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**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK

Faculty of Humanities

**Master Thesis**

**The Discursive Construction of the Terai Protests in The  
Times of India and The Kathmandu Post**

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## Abstract

The Madhesi people in Nepal's Terai region have been subject to discriminatory practice for an extended period of time, regarding their economic, social and especially political situation. This has not changed when the first democratically elected government of Nepal promulgated a new constitution in 2015 - their demands for equality remain ignored to the present day. This has resulted in ongoing protests that have been part of a crisis that emerged after the promulgation of the new constitution and affected the whole population of the country. The issue has been discursively presented by the media, which holds a powerful position within society and has the ability to create meanings and affect the audience's perception of the topics it decided to report on. Thus, performing a critical analysis of media reporting on a particular topic can be regarded as a significant research topic that can contribute to the development of equal power relations between discourse producers and its recipients. Furthermore, the deconstruction of underlying meanings and intentions behind the ways a particular topic has been portrayed can lead to a better comprehension of the implications it has for the potential persuasion of the audience. Therefore, the thesis at hand has been conducted to deconstruct the discourses of *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Times of India* about the recent crisis in Nepal, particularly the Terai protests and the discursive strategies that have been applied by these two news sources to create meaning and construct a particular image on the events.

The methods and theories offered by Critical Discourse Analysis have been employed in this for the analysis of the selected data, which has been found through a customized search on google.com. Through a thorough interpretation following predefined analytical parameters, I have been able to investigate and discuss the

discursive means of the respective newspapers and thus to reveal underlying strategies that have been used to create meanings, as well as the implications that arise from them. The results showed partly one-sided reporting, implying an ideological tendency of The Times of India and The Kathmandu Post as pro Nepali government. The Kathmandu Post portrayed the protesters as a group who is distant from the Nepalis in the northern part of the country and whose main cause was to fight for their rights, even if this means that they have to use violence to reach their goals. Moreover, it depicted the Nepali government as a protector whose main interest lies in the improvement of the country's situation. However, the reporting mainly emphasized the impact of the crisis on the civilians and allocated responsibility to all involved actors. The Times of India depicted the protesters as a deliberately violent group and discursively delegitimized their reasons by the means of excluding them from the articles and by portraying them as the main perpetrators of the crisis situation. Furthermore, the Nepali government is portrayed as reacting to the protesters violent practices and the involvement of the Indian government has been disregarded. In sum, both newspapers excluded significant contextual factors, which simplified the underlying reasons for the crisis and led to a discursive construction of otherness, resulting in a binary of 'us' versus 'them'.

The findings of this thesis allowed for an understanding of the discursive strategies and furthermore for the uncovering of latent intentions that have been conveyed through discourse. If these underlying meanings are accepted as true by the recipients, they can possibly cause a biased view of the portrayed events and their enactors. Finally, this critical approach to media discourse has provided a deeper understanding of its persuasive techniques and their potential consequences.

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# 1 Introduction

The thesis at hand lays a focus on the media discourse in two online news sources, *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Times of India*, about the Madhesi Protests in Nepal's Terai region that followed the promulgation of Nepal's new constitution in 2015. Because of media's power, particularly that of newspapers due to their social and linguistic importance, to shape social structure they are essential in the construction of meanings, (re)production of power relations and conveyance of latent ideologies as well as neo-racist thinking within a society (Billig, 1995). Thus the aim of this thesis is to deconstruct the potential underlying meanings in newspaper discourse on the Madhesi Protests, during the India-Nepal Crisis of 2015.

On September 20th, 2015 the government of Nepal proclaimed a new constitution after eight years of negotiations and redrawing. The proclamation took place amidst ongoing protests by Madhesi groups throughout the Terai region, articulating their stance on the constitutional failure to address structural discrimination (Sharma and Najar, 2015). The resulting blockade of essential supplies by Madhesi civic and political groups and an "unofficial" embargo by India have been lifted in February 2016 after five months, without a political agreement between the respective parties (Crisis Group Asia [CGA], 2016). The marginalization of ethnic groups in Nepal and the contestation of power relations between India and Nepal have been a reoccurring topic in their respective media, often concerning citizenship, trade and political relations as well as territorial disputes (Crossette, 1989; Pradhan, 2000; Thapa, 2014; Indo Asian News Service [IANS], 2015). My analysis of newspaper discourse in these two countries, that share a rather unstable history but at the same

time many cultural similarities, lays a focus on power relations and potentially neo-racist ideologies, making the concepts of power construction in the media, as well as neo racism based on ethnicity both the framework and an analytical unit for the study of the discursive construction of ideological thinking, ethnic discrimination and power relations in Nepali and Indian online newspaper discourse.

With its omnipresence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, media has great power over the information we receive and therefore also has great effects on our perception of reality. As of today, media is one of the main information sources for a majority of people, often passive recipients, all over the world (van Dijk, 2008). Consumption of digital media is becoming more and more popular, thus an oftentimes unfiltered flood of information is constantly received by the audience. Through this development of information technology and the global rise of the internet, information can be distributed in real-time, which in combination with agenda setting gives media the power to influence the recipient's opinion about nearly every discursive topic (Brettschneider, 1998). The diverse effects of media discourse have been studied by various academics like Teun van Dijk (1992; 2008), Norman Fairclough (2007) and Lilie Chouliaraki (2008), showing ways in which media discourse can possibly influence societies' and individuals' beliefs and perceptions of events and information. Thus, critical questioning and thinking regarding the depiction of cultural matters and their enactors as well as certain events, is becoming more and more important in contemporary society.

In this study, the analytical focus lies on reports by *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Times of India* on a particular topic, the Madhesi Protests in Nepal which are related to the India-Nepal Crisis of 2015 that followed the promulgation of Nepal's new

constitution. These two newspapers have been chosen due to their significance in their respective countries, which have both been involved in the crisis. *The Times of India*, owned by the Indian media conglomerate Times Group, is the top-selling English-language daily newspaper worldwide with a daily circulation of more than three million copies (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2015). The paper is known for its high-quality journalism and prestigious position among Indian newspapers, yet it is nowadays also associated with questionable advertising techniques, as well as corruption in terms of reporting in favour of for example particular political groups or businesses (Dalal, 2003). *The Kathmandu Post*, with an estimated readership of four million people, has been the most influential national English language newspaper in Nepal since its first publication in 1993 (Kantipur Publications, 2016). Belonging to the largest Nepali media group Kantipur Publications Network, the paper is known for its broad coverage of diverse topics by permanently employed journalists as well as national and international guest authors from various segments of society (ibid.). Furthermore, *The Kathmandu Post* has partly been associated with a rather leftist, anti-establishment stance, particularly during the Nepalese Civil War that lasted from 1996 until 2006 (Adhikari, 2008).

Working under the social constructivist paradigm, I argue that all human knowledge and experience is primarily socially constructed and therefore society is highly shaped by and shapes discourse. Thus, discourse needs to be scrutinized in order to disclose particular strategies that might be used to exert persuasive power on the readers and construct particular meanings about the mentioned events of the crisis and the involved actors. The approach that has been used in this thesis is Critical Discourse Analysis, a strand of linguistics which is concerned with the understanding of *how* and *why* particular texts can influence their recipients.

Through the analysis of linguistic features, it aims to reveal the *underlying ideologies* that can affect a reader's view of the world. Thus, in order to deconstruct potential power structures, underlying ideologies and possible discriminatory implications in the crisis discourse of *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Times of India*, analytical methods offered by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) have been employed in this thesis. In the following, three complementary research questions are posed that are guiding this research:

**Which positions did *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Times of India* voice towards the Madhesi Protesters and how have they been portrayed during the crisis of 2015/ 2016?**

**How has a potential dichotomy of 'Us' vs 'Them', on the basis of collective identities, been created in the respective newspapers?**

**How have potential power relations between the Madhesi protesters and the Nepali Government been (re)produced in the discourse of *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Times of India*?**

In order to provide a basis for a thorough understanding of the topic, the historical and socio-political contexts of the crisis will be discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. Following this, to allow for a better comprehensibility of the selected media sources for the analysis, an overview of relevant empirical studies on media consumption and effects will be given, as well as an introduction of the newspaper sources, *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Times of India*. Chapters four and five encompasses the theoretical framework as well as the methodology section, explaining the foundation of this thesis, the methods and analytical parameters that have been used in the analysis as well as the data selection and the specific

approach to the data. This is followed by the analysis of the selected newspaper articles from *The Times of India* and *The Kathmandu Post*. Chapter six presents the Discussion, where the findings of the analysis are discussed in context of the problem formulation, including potential limitations. Finally a conclusion will be provided where the final results of this research have been summarized.

## **2 Context**

In order to explore the processes of ideological constructions in *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Times of India*, it is necessary to consider the historical and socio-political contexts regarding the research topic of this study. This chapter introduces the crisis context, including reasons and demands of the protesters and a brief outline of historical coherences which will conduce to a coherent and objective analysis. Due to the circumstances that some of the events in this chapter happened in the recent past, I have to mention that a greater part of information concerning these events is primarily available through online media at present. Hence, I had to use information from media sources (considered valid), in order to build this contextual section adequately.

### **2.1 Nepal's Way to Democracy**

On September 20th, 2015 the government of Nepal proclaimed a new constitution, which 507 out of 589 members of the Constituent Assembly (CA) had voted for on September 16th, 2015 (Phuyal, 2015). The promulgation took place amid ongoing protests by Madhesi groups throughout the Tarai region, articulating their stance on the constitutional failure to address structural discrimination (Sharma and Najjar, 2015). The resulting blockade of essential supplies by Madhesi civic and political

groups and an “unofficial” embargo by India ended after five months, in February 2016, without a political solution (CGA, 2016).

