Through market mechanisms only.
Control of prices of the petroleum and other essential goods	Position not clear.
3. Social security	
Education, health and employment established as fundamental rights – employment guarantee.	Employment guarantee lacking.
National education policy, end to the privatization of education.	Position not clear.
Expansion of free health services in rural and other areas.	Free health services to all not feasible.
4. Gender	
End of all discrimination against – Equal rights on parental property – prevention of trafficking.	Enabling programs for promoting women in employment, politics and decision-making positions, education.
Ensuring representation in the parliament and other political institutions.	Enabling programs, representation in upper house, stepwise target to reach 33 percent women in lower house.

Table 3. Integrated national caste / ethnic index of governance, 1999

High level officials in:	Bahun / Chhetri	Newar	Hill ethnic groups	<i>Madhise</i>	<i>Dalit</i>	Others	Total
Judiciary	190 (80.85)	33 (14.04)	3 (1.28)	9 (3.30)	0 (0)	0 (0)	235
Constitutional body and commission	181 (77.02)	32 (13.62)	4 (1.70)	18 (7.66)	0 (0)	0 (0)	235
Council of ministers	14 (56)	6 (24)	2 (8)	3 (12)	0 (0)	0 (0)	25
Public administration	20 (62.50)	3 (9.38)	4 (12.50)	5 (15.63)	0 (0)	0 (0)	32
Legislature	159 (60)	20 (7.55)	36 (13.58)	46 (17.36)	4 ^a (1.51)	0 (0)	265
Political parties	97 (58.79)	18 (10.91)	25 (15.15)	26 (15.76)	0 (0)	0 (0)	165
District Development Committee president, municipality mayor, vice-mayor	106 (55.50)	30 (15.71)	23 (12.04)	31 (16.23)	0 (0)	0 (0)	191
Industry and trade sector	7 (16.67)	20 (47.62)	0 (0)	15 (35.71)	0 (0)	0 (0)	42
Education sector	75 (77.32)	11 (11.34)	2 (2.06)	7 (7.22)	1 (1.03)	1 (1.03)	97
Cultural sector	85 (75.22)	22 (19.47)	6 (5.31)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	113
Science and technology	36 (58.06)	18 (29.03)	2 (3.23)	6 (18.75)	0 (0)	0 (0)	62
Civil society sector	41 (66.13)	18 (29.03)	1 (1.61)	4 (6.45)	0 (0)	0 (0)	62
Total	1011 (66.5)	231 (15.2)	108 (7.1)	170 (11.2)	5 (0.3)	0 (0)	1520 (100)
% of Nepal's population	31.6	5.6	22.2 ^b	30.9	8.7 ^c	0.1	100

Source: Neupane, G. (2000). *Nepalko Jatiya Samasya, Samajik Banot ra Sajhedariko Sambhavana*. (Caste/ethnic problems in Nepal, Social Structure and the Possibility of Cooperation). Center for Development Studies, Kathmandu. Cited in Pradhan and Shrestha, 2005, 23.

Note: ^aNominated members of the Upper House; ^bNot inclusive of all *Janajatis*, ^cIncludes hill *Dalits* only.

Table 4. Position of Maoists regarding the issues of religion, and caste/ethnicity

Position of Maoists	Position of State
1. Religion	
Secular state.	State still declared as Hindu kingdom.
Ethnic / geographic autonomy with rights to self-determination.	Bureaucratic rule imposed from the center.
2. Caste / Ethnicity	
Ensuring representation in the parliament.	Position not clear.
Strict enforcement of laws on untouchability, and enabling programs.	Enabling programs; existing laws not implemented; marginalized by the state.
3. Linguistic Cultural Freedom	
Local autonomy with full freedom.	Provision of primary education in mother tongue – however no clear implementation; Nepali language considered as the official language; other language in local governments was banned judicially also.

have explicitly stated in their demands that, 'In areas having a majority of ethnic group, that group should have autonomy over that area'. It therefore does not come as a surprise that many ethnic organizations were sympathetic to the PPW. Table 4 summarizes the position of the Maoists to the factors under the first cluster.