The demand for a new constitution was initially raised by Maoists rebels, who fought a one decade-long civil war which ended with a peace deal in 2006 (Dahal, 2010). The resulted interim-constitution of 2007 included provisions for numerous political treaties between the parties, which comprised that an inclusively elected Constituent Assembly (CA) with an adequate participation from all segments of society should conceptualize and promulgate a new constitution (CGA, 2012). During their four years of existence the CA, additionally to its function as the national parliament, abolished the monarchy, established secularism and federalism and declared Nepal a republic with an elected president and vice-president (ibid.). In May 2012 the first elected CA of 2008 was dissolved, due to merely irreconcilable differences particularly between the leaders of the three major parties Nepali-Congress (NC), Communist Party of Nepal- Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) and Unified Communist Party of Nepal- Maoist (UCPN-Maoist) (ibid.). The significant amendments of 2007 were supposed to be incorporated in the new constitution but soon after the second Constituent Assembly had been elected in November 2013, the process began to stagnate again, induced by discussions on the main constitutional issues, especially the formation of a federal state (CGA, 2016).

After the devastating earthquakes of April and May 2015, the reputation of Nepal’s leading politicians drastically decreased due to poor crisis management and a delay in the mobilization of rescue efforts (Iyengar, 2015). As an aftermath, during the post-earthquake period a consensus regarding the proclamation of a new constitution became conceivable. Involved in this new emerged initiative were politicians of all three major parties, as well as Bijaya Kumar Gachhadar of the Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum-Democratic (Samiti, 2016). Within a few days, the political elite submitted a draft constitution including various issues that had been stipulated in the first and second constituent assembly (Haviland, 2015). Yet, previous treaties which had been stipulated between the parties and also partly with

representatives of segments of society have patently been ignored, including all propositions of the first constituent assembly concerning the formation of the federal state (CGA, 2016). Merely the State Restructuring Commission's (SRC) proposal of a segmentation into seven federate states, supported by three representatives of NC and CPN-UML respectively, had been implemented (ibid.). Hence, ethnic aspects or even relative majorities of larger ethnic groups have been avoided and the names of the prospective provinces were not to remind of the territories' ethnic history.

The bottom line is that the New Constitution in the form it has been proclaimed in, ensures continued control and dominance of the ruling elite, predominantly assembled of male members of the high caste hill-population (Pahadi) (Haviland, 2015). Even though the Hindu State has officially been abolished, identification with Hindu culture and mentality is still present and conspicuous among the ruling state elite (ibid.). Women for example are still second-class citizen with limited rights, e.g. in terms of citizenship. Furthermore, numerous demands from ethnic groups (Janajati), ethnic Indians from the Tarai region (Madhesi) and Dalits, for adequate and equal involvement in federal Nepal have been most widely ignored, thus historical and cultural rights of the groups still go unrecognized (CGA, 2016). Yet, the number of federal provinces (7) and their borders have been determined but Madhesi people's claims concerning the federal division have been overruled and designations referring to the ethnic group's historical areas of settlement have already been rejected beforehand (Sharma and Najjar, 2015). According to this provision the Tarai region will be allocated to six of the seven federate states; whereas previous agreements provided for the allocation in two federate states in the Tarai (ibid.). Decisions concerning the federal state are congruent with plans pursued by NC and CPN-UML leaders, since the first constituent assembly (Phuyal, 2015). A recent development, on the other hand, is that also UCPN-Maoist leaders are acting in accordance with this line, which is merely reconcilable with the objectives the party was aiming to pursue through the civil war and their rebellion (ibid.). Moreover it can be regarded as a further reason for the Madhesi's irritation,

since they supported the Maoist party in their pursuit for revolutionary change of state and society (ibid.).

## **2.2 The Madhesi Protests and India's Unofficial Blockade**

The Madhesi Protests (bandhs) against the continuous marginalization of certain minority groups have started in the Terai region, months before the promulgation of the New Constitution (Haviland, 2015). Yet, the important trade and transportation routes into and from India had only been blocked after the Constitution has officially been passed by the Nepali government in September 2015 (ibid). State security forces partly reacted with violence against the protesters, which radical Terai-groups reciprocated similarly and more than 50 people lost their lives in the civil commotions (CGA, 2016). Soon after the new constitution had been proclaimed on 20th September 2015, India intervened by imposing an embargo on Nepal and as a consequence the supply situation, which has already been constrained by the ongoing protests and blockades, became even more critical (Tiwary, 2015). Not only the Kathmandu Valley was affected but the whole country, since the minimal supply with gas and fuel had halted various public and economic spheres and transportation within the country, as well as national and international air traffic (Seiff, 2015). Tourist figures decreased, while prices and black marketing increased. Not only the tourism sector had been affected but also medical care, the media, private households, as well as protected forest areas due to wood being illegally used as combustible material for cooking and heating (Sharma, 2015). To the present day India's political leaders, including prime minister Narendra Modi and the Indian ambassador in Nepal, deny the imposition of an embargo, which the media termed "India's unofficial blockade" (Press Trust of India [PTI], 2015).

While the government's reaction to the Madhesi protests had been quick, the response to India's embargo was rather reluctant for a long time period (Bearak, 2015). The government was apprehensive to public criticism and termed the

condition a temporary irritation, stating that it would soon be reversed, even months after the beginning of the blockade (ibid.). Only when this anticipation proved to be an obvious fallacy, they began to look for alternatives and for example turned to China for help (Gurubacharya, 2015). Nepali citizens, however, reacted immediately expressing their sentiments on India's role in this matter e.g. in social media with the hashtag #BackOffIndia, which was first trending in Nepal soon after the blockade had been imposed (Parashar, 2015). Furthermore, numerous people protested throughout Kathmandu with posters accusing India of violating their country's sovereignty and the demand to stay out of constitutional matters, as well as in front of the Indian embassy ironically offering plastic bottles filled with fuel (Peterson, 2015). Thus, the Nepali population initially made India responsible for their country's situation. Their own government, however, did not enter into a dialogue with the protesting Madhesi groups to discuss possible constitutional amendments for an adequate involvement of marginalized groups. The now oppositional Nepali Congress, who had the leading governmental responsibility when the constitution was proclaimed, repeatedly declared that their party is reluctant to alterations regarding the federal structure, even though this was one of the Madhesi's essential demands (Haviland, 2015). Thus, the first constitutional amendment of 24th January, 2016 did not imply an attempted rapprochement to the Madhesi's demands (Bhattacharjee, 2016). India on the other hand used the opportunity to lift their unofficial blockade and began to resume the cross-border trade in February 2016 (ibid.). The demonstrating groups, who did not accept the first constitutional amendment, have eventually been defeated by groups of civil society who would not tolerate the restriction of their civil rights and liberties any longer (BBC, 2016). International reactions and media coverage have been rather sparse. UN- Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon first reacted on 11th November, 2015 requesting all parties to lift the blockades immediately, with reference to the looming humanitarian crisis (BBC, 2015).

## 2.3 Proposed Amendments

The Terai, which is also referred to as 'Madhes', is located in the south of Nepal and continues to India and Bhutan, bordering the foothills of the central Himalayas (Yadav, 2005). The region is not only geographically different from Nepal's hill-regions but also culturally: the Madhesi people living in the Terai are considered ethnic Indians and have their own languages, customs, religion and caste system, as well as food and clothes, which are more similar to those of their Indian neighbors than to the hill-people (Pahadi) of the Kathmandu Valley (ibid.). Almost half of Nepal's population lives in the Terai, which incorporates 20 of Nepal's 75 districts, furthermore a greater part of the country's agricultural as well as industrial outputs are produced in this region (Mikilian, 2008). As previously mentioned, there are social groups in Nepal that have been marginalized and discriminated by the government; according to Gurung (2003) these groups are Madhesi (Terai) based on geography and ethnicity, on the basis of caste the Dalit (untouchables; lowest caste), and women, based on gender (ibid.).

In consequence of the continued marginalization in the New Constitution of 2016, Madhesi and representatives of other groups alongside with the Indian government proposed seven amendments (Roy, 2015; Kathmandu Post, 2015) to Nepal's New Constitution, which are summarized in the following. The Madhesi demand a representation in the Parliament and the National Assembly, based on the percentage of the population inhabiting the respective province (Roy, 2015). Furthermore, Article 238 of the new constitution, concerning citizenship establishes that only individuals who have acquired Nepali citizenship by descent will be eligible for significant political positions, such as president or prime minister (ibid.). The Madhesi groups regard this article as discriminatory against the high number of Madhesis who have acquired Nepali citizenship by naturalization or birth (ibid.). In this context, also a provision for Article 11(6) is demanded, which states that foreign women can only acquire citizenship by naturalization through marriage to a Nepali citizen (ibid.). The groups demand the possibility of an acquisition of naturalized

citizenship through an application process (Kathmandu Post, 2015). Moreover, the districts of Kanchanpur, Kailali, Sunsari, Jhapa and Morang should be included into the neighboring Madhes Provinces, substantiated by the fact that the majority of their population belongs to the Madhesi ethnic group (ibid.).

### **3 News Media**

The following paragraph provides a brief overview on empirical studies on news media consumption and news media effects that have been considered valuable, in order to allow for a better comprehension of the choice on the media sources for the analysis. Furthermore the online newspaper sources, *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Times of India*, will be introduced.

#### **3.1 Empirical Studies: Consumption Habits**

Newspapers were “the nation's only mass medium” until new media forms emerged in the early 20th century. In order to compete with television and radio, “the tradition of in-depth coverage and interpretation” has been particularly valued by print media (Defleur and Dennis, 1998: 95). Yet, entertainment news have been a new focus of newspapers in addition to its function of informing readers (ibid.). However, with the emergence of the internet and multimedia, newspapers are confronted with more challenges. As Sylvie and Witherspoon noted, “the Internet and its associated ramifications posed one of the most puzzling, persistent threats to newspapers.” (2001: 4). It has proven that the development of newspapers is experiencing a gradual decline in terms of “readership, advertising revenues and profits” (Defleur and Dennis, 1998: 96). This development is has been confirmed by a survey on „The Modern News Consumer“, conducted by the Pew Research Center (2016) who

found out that in 2016 only two out of ten adults in the United States get their news from print newspapers. This trend is even more visible among the age group of 18- to 29-year-olds, where only 5% of the sample group stated print newspapers as a regular news source (Pew Research Center, 2016). The study furthermore led to the result that 81% of the questioned adults ever read news on online platforms, such as news websites or social media.

Even though a study conducted in the United States may not be completely applicable to the news consumption situation in Nepal and India, a different study conducted by Kshetri (2008) shows that there has also been an increase in the audiences of online news portals in the respective countries. According to Kshetri (2008) this development is related to the increasing internet access in the countries, which has reached 44,1 % among the population of Nepal (Nepal Telecommunications Authority, 2014) and 34,8 % in India (Internet Live Stats, 2016). Furthermore, in the context of Nepal the accessibility of online media is a factor for the increased consumption of online news, since they are widely available to a larger part of the population, in contrast to traditional print newspapers (Kshetri, 2008). Due to the topography of Nepal, it can take days for newspapers to arrive in remote parts of the country; this restriction does not apply to online media, which can immediately update their information and be accessed by the audience (ibid.). An increase in the number of smartphone users with a mobile internet access, furthermore adds to the development of increased online news consumption (ibid.).

### **3.2 Empirical Studies: News Media Effects**

In their study on news media bias Niculae et. al. (2015) revealed through a complex computer algorithm and linguistic analysis that “there is systematic bias in the quoting patterns of different types of news sources“ (:10). Moreover, they found that

the selected issues are not solely based on newsworthiness but that „the patterns behind the media’s selection of what to cover“ implies a biased selection of topics (ibid.). The study concludes furthermore that information about a newspaper’s political stance can be found in their quote choices, without considering the context (Niculae et. al., 2015). These findings correlate with a study on major news platforms by Curran et. al. (2013), which showed that online news providers rather tend to include quotes of officials, who are associated with authority or expertise than those of ‘ordinary people’ from civil society.

However, a survey on people’s trust in the news media, by Pew Research Center (2012), shows that a majority of the sample group views news media as politically biased. The results for adults in the United States were that “66% say that news stories often are inaccurate, 77% think that news organizations tend to favor one side, and 80% say news organizations are often influenced by powerful people and organizations.” (ibid.). Furthermore, a majority of the sample stated to retrieve their information from different news sources in order to get a more accurate picture of events (ibid.). According to Altheide (2003), news media play an essential role in the communication of fear in our contemporary society. This argument is substantiated by Altheide and Michalowski’s (2014) study “Fear in The News”; they found out that the term ‘fear’ is ever-present in newspaper articles on various topics, a particularly noticeable fact is that the appearance of the word in news headlines has doubled (ibid.). Mass communication serves a variety of functions; one of them is the surveillance function (Berger, 1995). The communication of ‘fear’ through the news media results in an anxiety that leads people to an awareness of their surrounding events (ibid.). What is odd about this function is that the communicated ‘fear’ which causes the awareness can be seen as a direct consequence of media’s news reporting (ibid.). In this context, Altheide and Michalowski (2014) argue that “the prevalence of fear in public discourse can contribute to stances and reactive social policies that promote state control and surveillance” (: 476). Thus, a result of the

communication of ‘fear’ is that it affects social policies as well as people’s reliance on official agencies of control (ibid.).

### **3.3 Introducing the Newspaper Sources**

In the following the newspapers, from which the data set for the analysis in this thesis has been retrieved, will be introduced. Due to the lack of academic sources providing information about *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Times of India*, also journalists and other sources, considered as credible, have been cited when necessary.

#### **3.3.1 The Kathmandu Post**

In the decade of the 90s, after the first New Constitution was promulgated in Nepal, the media landscape changed and began to grow and improve (Ghimire, 2011). The constitutional provisions led to private investment in the media sector; beginning with Shyam Goenka, the entrepreneur who established Kantipur Publications and *The Kathmandu Post*, Nepal’s first privately owned English broadsheet daily, in 1993 (ibid.). *The Kathmandu Post* is published by Kantipur Publications (P) Ltd., the largest media group in Nepal, from Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Bharatpur and Nepalgunj simultaneously (Kantipur Publications, 2016). Since its foundation in 1993, Kantipur Publications (P) Ltd. provides a broad and diverse range of news media products to an overall readership of close to four million people (ibid.).

As of today, *The Kathmandu Post* has a daily circulation of 82,000 copies, which establishes it as Nepal’s leading English-language newspaper (ibid.). Its print version is a broadsheet that includes a wide variety of news, opinions and analyses as well as a separate daily ‘Money’ section, which covers business news (Asia News Network [ANN], 2016). In the Op-Ed section, articles and columns, contributed by,

e.g. diplomats, national and international academics and NGO leaders, are featured regularly (ibid.). All articles that are included in the print version of the Kathmandu Post can also be accessed online (Kantipur Publications, 2016). In the context of South Asia, Nepal happened to be a pioneering country in providing news content online, with *The Kathmandu Post* launching its online platform in 1995 (Kshetri, 2010).

According to its self-presentation, where it positions itself as “one of the most reliable publications for news, opinion and original content in Nepal”, the paper follows the guiding principle that everyone has the right for information (Kantipur Publications, 2016). In the past decade it has been associated as a ‘left-of-the-center’ newspaper by critics, which the lead page editor Puran PD Bista denied in an interview with Nepal Monitor (Adhikari, 2007). He argued that various articles, which are openly pro- monarchy have been accepted for publication regularly (ibid.). Yet, Bista admits that “every news story, in one way or the other, is biased and *The Kathmandu Post* sometimes tends to be an anti-establishment newspaper” (ibid.). This stance is reflected in the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (2007), which states that *The Kathmandu Post* reported from an independent standpoint during the civil war period, even under death threats of Maoist groups and the abductions of journalists.

### **3.3.2 The Times of India**

The Times of India is an Indian English-language daily newspaper published in Mumbai, Ahmadabad, and New Delhi, by Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016).

It is the third-largest daily newspaper in India by circulation, as well as the most selling English-language daily in the world, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (India) (ibid.; Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2015).

The Times of India has originally been published as *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, and was founded in 1838 for British colonialists living in India (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016). After Indian independence the paper's "insistence on accuracy, its avoidance of sensationalism, its serious tone, and its coverage of international news enhanced its prestige in India", where it is regarded as an "intellectual newspaper." (ibid.). In the mid-90s the paper started to include features of "celebrity news, lifestyle, fashion" and other entertainment news, which according to Lecuyer (2014) can be attributed to the paper's "vision of journalism", being that of "journalism that sells".

In her article "The Times of India a journalistic business", published by the Institut national de l'audiovisuel (INA), french academic and journalist H el ene Lecuyer (2014), among other things, thematizes the editorial independence of The Times of India. Lecuyer argues that the paper does not openly take partial positions but conveys a "certain amount of skepticism at times" (Lecuyer, 2014), on the other hand Lecuyer states that The Times of India is not free of corruption. She reports that its reputation has been tarnished because of bribery scandals that involved journalists who have been paid to cover or exclude certain topics (ibid.). Furthermore, Lucyer (2014) argues that "favorable coverage of a politician's campaign, particularly during local elections" can be achieved through bribery. Moreover, journalist and former Times of India employee Sucheta Dalal (2003) disclosed that the Times of India group embedded 'paid content' in their articles, which in contrast to 'paid advertisements' is not clearly identified as 'sponsored features' but displayed as objective reporting. Even though the newspaper has been "criticized at times for how it blurs the lines between journalism, news and advertising", according to H el ene Lecuyer (2014) it has been able to keep its dominant status "thanks to diversification and an aggressive marketing strategy"

## 4 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this thesis is set within the field of Critical Discourse Analysis, which thoroughly investigates the structures and functions of language, in their social, political, and cultural contexts (van Dijk, 1992). The main interest of this study is to uncover how dominant groups can influence the way discourse is used to privilege certain ideologies, perpetuating a social system of ethnic inequality. Thus, the following framework comprises theoretical approaches on media discourse, notions of power and the discursive construction of racism against minority groups. Drawing on van Dijk's (1992) "Power and the news media", particularly the social power of news media will be emphasized. Yet, this power is not limited to the impact of the media on their recipients, but furthermore includes the role of the media within the societal structures of culture, politics and economy (ibid.). Close attention needs to be paid to the discourse of the media in terms of "structures and strategies of such discourses and to the ways these relate to institutional arrangements, on the one hand, and to the audience, on the other hand", in order to understand the role of the news media and their messages (ibid: 10). According to that, the focus of this theoretical section lies on the discourse of news media, particularly the press.