4.3 International linkages as the underlying cause for prolongation of PPW

Lastly 'international linkages', Azar's fourth cluster also played an important role in escalating PPW. In the context of the US-led 'War on Terror', the US and India refused to give credit to the Maoists as a political party and tried to suppress the Maoist movement by providing arms and ammunitions to the ruling government, while they could have acted as good mediators to settle the conflict through negotiation. India labeled the Maoists as a terrorist group in 2001 and the US branded the Maoists as terrorist in 2002. The US and India provided various ammunitions, non-lethal equipments, night-vision, and Apache helicopters to the Nepalese army to fight against the Maoists. The role of the US and India was always biased on the opposition of the Maoists during the PPW.

On the other hand, Nepal's porous border with India facilitated easy communication and coordination between the Maoists in Nepal and similar groups in India (Upadhyay and Sherchan, 2003). The maoist leaders and cadres frequently crossed the open border with India and took shelter in the adjoining Indian states of West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. It was reported that the Maoists regularly received trainings in different parts of India and they used Indian land to organize their activities. Regarding the open India-Nepal border, the Maoists were however on the position to close the open border while the major political parties and the government were on the position only to have partial control over the open border. Maoist movement in Nepal was also supported by international and regional parties and committees like Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPIM), Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA), Revolutionary Communist Party of America, and International Revolutionary Movement (RIM).

Because of the failure of a nationally initiated dialogue processes twice during PPW, there was realization among the national stakeholders about the necessity of international mediation. It was only after the breakdown of the second rounds of talks in 2003, the UN Secretary General proposed for the UN involvement in the peace process of Nepal for the first time (Bhattarai, 2005; Sharma, 2006). The Maoists expressed their readiness to join the negotiating table under some form of the UN role. However, the Nepal government showed reluctance to accept the role of the UN due to continuous opposition by India and the US (Sharma, 2006). After the 19-days long people's movement against the King's autocratic rule in April 2006, the Nepal government together with the consent of the Maoists requested to the UN as an observer to the Arms Management and the election process of the CA.

The policy of the European Union (EU) member countries differed from that of the US. While the US believed that increasing military base could bring the Maoists to the negotiating table, the EU members, including the United Kingdom (UK) preferred to work towards a 'negotiated settlement' which addressed the root causes of conflict. The UK's government emphasized to restore functioning democratic institutions to Nepal and to initiate the peace processes. For that purpose, it sponsored a conference in London in May 2002 inviting all the major donor countries (Bhattarai, 2005). The EU also emphasized to end violence and to create the right environment for a meaningful and sustainable peace process.

As far as the role of China is concerned, China referred to the Maoists as 'anti-government terrorists' and has often reiterated that it has nothing to do with them. China adopted a policy of non-interference (Simkhada et al., 2004). China always chose to distance itself from the Nepalese Maoists and their activities and left the issue to be resolved internally (Bhattarai, 2005). It was largely in form of status quo, thus indirectly supporting the monarchy in an implicit manner.

4.4 Are Azar's four clusters adequate to address the sources of conflict in Nepal?

As argued by Simkhada et al. (2004) issues such as poverty, inequality, frustrated expectations and poor governance in the post-1990 democratic period are significant, however inadequate to explain the rise of the Maoists and its strategy of the PPW. "The causes identified are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the rise of Maoists." Besides the variables belonging to the four clusters identified by Azar in his theory of PSC, there is one more probable reason behind the PPW, uncovered by these clusters. The insult, which Dr. Baburam Bhattarai had to face during the general elections in 1994, is probably the major trigger factor that led Dr. Bhattarai to decide to go for armed revolt. In 1994 the Election Commission denied recognition to the faction of UPFN, which was headed by Dr. Baburam Bhattarai who established Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist a year later in 1995 (Sharma, 2006). The major reason behind the exclusion of Bhattarai-led UPFN is still not very clear. During the first four years of democracy after 1990, the Maoists had been almost integrated in the democratic process. But the major political parties of the country, i.e. Nepali Congress and Community Party of Nepal – United Marxist Leninist refused to recognize the Maoists as a political force and attempted to discredit them. Violent repression through police operations in 1995 in the districts where the Maoists enjoyed widespread popular support was coupled with political discrimination by the ruling political parties against the Maoists. All these factors forced the Maoists to become an 'extra-systemic force' and restricted the menu of political choices for the Maoist leadership, convincing them that armed struggle was the only practical option (Simkhada et al., 2004).

Conclusion

Azar's theory of PSC, though was advocated in early 1970s, still retains its relevance today. In fact, it was only after the death of Azar in 1991 that conflict studies started to focus on the so called 'new wars'. This paper analysed the Maoists-led PPW in Nepal from the perspective of four clusters of variable identified by Azar as the major source underlying PSC, viz, communal identity, needs deprivation, governance and state's role, and international linkages. In a developing country like Nepal, where the growing rate of population growth was coupled with high poverty incidence and limited resource base, the rural masses had high expectations from the states, especially after the success of people's movement in 1990. However, the leaders of major political parties were busy in power politics while the people were deprived of the basic needs. Failure to address the grievances resulting from need deprivation and poor governance cultivated a niche for the PPW. The new constitution drafted after 1990 could not eliminate discrimination in terms of caste, ethnicity, religion and gender. The declaration of Nepali (*khas*) language as the national official language and Nepal as a Hindu state marginalised the ethnic groups having their own mother tongues other than Nepali, and following religion other than Hinduism. The Bahuns and Chhetris still dominated the bureaucracy, and politics, thereby further marginalising the ethnic groups and the *Dalits*. In fact, the history of the suppression of ethnic minorities by the Bahuns-Chhetris can be traced back to the very formation of Nepal and Civil Code in 18th century, but its discrimination with modern means of written constitution, laws, and practice in bureaucracy that further strengthened the discrimination, and structural deprivation started from the Panchayat era and beyond where in the name of nationalism one language (i.e. Nepali), one religion (i.e. Hinduism), and one culture was promoted. In the background of growing frustrations among the people due to this discriminatory practice of the state, the Maoists declared the PPW in February 1996, after their forty-points demands submitted to then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba was not taken seriously. The Maoists effectively addressed the issues of poverty, inclusion, rights to self-determination of the minorities, and other issues pertaining to gender, and nationalism in their manifesto. As a result, they received widespread support from ethnic groups, poor and the rural masses. Similarly, the biased support to the ruling government by

the US and India against the Maoists further aggravated the situation and led to prolongation of the conflict. It can thus be concluded that Azar's four clusters explains the Maoists-led PPW in Nepal quite well. As the major objective of this paper was to analyse the decade long PPW, the political events that unfolded after the April movement of 2006 have not been discussed. In the present context, the PPW was formally ended in November 2006 after the signing of the CPA. The CA election has been successfully held and the Maoist party has already emerged as the largest party in the CA. It is yet to be seen, how Maoists will successfully incorporate in the new constitution to be written in their leadership, the issues of ethnic autonomy, inclusion, good governance, nationalism, republicanism, federalism, and others including gender disparity, ending of discrimination against all groups / handicapped, third sex, jobs, human rights, and security, which they had effectively addressed in their forty-points demands.