### 4.1 Discourse and Power

In the everyday context, the word *discourse* usually refers to conversations or discussions (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). In the academic field, the definition of discourse is more broad and it can entail all forms of communication. Chilton (2004) simply defines discourse as "the use of language" (:16), whereas Potter (1996) is more specific in his understanding of discourse as "talk and texts as part of social practice" (: 105) and van Leeuwen (2008) adds the notion of discourse as "socially specific ways of knowing social practices" (: 6). Siegfried Jäger on the other hand,

broadly defines discourse as “the flow of knowledge through time” (Jäger 2004: 129). Drawing on these definitions, discourse here is understood as diverse communication practices playing out across all media, which systematically construct our knowledge of reality, and language in form of text and talk is understood as part of this construction. While ‘language’ concerns a rather theoretical “set of patterns and rules” acting at the same time at various (e.g. grammatical, semantic) levels, discourse operates on levels higher than grammar and semantics (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 5). That is, discourse refers to what occurs when language is used in real context, when individuals participate in different areas of social life (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002).

Even though the concept is rather broad, it is widely agreed upon that the term discourse comprises both, meaning and impact of language use and how various people and groups use reciprocal strategies in the interpretation and production of actual texts (ibid.). Thus, following this general overview, the focus of this paragraph will now be predominantly on power relations and how they can be established and perpetuated through discourse. The emphasis will be on media discourse, particularly news reporting, which is substantiated by the fact that online newspaper articles build the data corpus for the analysis in this thesis. Yet, also other dominant groups will be taken into consideration in order to present a consistent theoretical framework. Also important for this critical work on discourse is the notion of social power, held by dominant groups, and how discourse is used to disseminate it (van Dijk, 1993a). Since I am focusing on relations between social groups, personal power is of minor interest in this study and social power will be emphasized.

Power originates from a prerogative access to social resources like knowledge, funds, status, education and also access to different kinds of public discourse and communication (van Dijk, 2008). According to van Dijk (1993a), the dominant groups or ‘elites’ in politics, the media and various other social arenas control this access to valuable social resources and privileges, and can thus be seen as perpetrators of imbalanced relations between majorities and minority groups (ibid.). The

'mainstream' idea of power, involves control of one group over other groups, e.g. the "corrective power of the state" over subordinate people (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 2; van Dijk, 1993a). This type of control can concern "action and cognition", meaning that the group holding more power can restrict the "actions of others, but also influence their minds." (van Dijk, 1993b: 254). The significant approach to power for the work at hand, lays a focus on the importance of the persuasive impact of power and "strategic ways to change the mind of others in one's own interests" (ibid.: 255). In order to be in control of how discourse is understood, the strategic control of knowledge, as well as attitudes is essential and thus also the control of access to discourse. While the control of knowledge affects a person's understanding, control of attitudes has an impact on how they evaluate information (van Dijk, 1992). That is, the acceptance of a dominant group's actions is essentially dependent on how these actions are justified or legitimized (ibid.). On the other hand it also depends on how the opponents and their actions are depicted in public discourse, e.g. news media reporting, which result in predominant pictures that people may have of various "forms of perceived threat to one's safety and legitimate interests." (ibid: 15).

Negative evaluations of 'the other' can be achieved through various discursive means, e.g. by rhetorically emphasizing 'their' negatively connoted actions, which in turn puts 'us' in a position of possible threat (van Dijk, 1992). Furthermore, to achieve this dichotomy of 'us versus them', information that oppose the "evaluative process and the construction of unambiguous attitudes", and thereby a 'positive' self-representation, are not emphasized if not fully ignored (ibid.: 16). For example Anderson (1991) argues that news reporting enable people to engage in discourse and to imagine themselves as a community, a feeling that is produced through the mass communication of certain ideas in the news.

## 4.2 Media Discourse: Symbolic Power and Ideological Hegemony

According to van Dijk (1992) media mostly exerts its power indirectly. For example, journalists select pictures and formulations that are able to influence the recipient's perception of a portrayed topic (ibid.). Hence, the power that media holds is typically symbolic and persuading, implying that it doesn't have the ability to directly control the recipient's actions but mainly has a certain potential to control their minds to some degree (ibid.). Thus, the control over mass media discourse and the topics that are being reported on, can result in the ability to control attitudes; a control either directly held by the journalists themselves or by those whose information they accept as true or legitimate (McCombs and Shaw, 1977; van Dijk, 1992). Since control, like power, is not absolute it is clearly depending on people's "access to alternative sources of information, oppositional knowledge and beliefs, and more fundamental ideologies", to which extent this control over attitudes actually exists (van Dijk, 1992: 16). Furthermore, power of the elites can be exercised through a "propaganda system", which includes the media and can be instrumentalized to "create worthy and unworthy victims" (Chomsky and Herman, 1988: 37; Jorge, 2014: 25). Furthermore, media's coverage and depiction of "distant sufferers" can be motivated by the intention to gain more attention and a wider audience and thus generate profit from selling "human tragedies" (Höijer, 2004: 516).

At this point I have to mention that language here in any form, is not regarded as neutral but influenced by political opinions, social practices and ideological thinking (Simpson and Mayr, 2010). This is an important assumption for the work at hand, since it implies that a thorough analysis of the selected textual data can lead to an understanding of how ideology is ingrained in discourse and thus how the reflections of dominant ideologies are perpetuated through textual practice to control the production and understanding of news about minority groups (ibid.). Such ideologies, here, refer to the ways in which people's "beliefs, opinions and

value-systems” coincide with the wider “social and political structures of the society” they live in (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 4). When essential ideologies, accompanied by knowledge and attitudes, have ‘arrived’ in people’s minds (e.g. through the repetition of mass media reporting) the manipulation of certain information and opinions will further on be almost unnecessary for the recipients’ evaluation of events reported on in the news (ibid.). This is, because once the recipients have been provided with particular information, appearing to be objective, they will further on “produce the preferred models of the elites and may even act accordingly” (van Dijk, 1992: 16). Control through ideologies, thus, becomes hegemonic because the received information is not regarded as ideological anymore but rather as ‘natural’ (van Dijk, 1992). Gramsci (1971) gives a description of ‘hegemony’ as the effective persuasion by dominant groups that leads subordinate groups to the approval and acceptance of their “moral, political and cultural values and institutions” (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 3). Van Dijk (1993b) describes it as the “social power of dominant groups, being constituted by their ability to control the actions and mindsets of other (subordinated) groups with their ostensible ‘consent’” (:255). Discrimination based on class, gender or race are typical examples of such hegemony (ibid.). Hence, power is not always exerted forcefully by dominant groups but rather as a matter of routine; “hegemonic attitudes, opinions and beliefs” can be formed and molded through discourse and can thus become naturalized, as it is often the case with everyday racism (Essed, 1991; Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 3).

### **4.3 The Recognition of Differences: Neo Racism and the News Media**

A variety of topics in the context of the discussed crisis in Nepal could be emphasized here, yet, I wish to lay a particular focus on the mentioned protests of the Madhesi minority group (Chapter 2.2) and how these actors have been portrayed in news reporting of the Kathmandu Post and the Times of India. One focus of this

thesis lies on how discourse may have been used by dominant groups to construct an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy during a conflict situation on the basis of collective identities (Koller, 2012). Therefore, the concepts of race and ethnicity will be explained in the following, since in the context of the Madhesi group they can be regarded as the basis for the construction of their collective identity.

Following van Dijk (1997), at this point I would like to note that the concepts of 'race' and 'ethnicity' are here regarded as socially constructed and not as biologically or naturally given. Thus, I agree with Simpson and Mayr (2010) that 'race along with other comparable concepts such as gender and class are constructed in a society shaped by social stratification and inequality.' (:21). While 'race' is typically constructed based on the common-sense perceptions of primarily phenotypical characteristics (appearance, mostly of skin color) of a person, 'ethnicity' refers to the culture of people in a certain geographic region, including their language, heritage, religion and customs (Anemone, 2011; Gellner, 2007). The reason why 'ethnicity' is particularly significant in this context is that in this study a possible differentiation of the groups (Madhesi/ Indians/ Nepali) is rather based on 'ethnic' than on 'racial' differences.

In the context of this research I have mostly used and will continue to use term 'racism' in the sense of neo racism, which will be explained in the following. The form of racism discussed here is based on what Stuart Hall (1989) and Étienne Balibar (1991) described as "racism without races", for which the terms "Cultural Racism" or "Neo Racism" can be used synonymously. This approach starts from the premise that a form of racism exists that does not include the concept of 'race' and according to Hall (1989) it exists in people's minds, manifested in a practice of social exclusion, without an underlying racial thinking. When an excluding majority group holds the power to define a minority group as 'different' or 'not fitting into the norm' and to disadvantage them in their living conditions, one can talk of cultural racism or racist practice (Sahin-Klinserer, 2009). This is substantiated by the notion that a classification system is employed to justify social, political and economic practices,

which exclude certain groups from the access to material or symbolic resources (ibid.). Furthermore, Hall (1989) notes that “racism without races” supports the construction of particular ‘identities’ and secures the possibility of identification. That is, it is part of the process to achieve the consent of a social group in opposition to another, subordinate, group (Sahin- Klinserer, 2009). Instead of ‘race’, this neo racist ideology employs terms like ‘ethnicity’ and ‘culture’ (Hall 1989: 918).