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Appendix – 1
Forty points Demands of Maoist Party

I. Demands related to nationalism

1. Regarding the 1950 Treaty between India and Nepal, all unequal stipulations and agreements should be removed.
2. HMG should admit that the anti-nationalist Tanakpur agreement was wrong, and the Mahakali Treaty, incorporating it, should be nullified.
3. The entire Nepal-Indian border should be controlled and systematized. Cars with Indian number plates, plying the roads of Nepal, should not be allowed.
4. Gorkha recruiting centers should be closed and decent jobs should be arranged for the recruits.
5. In several areas of Nepal, where foreign technicians are given precedence over Nepali technicians for certain local jobs, a system of work permits should be instituted for the foreigners.
6. The monopoly of foreign capital in Nepal's industry, trade and economic sector should be stopped.
7. Sufficient income should be generated from customs duties for the country's economic development.
8. The cultural pollution of imperialists and expansionists should be stopped. Hindi video, cinema, and all kinds of such newspapers and magazines should be completely stopped. Hindi video, cinema, and all kinds of such newspapers and magazines should be completely stopped. Inside Nepal, import and distribution of vulgar Hindi films, videocassettes and magazines should be stopped.
9. Regarding NGOs and INGOs: Bribing by imperialists and expansionists in the name of NGOs and INGOs should be stopped.

II. Demands related to public welfare

10. A new constitution has to be drafted by the people's elected representatives.
11. All the special rights and privileges of the King and his family should be ended.
12. Army, police and administration should be under the people's control.
13. The Security Act and all other repressive acts should be abolished.
14. All the false charges against the people of Rukum, Rolpa, Jajarkot, Gorkha, Kavre, Sindhupalanchowk, Sindhuli, Dhanusha and Ramechhap should be withdrawn and all the people falsely charged should be released.
15. Armed police operations in the different districts should immediately be stopped.
16. Regarding Dilip Chaudhary, Bhuvan Thapa Magar, Prabhakar Subedi and other people who disappeared from police custody at different times, the government should constitute a special investigating committee to look into these crimes and the culprits should be punished and appropriate compensation given to their families.
17. People, who died during the time of the movement, should be declared as martyrs and their families, and those who have been wounded and disabled should be given proper compensation. Strong action should be taken against the killers.
18. Nepal should be declared a secular state.
19. Girls should be given equal property rights to those of their brothers.
20. All kinds of exploitation and prejudice based on caste should be ended. In areas having a majority of one ethnic group, that group should have autonomy over that area.
21. The status of dalits as untouchable should be ended and the system of untouchability should be ended once and for all.
22. All languages should be given equal status. Up until middle-high school level (uccha-madyamic)

arrangements should be made for education to be given in the children's mother tongue.

23. There should be guarantee of free speech and free press. The communications media should be completely autonomous.
24. Intellectuals, historians, artists and academicians that engaged in other cultural activities should be guaranteed intellectual freedom.
25. In both the tarai and hilly regions there is prejudice and misunderstanding in backward areas. This should be ended and the backward areas should be assisted. Good relations should be established between the villages and the city.
26. Decentralization in real terms should be applied to local areas, which should have local rights, autonomy and control over their own resources.

III Demands related to the people's living

27. Those who cultivate the land should own it. (The tiller would have right to the soil he/she tills). The land of rich landlords should be confiscated and distributed to the homeless and others who have no land.
28. Brokers and commission agents should have their property confiscated and that money should be invested in industry.
29. All should be guaranteed work and should be given stipend until jobs are found for them.
30. HMG should pass strong laws ensuring that people involved in industry and agriculture should receive minimum wages.
31. The homeless should be given suitable accommodation. Until HMG can provide such accommodation they should not be removed from where they are squatting.
32. Poor farmers should be completely freed from debt. Loans from the Agricultural Development Bank by poor farmers should be completely written off. Small industries should be given loans.
33. Fertilizer and seeds should be easily and cheaply available, and the farmers should be given a proper market price for their production.
34. Flood and draught victims should be given all necessary help.
35. All should be given free and scientific medical service and education and education for profit (private schools?) should be completely stopped.
36. Inflation should be controlled and laborers' salaries should be raised in direct relation with the rise in prices. Daily essential goods should be made cheap and easily available.
37. Arrangements should be made for drinking water, good roads, and electricity in the villages.
38. Cottage and other small industries should be granted special facilities and protection.
39. Corruption, black marketing, smuggling, bribing, the taking of commission, etc. should all be stopped.
40. Orphans, the disabled, the elderly and children should be given help and protection.

We offer a heartfelt request to the present coalition government that they should, fulfill the above demands, which are essential for Nepal's existence and for the people's daily lives as soon as possible. If the government doesn't show any interest by Falgun 5, 2052, (February 17, 1996) we will be compelled to launch a movement against the government.

The above demands put forth by the Samyukta Jana Morcha, led by Dr. Bhattarai, were handed over to the then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. The government showed no interest in fulfilling any of the above demands, or even taking these seriously. After a cruel government crackdown (Romeo operation in November, 1995) on members of the Samyukta Jana Morcha (which previously was third largest political party in the

parliament with nine seats in 1991 parliamentary election), in Rukum and Rolpa, Dr. Bhattarai declared the “Jana Yuddha” in February 2, 1996.

Cited from Maharjan and Maharjan, 2008, 88-89.

Appendix – 2

Breakdown of members of interim parliament according to the political parties

S.No.	Name of the Party	Number of members
1	Nepali Congress	132
2	Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)	84
3	Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist)	82
4	<i>Rashtriya Prajatantra Party</i>	8
5	<i>Nepal Sadhbhavana Party (Anandidevi)</i>	4
6	People’s Front Nepal	4
7	Nepal Workers Peasants Party	4
8	<i>Tarai Madhesh Loktantrik Party</i>	4
9	National People’s Front	3
10	United Left Front	2
11	Communist Party of Nepal (Unified)	2
12	<i>Rashtriya Janashakti Party</i>	1
	Total	330

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interim_legislature_of_Nepal

Appendix – 3

Breakdown of cabinet of ministers in the interim government according to the political parties

S.No.	Name of the Minister	Ministry	Party
1	Girija Prasad Koirala	Prime Minister along with Defense	Nepali Congress
2	Ram Chandra Poudel	Minister for Peace and Reconstruction	Nepali Congress
3	Farmulla Mansoor	Minister for Science and Technology	Nepali Congress
4	Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat	Minister for Finance	Nepali Congress
5	Narendra Bikram Nembang	Minister for Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs	Nepali Congress
6	Krishna Prasad Sitaula	Minister for Home	Nepali Congress
7	Ramesh Lekhak	Minister for Labour and Transport Management	Nepali Congress
8	Gyanendra Bahadur Karki	Minister for Water Resources	Nepali Congress
9	Sujata Koirala	Minister without Portfolio	Nepal Congress
10	Sahana Pradhan	Minister for Foreign Affairs	Communist Party of Nepal – United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML)
11	Pradeep Nepal	Minister for Education and Sports	CPN-UML

12	Prithvi Subba Gurung	Minister for Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation	CPN-UML
13	Ram Chandra Yadav	Minister for General Administration	CPN-UML
14	Chhabi Lal Bishwokarma	Minister for Agriculture and Cooperatives	CPN-UML
15	Krishna Bahadur Mahara	Minister for Information and Communication	Maoist
16	Dev Gurung	Minister for Local Development	Maoist
17	Matrika Yadav	Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation	Maoist
18	Hisila Yami	Minister for Physical Planning and Works	Maoist
19	Pampha Bhusal	Minister for Women, Children, and Social Welfare	Maoist
20	Jagat Bogati	Minister for Land Reforms, and Management	United Left Front
21	Giriraj Mani Pokharel	Minister for Health and Population	People's Front Nepal
22	Shyam Sunder Gupta	Minister for Industry, Commerce, and Supply	Nepal Sadhbhavana Party (Anandidevi)

Source: http://www.nepalnews.com/archive/2007/ministers_interim_cabinet.php