However, the use of different terms does not take away the notion that the recognition of ‘difference’ is a major preoccupation of contemporary societies (Simpson and Mayr, 2010). Hall (1997) refers to this recognition of ethnic difference as ‘othering’. Drawing on Bakhtin and Saussure he suggests a theoretical explanation as to why othering is so significant for representations (ibid.). Hall (1997) argues that differentiation is needed to “create meaning, language and culture, social identities and a sense of self” but at the same time it is a “site of negativity, aggression and hostility towards the ‘other’”, which leads to the conclusion that difference is dichotomous (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 23). For the representation of ethnic or racial difference, a practice that Hall (1997) refers to as “naturalizing difference” is exemplary, meaning that even though they are the outcome of social construction, differences seem to be naturally existent. Thus naturalization functions as a representational strategy through which differences can be fixed and secured (ibid.)

Language in form of text and talk plays a significant role in the reproduction of racism (Simpson and Mayr, 2010), which according to van Dijk (1993a) is particularly the case for the most harmful forms of racism of our time, i.e., ‘elite racism’. Van Dijk (1993a) describes elites as the groups who control the most essential areas and decisions of the everyday lives of minority groups, like residence, employment, knowledge, information, and culture. Particularly the political sphere and the media produce and reproduce racial discourse, opinions and attitudes; therefore this ‘elite racism’ is usually not carried out as direct discrimination in discourse but rather latent under circumstances controlled by these groups (ibid.). Presuming that elite

groups dominate the options of representation, mass media can be seen as a critical factor for the reproduction and propagation of racism and ethnicism, both because of their connections with other societal elites and their ability to shape and change social practices (ibid.).

Media's discourse and the representation of 'difference' in terms of race and ethnicity, can be seen as one of the main reasons for the tensions that arise between different groups, since news reporting is often implying fear, especially in connection to "change and 'disorder' in a pluralistic society" (Jorge, 2014: 20). Media is regarded as sociologically significant for the construction and maintenance of collective identities in cultures and societies, implying that their discourses and campaigns are also important for the aforementioned differentiation between 'us' and 'them' (Eder, 2000). That is, media is involved in the definition of identities and furthermore in the definition of relations and attitudes towards 'the others' which can be regarded as friendly or negatively different (Sztompka, 2004). When media attributes certain characteristics to specific ethnic groups, for example through discourse strategies of "negative other-representation" (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 24), these characteristics can become embedded in people's minds which can lead to negative (but also positive) images of the 'others' (Bozay, 2005: 124). Through negative representations, the 'others' can be perceived as 'not fitting in' resulting in rejection and avoidance (ibid.) Beyond that lies the extreme image of the 'other' as an 'enemy', which creates the strongest boundaries between 'us' and 'them' (Sztompka, 2004). These conceptualizations of 'otherness' are often expressed through stereotypes, which typically have racial and ethnic bias as a basis and that allow for the emergence of discriminatory practices and separation (ibid.).

## **5 Methodology**

In the following chapter the underlying paradigm of this thesis will be discussed, as well as ontological and epistemological positions that derive from it and their implications for the course of this research. Furthermore, Critical Discourse Analysis and its application in this thesis, including analytical parameters will be explained, as well as the data selection process and the chosen approach to the data set.

### **5.1 Paradigm, Ontology, Epistemology**

The thesis at hand is conducted under the paradigm of social constructivism (Guba, 1990), which has an impact on my ontological and epistemological positions. These positions will be stated in the following, since they affect the course of this research as well as the posed research questions.

How reality is perceived by an individual, has a direct impact on their basis for knowledge construction and reasoning of conclusion. This implies that every researcher operates according to a predefined “basic set of beliefs that guides his [or her] actions” - a paradigm (Guba, 1990: 17). I am working under the paradigm of social constructivism, which is concerned with social processes and factors involved in the construction act of social reality, including the creation of meaning (ibid.). In this regard the subject of this thesis, the underlying meanings of the reporting in online newspaper discourse on events and social actors related to the Madhesi protests in Nepal’s Terai, can be understood in terms of meaning construction. On the one hand, every author attributes a personal meaning to the topics they write about and on the other hand the recipient understands the articles and creates his own understanding of the entailed meanings; for both parties the processes depend on their backgrounds, knowledge and experience (Flick, 2003).

A paradigm has ontological, epistemological, methodological consequences for the understanding and creation of knowledge. The underlying ontology determines what

reality is from a researcher's perspective, (Guba, 1990; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). In accordance with my social constructivist paradigm, I believe in a relativist ontology which means that 'realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based [...]' (Guba, 1990: 27). Therefore, my relativist approach means that there is no absolute truth about reality as it is constructed through the interpretations of individuals (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Thus, I won't be looking for an absolute truth about the journalists' intentions and their ways to construct particular meanings through their portrayals of actors and events during the Madhesi Protests but rather aim to gain a deeper understanding on the potential (re)production of ideologies, latent power relations and the construction of discriminatory meanings through media discourse, that can be derived from the analysis (Guba, 1990). Moreover, I acknowledge that the interpretation and understanding of text and its meanings can vary, depending on the researcher's perspective of reality.

Since the epistemology within the constructivist paradigm is characterized by subjectivity, the researcher cannot be purely impartial (ibid.). Despite all intentions to be objective, it is possible that preexisting knowledge, experiences and notions have an influence on the interpretation of data. Thus, my methodological choices are affected by my own perspective on the world, which results in this work being inherently interpretivist (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Due to my awareness of the fact that complete objectivity is merely possible in and interpretative analysis (Guba and Lincoln, 2005), I am striving to provide reliable, feasible results by analyzing the chosen data in a scientific matter according to the qualitative analytical tools provided by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which constitutes my methodological choice. Corresponding with my social constructivist stance, the theoretical foundation of CDA determines the world as socially constructed, in which meanings are created through discursive processes. Consequently, following the principles of CDA I will be able to extrapolate discursive details, which can indicate a particular discursive construction the events and actors related to the Madhesi Protests in Nepal's Terai region.

## 5.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is understood as a compound of critical approaches to discourse, which is typically applied as an attempt to unravel the complex connections between discourse, power and ideology (Fairclough, 2001). Fairclough (1993) defines CDA as

*“discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practice, events and texts and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.” (: 135)*

In contrast to Discourse Analysis the focus of CDA lies rather on the means of and reasons for the production of specific linguistic features (Simpson and Mayr, 2010). Thus, the analysis of “unequal encounters” in form of text and talk, e.g. political speech, health counselling or news reporting, is common in this critical approach (ibid.: 51). CDA offers an encompassing theoretical view on the operating power relations between the production and consumption of texts in which power typically falls on the producer’s side. What these “unequal encounters” often have in common is the use of linguistic strategies, which seem neutral when regarded superficially but can in fact convey latent ideologies (ibid.). Consequently, one feature that makes CDA critical is that it aims to reveal these underlying ideologies and disclose the construction of power relations in and through discourse. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) introduced a set of key principles of CDA, which have been summarized by McGregor (2003) as follows:

*“CDA is concerned with studying and analyzing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced, and transformed within*

*specific social, economic, political, and historical contexts. It tries to illuminate ways in which the dominant forces in a society construct versions of reality that favor their interests. By unmasking such practices, CDA scholars aim to support the victims of such oppression and encourage them to resist and transform their lives (Foucault, 2000), the central tenet of critical theory and the critical science approach.”*

A significant number of empirical work in this field is focused on mass media discourse, which is considered highly important for the formation of public opinion and furthermore an important venue for political conflicts (Ullrich, 2008). In the last two decades, research on media discourse in context of CDA has generally established media as a social and discursive institution which controls and structures social life and the creation of “values, beliefs and social knowledge through linguistic means” (Van Dijk, 1993b; Li, 2009: 90). Through the application of different linguistic means in media, specific images of “the world, social identities, and relations” can be constructed, “projecting certain versions of reality depending on the media’s institutional purposes, positions, and interests.” (Li, 2009: 90). Fairclough suggests that media language and texts are discursively “constrained, situated and motivated” implying the significance of discursive and social practices in research on media texts, as well as the necessity to display the “organization of meanings through interdependencies between various discourses in media texts.” (Fairclough, 2007; Li, 2009: 90).

The Kathmandu Post and The Times of India, through their reporting and discursive strategies, have the potential to influence its recipients’ perception of the portrayed events concerning the Madhesi Protests in Nepal’s Terai region. Acknowledging the circumstance, that their social and discursive practice involves power, leads to the conclusion that this power needs to be deconstructed in order to achieve balanced power relations between the social actors that are involved in their discourse.

The qualitative methods offered by CDA provide a perspective on the production of newspaper articles as social practice, thus, it enables the researcher to investigate

the context of textual elements and their subliminal structures of meaning. Consequently, I am not only considering manifested but primarily latent content of the researched material. In my analysis of potentially racist discourse, power relations and latent ideologies in newspaper articles published by the Kathmandu Post and The Times of India, I will be drawing on Fairclough's (2000) three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis, which is an attempt to explore the relationship between, three levels of analysis: (a) the text; (b) the discursive practices (production process); and (c) social practice (the interpretation within a larger social context). The text dimension includes the analysis of the linguistic features of the *Text* for which I selected the following parameters, suggested by Norman Fairclough (1992):

**Vocabulary:** Through his or her choice of particular words over others, as well as metaphors and other figures of speech, the author has the ability to affect potential interpretations, since these choices also imply a choice in meaning creation.

**Grammar:** How sentences are structured has an impact on their meanings, for example active or passive structure can be used in news articles to point the reader towards important sections of the article. Modal and auxiliary verbs (for example to be, to have, to do, can, must may, might, will, shall); time indications (tenses), modal adverbs (for example apparently, maybe)

**Cohesion:** The connection of sentences and clauses with the rest of the text, e.g. by the particular use of conjunctions and repetition through the use of synonyms and antonyms.

The second dimension, *Discourse Practice*, refers to the "nature of text production, distribution and consumption in society" (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 54). Thus, during the analysis of vocabulary, grammar and the structure of a text a further emphasis should be on *Intertextuality*, which connects a text with its context (ibid.). This involves the incorporation of other texts into the data at hand in order to create meaning, e.g. quotations of people or organizations. Fairclough (1992) furthermore suggests *Interdiscursivity*, which means that "texts are made up of heterogenous

elements or various discourse types” for example the use of “informal and formal language in a newspaper article” (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 54). According to Koller (2012), “text producers communicate particular representations of social actor groups, including beliefs and/or knowledge about them, the attitudes towards and expectations of them that ensue from beliefs and/or knowledge, and the emotions that accrue to them.” Therefore, *Social Actor Representation* and *Transitivity*, are furthermore included as analytical parameter in order to analyze how events and people are portrayed, if actors are included (or excluded, generalized, subjected, activated), and which actions with what effects are ascribed to them (ibid.)? The third dimension *social practice* is concerned with power relations and ideological issues, which can be produced or reproduced, challenged or changed through discourse. In summary, in order to produce a consistent analysis of the selected data I am going to apply the mentioned parameters to describe the text linguistically, interpret connections between text and discourse practice and explain the relationship between discourse processes and the social processes.

### **5.3 Data Collection Process**

In this paragraph the method that has been applied to generate an adequate and pertinent data selection is described. I have chosen a data size of three articles from each online newspaper source, concerning events related to the crisis in Nepal that followed the promulgation of the new constitution in September 2015. This approach will allow for a discursive comparison between both events through a coherent analysis. I am furthermore going to explain my choice of the data size in the following paragraph.

### 5.3.1 Data Selection

In the following paragraph the data selection method is presented, which has been applied to gather the data samples for the analysis. Drawing on Tomé Jorge's (2014) suggested method for data gathering online, the selected data was found through a customized search, performed through the search engine google.com.

For each newspaper source a google search has been performed with the same criteria, with the keywords "Terai Protests", both including the filter 'site:' in order to limit the results to the newspaper sources. Thus, the whole searching terms for The Kathmandu Post were "Terai Protests" site:kathmandupost.ekantipur.com and for The Times of India "Terai Protests" site:timesofindia.com. As a third filter, a customized time frame has been used in order to only get articles published during the crisis period. The chosen time frame here was the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015, three days after the promulgation of the new constitution and the start of India's unofficial border blockade, until 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016, the date stated as the official end of the crisis (BBC, 2016). The search results found in this order were obtained on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016; hence, the results and their particular order may have changed since that date, due to the fast-paced nature of online search engines (Jorge, 2014).

According to the website ranking service Alexa Internet, Inc., Google is the most frequented search engine, in India as well as worldwide, (Alexa, 2016a; Alexa, 2016b) e.g. having a share of 78.5% of all search traffic in the US (Statista, 2016). The chosen method for data selection is substantiated by Google's tremendous range, which potentially enables it to affect an audience on global-scale (Jorge, 2014). Furthermore, the Reuters Institute Digital News Report (2015), the largest ongoing comparative study of news consumption in the world, shows that for all studied countries an average of 39,8% using search engines as a primary entry point to news sites with Google being the main traffic mediator to these sites.

A study on "The value of Google result positioning" by Chitika Insights (2013) showed that the results appearing on the first page of a google search account for 91,5 %, with the first result generating 32 % of traffic. Thus, for my analysis I

decided to select the first three results of the respectively performed searches for each source. It can be argued that “these first results are the ones that will have more readers and therefore more visibility and arguably more potential impact in the public sphere’s opinion” (Jorge, 2014: 38). Furthermore, this method does not only demonstrate a common utilization of search engines but also shows that Google’s provided results are selective, created through an algorithm that filters the results and how they are presented to the reader (ibid.) Hence, Google’s selective practice can be considered as a means that has the power to influence and create social change (ibid.)

### **5.3.2 Approach to data**

The articles will be analyzed in their natural reading order from top to bottom, focusing on the first three parts of the article. This choice is motivated by Jakob Nielsen’s (2006) studies on people’s eye movement while reading web content. Through his analysis, using eye tracking methods Nielsen (2006) came to the result that readers of online media have a reading pattern which is rather F-Shaped, with an emphasis on the first half of a text. Furthermore, thorough reading was found to be rather exceptional, since internet users usually do not read every single word of a text. Accordingly, general guidelines on journalistic writing suggest a format for articles where the main facts are summarized in the lead paragraph including the five “W-questions” (Who, What, Where, When and Why), with the following paragraphs comprising information in descending order of their significance (Associate Press, 2015).

Due to this journalistic writing practice, the first half of the articles will be regarded as carrying the most significant information of the article. Therefore, I decided to analyze the title and three first paragraphs in the articles without subtitle; and the title, subtitle, the first two paragraphs in the articles that include a subtitle.

## 6 Analysis

The focus of the analysis will be on the Madhesi Protests in Nepal's Terai. I will analyze the first three Google search results for the respective newspaper, which can be considered as potentially allowing for the generation of insights on the discursive strategies applied by The Kathmandu Post and The Times of India in their reporting on the protests in order to create meaning.

### 6.1 Analysis: The Times of India

#### Article 1

**Publication date:** 12 December 2015

**Web address:** [timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/At-India-Nepal-border-a-pile-up-of-angst-anxiety-and-betrayal/articleshow/50146311.cms](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/At-India-Nepal-border-a-pile-up-of-angst-anxiety-and-betrayal/articleshow/50146311.cms)

**Appendix location:** Appendix a, Article 1, p. 84

**Title:**

**At India-Nepal border, a pile-up of angst, anxiety and 'betrayal'**

(Appendix a, Article 1, p. 84).

This article reports on the course of actions that has been employed by the police in an attempt to disperse the Madhesi protestors from the Birgunj entry point, on the border of India and Nepal, since the beginning of the demonstrations in September 2015.

In the headline the nouns 'angst' and 'anxiety' have been used in a listing. This repetition of synonymous words immediately intensifies their negative connotation and this image becomes even more vital in connection with the metaphor of a 'pile-up' referring to these nouns, which is typically used in reference to a serious collision of multiple motor vehicles. Furthermore, the noun 'betrayal' is highlighted

through inverted commas, which suggests the implication that one of the parties is being accused of the act of ‘betrayal’. Even though there are no actors mentioned in the title, an impression is created that the accusation is probably referring to the protestors.

In summary, the headline connotes a certain degree of hostility to the situation at the main site of the Madhesi protests, at the India-Nepal border and furthermore associates it with a high amount of fear.

### **Paragraph 1**

*BIRGUNJ, Nepal: It's called the Maitri Bridge. But "maitri (friendship)" is the last thing on everyone's mind here. ([Appendix a, Article 1, p. 84](#)).*

In the first paragraph, in an introductory sentence the bridge that builds the connection between India and Nepal is referred to by its official name “Maitri (friendship) Bridge”; the word ‘friendship’, is typically connoted with friendly, peaceful behavior. Building on that, the second sentence begins with the conjunction ‘but’, presenting a contrast, namely the state that the goal of the involved actors is not this kind of behavior. Through the use of the verb “to be” in its present tense ‘is’, the described state is established as a fact. Also, by including the word ‘mind’ a reference is made to the cognitive mental process of ‘thinking’, which implies that the author claims to know what the actors are thinking. Furthermore an exaggeration, ‘last thing on everyone’s mind’, is used to reinforce this statement, while generalizing the actors (‘everyone’) as a homogenous group of protestors and police.

### **Paragraph 2**

*Linking Nepal's Birgunj with India's Raxaul is a dusty connector overrun with motorcycles, tongas, rickshaws and cycles. Since September, a bamboo-and-plastic shelter has partially covered it, protestors camping inside imposing a blockade on*

*themselves, refusing food, fuel and essentials supplies from India to get in. (Appendix a, Article 1, p. 84 ).*

In the first sentence of the second paragraph, once again the bridge that connects Nepal and India is referenced. Here it is described as a 'dusty connector', which is 'overrun' with vehicles. In contrast to the term 'Friendship Bridge', used in the first paragraph, this description presents the image of a rather comfortless environment at the main site of the protests. Considering the context, it can also be interpreted in a metaphorical sense, describing the connection between Nepal and India during that time. In the second sentence, the makeshift accommodation, of the subject referred to as 'protestors', is mentioned as having 'partially covered' the bridge. By establishing this, a responsibility of the 'protestors' for the blockade is implied. It is furthermore mentioned that the 'protestors' are 'camping', a verb that is connoted with a temporary situation, which together with the time designation 'since September', implies that the protestors have been there for a time but are not going to stay there. In the same sentence it is mentioned that the 'potestors' are 'imposing a blockade on themselves' and 'refusing' goods to 'get in'. The verbs 'imposing' and 'refusing' again connote them as the causers of the blockade, which has consequences for 'themselves', since they do not receive 'food, fuel and essential supplies' but also they are put against the civilian population, who does not receive these goods either because of the blockade. The sentence furthermore states that the mentioned goods are refused to 'get in' from 'India', here India can be understood as the actor who is being stopped from delivering supplies and in direct opposition to that are the 'protestors' who are preventing the delivery. Thus, a responsibility for the blockade on Indian side is being denied.

### **Paragraph 3**

*There are no police lines here or agitators visible, just people hurrying to Raxaul to pick up supplies. Any police force should have broken the protest. But for three months, the stir has continued. How? "Thousands converge here within minutes to take on the police," Aslam, an agitator, says. Policemen have beaten up protestors.*

*But only one day they managed to clear the bridge for stranded Indian trucks to return.* ([Appendix a, Article 1, p. 84](#)).

In the first sentence of the third paragraph the subject is now ‘agitators’, which has a more negative and specific connotation than ‘protestors’, implying that their behavior causes disturbance. The subject is referred to as not being ‘visible’, with the use of the auxiliary verb ‘are’ stating the absence of protestors, as well as ‘police lines’ implying that there is also no police present at the site, as a fact. The other actors in this sentence are referred to as ‘people’ with the adverb ‘just’, that connotes them as ordinary and not involved in the protests or blockade. The verb ‘hurrying’ as a material process, suggests that the ‘people’ feel an urgency ‘to pick up supplies’ from ‘Raxaul’ before they are not available anymore. In the second sentences the subject is ‘police force’, a term that connotes power and authority. The auxiliary verb “should” connotes a sense of duty or obligation of the police to have ‘broken’ the protest, if necessary by force. The determiner ‘any’ is used before ‘police force’ to establish that the police is actually more powerful than the protestors, so that it would not matter what kind of police force is used against them. In the third sentence of the paragraph the conjunction ‘but’ is used to present that in contrast to what ‘should have’ happened, the ‘stir has continued’ - the protestors are thereby represented as difficult to control. The statement, that the ‘stir’ has ‘continued’ for an extended period, ‘three months’, connotes a long term impotence of the police to establish order and thus implies an excessive use of force by the protestors. The noun ‘stir’ has been used now to describe the protest, which diminishes the legitimacy of people expressing their grievance. By subsequently using the interrogative word ‘how?’, the rhetorical question is posed of how the course of events developed this way. The answer to that consists of a direct quote, by a protester who is referred to by his first name ‘Aslam’ and functionalized as an ‘agitator’. His statement in informal language, confirms the inability of the police to successfully act against the demonstrators, since ‘thousands converge’ within a short time to ‘take on the police’. Including a protester’s voice gives the article a semblance of authenticity, although the person who made the statement is indeed

referred to as an 'agitator', giving his statement a negative connotation. Thus, the phrasal verb 'take on' used in the direct quote does not immediately connote that violence is involved. Yet, in context of the previously mentioned inability of the police to defeat the protestors and the reference to the protestor as an 'agitator' it implies the use of violence and denotes the protestors as the ones who overpower the police. The next sentence refers to the police in an informal way as 'policemen', which makes them appear more ordinary and less authoritarian than the use of the term 'police force'. The informal, phrasal verb 'have beaten up' has been used to describe a material process of the police on the demonstrators who are now referred to as 'protestors'. The informal language of this sentence connotes a downplaying of an act of violence performed by the police. The next sentence is initiated by the conjunction 'but' presenting a contrast to the previous statement. The author here reports that even though the police has defeated the demonstrators, 'only one day they managed to clear the bridge', the use of the verb 'managed' here connotes the police's success in dispersing the protesters from the bridge and portrays it as a positive action. By placing the modifying adverb 'only' before the time designation 'one day', it is stressed that this 'success' is limited to an unique event. In the context of this and the previous paragraphs, it seems the word 'only' is also used to express a certain disappointment over the fact that the police has not been more successful in their action. Furthermore, the verb 'clear' is used in the same sentence, referring to the police action, consequently connoting a sense of cleaning or removal of someone who did not belong there, the protesters. At the end of the sentence it is added for whom the bridge has been 'cleared', 'stranded Indian trucks', implying that India as an uninvolved party, has to bear the consequences of the protests, since the 'trucks' were unable 'to return' before the police 'cleared' the bridge. Again, the positive effect of the police action is implied and the police and the demonstrators are furthermore placed in direct opposition.

What is noticeable in the first three paragraphs of the article is that while the author describes the situation at the main site of the protests, there is not a single reference to the underlying reasons for the protests and the demands of the protesters. This

exclusion connotes a delegitimization of the protesters demands as well as required previous knowledge of the reader, to understand the context of the described events.

## Article 2

**Publication Date:** 22 January 2016

**Web Address:** <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/Nepal-unrest-No-solution-in-sight-Terai-death-toll-59/articleshow/50689329.cms>

**Appendix Position:** Appendix a, Article 2, p. 87

### **Title:**

**Nepal unrest: No solution in sight, Terai death toll 59**

([Appendix a, Article 2, p. 87](#)).

The second article by *The Times of India* reports on the developments in the crisis, including the government's changed approach on the demonstrators as well as their reaction to this changed course of action.

The title immediately establishes 'Nepal' as an unspecified place of 'unrest', connoting a precarious situation in the country as a whole. The following use of a colon punctuation introduces an impression of despair, which is achieved through the statement that there is 'no solution in sight' for the mentioned 'unrest', which metaphorically states that a change of the situation will not be achieved in the near future. Following this statement, the exact number of people ('59') who have died is specified, using the compound noun 'death toll', which states the number of deaths resulting from a particular cause - the 'unrest'. By emphasizing death as a consequence of the 'unrest', a high amount of violence is indicated, as well as responsibility of the actors who are to blame for it, who in this context would directly

be the protesters and the police. Also the location of the ‘unrest’ is now specified as ‘Terai’ in contrast to ‘Nepal’ as a whole.

### **Paragraph 1**

*KATHMANDU: With Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and his party CPN-UML hardening their stance against the more than five-month-old Madhesi agitation in the Himalayan nation's southern terai region for a more representative constitution, a resolution receded even farther as three protestors died in police firing on Thursday in the south-eastern Morang district. ([Appendix a, Article 2, p. 87](#)).*

The first paragraph consists of two long sentences, separated by a comma, that contain information about a change of action by ‘K P Sharma Oli’, who is referred to as ‘Nepal Prime Minister’, an official title that connotes governmental authority. The sentence begins with the preposition ‘with’, which is here used to indicate that a consequence of the Prime Minister’s action is following. Furthermore, Nepal’s leading ‘party CPN-UML’, also a governmental authority, is mentioned with the possessive pronoun ‘his’, referring to the Prime Minister. The emphasis that it is ‘his party’ implies that the whole party backs up and agrees with the Prime Minister’s course of action. Moreover, the authorities’ action is described as ‘hardening their stance’, thus creating a metaphor that connotes them as strong and persistent and determined to take action. The use of the verb ‘hardening’ in present continuous tense, implies that the ‘stance’ the government has had so far was more indulgent, which is not the case anymore. Furthermore, the action is described as directed ‘against’ the ‘Madhesi agitation’, which indirectly implies that is also directed against the ‘Madhesi’ as the causers of the agitation, thus putting them in direct opposition to the government.

The ‘agitations’ are described with the time designation of ‘more than five-month-old’, a phrasing that is typically used for a baby but not for a situation. Thus, metaphorically implying that what has started as a demonstration has grown into a serious situation, which justifies the change in the government’s approach to the protesters. Moreover, the location of the events is specified as ‘the Himalayan

nation's southern Terai region', where Nepal is referred to as 'Himalayan nation'. The reference to the world-famous mountain region of the Himalayas connotes a peaceful atmosphere that is usually associated with Nepal. Thus, 'the Terai' is connoted as the place of unrest in contrast to the peaceful Himalaya region. Furthermore, through the use of an apostrophe followed by 's' the 'southern Terai region' is described as belonging to the 'Himalayan nation' and being a subordinate part of it. Geographically the Himalayas are bordering one side of Nepal, the North, which allows for a metaphorical connotation with the Pahadi (collective term for hill-people) who are associated as the ruling class of Nepal. In the context that one of the protesters' demands is the independence of the 'Terai region', this can be understood as a metaphorical means to emphasize, that the Madhesi (people of the plains, Terai) are subordinate to the Pahadi, thus also the government in Kathmandu, where they are underrepresented.

The paragraph furthermore establishes the demand 'for a more representative constitution' as the reason for the 'agitation'. The comparative adjective 'more' implies that the 'constitution' is already 'representative' but not to the satisfaction of the protesters. The implication of already existing representativity shows an intention to emphasize the legitimacy of the promulgation of the new constitution, because it is the government's decision which has been for the first time democratically elected by the population of Nepal. By referencing a 'representative constitution' the author is making use of democratic discourse which will potentially have a positive impact on the audience's perception of the government.

The second part of the sentence, beginning after a comma, reports the deaths of 'three protesters' as a consequence of the police's action. Even though it is indirectly established that the 'protesters' have been killed by the police, since they were the ones 'firing', the death of the protesters appears to be an unintended result. The day and location of the incident is furthermore specified, implying that it was an irregular event. A consequence of this incident is that 'a resolution receded even farther'. The verb 'recede' is used in past tense, connoting that the

metaphorical distance between the current situation and ‘a resolution’ has grown ‘even farther’. The adverb ‘even’ here precedes the comparative adjective ‘farther’ to emphasize that it has already been difficult to find a solution and the difficulty has intensified through the police’s action, which can be seen as a result of the government’s changed approach on the situation.

## **Paragraph 2**

*Since early morning on Friday, incensed Madhesi protestors forced markets to shut down and indulged in arson besides clashing with the police in several parts of the Terai as the protests assumed a more violent form than earlier.*

[\(Appendix a, Article 2, p. 87\).](#)

The second paragraph also consists of one sentence, beginning with the time designation for the described events. The main acting subjects, mentioned in this paragraph are referred to as ‘protestors’ and named as ‘Madhesi’ connoting their affiliation with the Terai region. The protestors’ emotional condition is described with the adjective ‘incensed’, which has a slightly aggressive connotation; a reason for their aggravation is not included. The first described action of the ‘protestors’ is that they ‘forced markets to shut down’, where the verb ‘forced’, with its negative connotation as a not legitimized use of power, implies violence and the use of phrasal verbs ‘to shut down’, as a consequence of the used force, instead of close, implies complete still-stand, stressing the severity of the protestors’ action. The conjunction ‘and’ is used here to link the clauses, adding to the impression that the author is building up from less to more fatal events. The next described action after the conjunction states that ‘Madhesi protestors’ ‘indulged in arson’. The verb ‘indulge’ connotes the positive feeling of enjoyment, thus bluntly implying that the actors enjoyed a criminal, destructive activity, ‘arson’. The use of the transition word ‘besides’, again indicates that more events happened. The final incident is mentioned as ‘clashing with the police’, the verb ‘clash’ represents a violent confrontation of two completely opposing actors: ‘the police’ and ‘the protestors’. It is furthermore added that the clashes took place in ‘several parts of the Terai’, thus emphasizing that there has been more than one incident of the same kind. The

transformation of the ‘protests’ to a ‘more violent form than earlier’ is here implied as a reason for the clashes. The comparative adjective ‘more’ in connection with ‘than earlier’ is used to emphasize that the protests have already been violent before but the use of violence has intensified.

### **Paragraph 3**

*The Madhesi protestors are demanding, among other things, a redrawing of the boundaries of the provinces in Nepal as proposed in the new Constitution - promulgated on September 20 last year; and representation in Parliament on the basis of population. Significantly, the Nepal Terai has almost 51 per cent of the country's population and yet gets only one-third of seats in Parliament. ([Appendix a, Article 2, p. 87](#)).*

In the third paragraph, the sensationalist tone of the second paragraph has not been used anymore. The main subjects are still the demonstrators, who are again referred to as ‘Madhesi protestors’ and the reasons for their protests are specified. It is reported that they ‘are demanding’ changes to the ‘new Constitution’, the verb ‘demand’ in this context is connoted negatively with an urgent and forceful request. The embedded clause ‘among other things’ implies the two formulated demands as the most important ones. The first mentioned demand is the ‘redrawing’ of the provincial borders ‘in Nepal’. The addition ‘as proposed in the new Constitution’ makes the demand comprehensible, since it implies that it has been negotiated beforehand. In the last sentence the demand concerning ‘representation’ is legitimized, which is implied by the adverb ‘significantly’ which connotes that the fact that half of the population is living in the Terai is important enough to affect the Madhesi’s ‘representation in Parliament’. However, only one of the reasons for the demonstrations is mention and more controversial topics like ethnic discrimination have been left out, which prevents the awareness and understanding on the reader’s side for the Madhesi’s underlying reasons behind the protests.

## Article 3

**Publication Date:** 21 September 2015

**Web Address:** <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/Protests-echo-in-Terai-region-as-Nepal-adopts-constitution/articleshow/49040452.cms>

**Appendix Position:** Appendix a, Article 3, p.

**Title:**

**Protests echo in Terai region as Nepal adopts constitution**

[\(Appendix a, Article 3, p. 90\).](#)

The headline employs a metaphor, where the verb ‘echo’ implies that the ‘protests’ are a reflection of the flaws that are inherent to the constitution and expressed through the ‘protests’ of the Madhesi. ‘Nepal’ here stands for the members of the Nepali government in Kathmandu, who decided to proclaim the constitution, despite the grievances of the Madhesi protesters

### Paragraph 1

*After decades of political unrest, Nepal put the world's newest constitution into effect on Sunday. Although the constitution was passed by 85% of the constituent assembly, there are areas of disagreement signified by Madhesi protests and dissenting notes from politicians from the Terai who have not joined the promulgation process. [\(Appendix a, Article 3, p. 90\).](#)*

The first sentence of the first paragraph begins with the unspecified time designation ‘after decades’ referring to ‘political unrest’, which implies that the unstable political situation in Nepal lasted for a prolonged time. The noun ‘unrest’ connotes a disagreement between different groups, which emphasizes the previous inability of

the political sphere in Nepal to bring order into the situation - a circumstance that the new government attempted to change. The preposition 'after', at the beginning of the sentence introduces the change of events which is described in the second part of the sentence that is separated by a comma. Here the country 'Nepal' is generalized as a sole entity and furthermore personified as an agent, which implies a possible intention of the author to obscure the actual agents who 'put the world's newest constitution into effect'. This impression is furthermore reinforced by the unnecessary addition that it is the 'world's newest constitution', since the information does not add any value to the statement but rather appears as a distraction. Furthermore, through the addition of the day of the event 'on Sunday', an impression of the author as following the bigger picture and thus working with precision is given to create legitimacy for the article and trust on the reader's side. The second sentence of the first paragraph begins with the conjunction 'although', which on the one hand is used to show that the author has been cautious in covering all options and explanations and on the other hand introduces a following contrast in the described events. Hence 'although' here can be understood synonymously for 'despite the fact', which highlights the statement that 'the constitution was passed by 85 % percent of the Constituent Assembly'. Furthermore the legitimacy of the constitution is stated by drawing on democratic discourse, emphasizing that the majority of the 'Constituent Assembly' agreed on the content of the constitution, which connotes a democratic decision and thus validity. At the same time the implied validity of the decision diminishes the legitimacy of the reason for the protests, which are vaguely referred to as 'areas of disagreement signified by Madhesi protests' in the second part of the sentence after the comma. The division the sentence in two parts, the first part mentioning the 'Constituent Assembly' which stands for the Nepali government and the second part

referring different segments of the Madhesi people, creates the impression of two oppositional groups, which connotes a dichotomy of 'us' versus 'them' - the Nepali government against the Madhesi. Moreover, through the exclusion of a clear definition of the underlying reasons for the protests, these reasons are removed from the reader's focus which makes the development of an understanding for the cause on the reader's side rather unlikely. Furthermore 'dissenting notes from politicians from the Terai' are mentioned as a further contrasting reaction to the new constitution, which connotes the disagreement of not only 'ordinary' Madhesi but also people who have been ascribed authority. The vague description 'dissenting notes', furthermore leaves out the concerns of the Madhesi. It is also emphasized that the 'politicians' 'have not joined the promulgation process', which connotes that the government has been aware of the constitution's deficiencies and has not addressed them before it has been proclaimed.

## **Paragraph 2**

*Even as security was stepped up in southern districts of Nepal, a man was killed and several injured in police firing on protesters in Birgunj near the border with India. (Appendix a, Article 3, p. 90).*

The second paragraph begins with the adverb 'even' to establish that despite the fact that 'security was stepped up', which implies that measures of protection have been taken, the events 'in southern districts of Nepal', a synonymous reference to the Terai region as the main site of the events, took an unexpected course. The phrasal verb 'stepped up' in past tense connotes that action has been taken, probably by the authorities, when there was a need for it, implying an intention to protect, thus also implying that the government 'stepped up' for its citizens. The clause reports that despite the effort to provide more security 'a man was killed and

several injured'. The subjects who have been affected are unspecified but it can be assumed that they belonged to the protesting side, since the effects are portrayed as consequences of the 'police firing on protesters'. The passive structure of the clause which is indicated by the passive verbs 'was killed' and 'injured', instead of for example 'a man died', gives the impression that the actions of the police might have been deliberate or that the negative consequences for the protesters have been approved, possibly by the authorities that gave the directive to use gunfire. The 'protesters' and the 'police' are placed in direct opposition, where the use of violence by the police against the demonstrators is justified by the increased 'security' measures that appear to be necessary to control the protesting group.

### **Paragraph 3**

*"The three major political parties, Nepali Congress headed by Sushil Koirala, NCP/UMML by K P Oli and UCPN by Puspa Kumar Dahal, instrumental in drafting the new constitution must listen to the voice of dissent and take them along to carry forward the democratic process," Ramesh Nath Pandey, former Nepal foreign minister, told TOI on Sunday . ([Appendix a, Article 3, p. 90](#)).*

The third paragraph almost entirely consists of a direct quote by a politician. Nomination of the person 'Ramesh Nath Pandey', as well as functionalization 'former Nepal foreign minister', are employed to emphasize and reinforce legitimacy and authority of the speaker, who appears as valid source on this topic, due to his political background. Furthermore, the included quote implies a diplomatic solution of the problem as possible, suggesting the governmental leaders 'must listen to the voice of dissent and take them along', which connotes the necessity for communication that is essential 'to carry forward the democratic process'. The modal verb 'must' furthermore indicates an obligation of the government to take the protesting groups and their demands serious. Moreover, it implies that the leading

politicians are the ones who are in the position of reasonable and civilized action, which the protesters are not taking.

## 6.2 Analysis: The Kathmandu Post

### Article 1

**Publication Date:** 21 November 2015

**Web Address:** <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-11-21/protests-turn-violent-in-Tarai-districts.html>

**Appendix Location:** Appendix b, Article 1, p. 91

**Title:**

**Protests turn violent in Terai districts**

(Appendix b, Article 1, p. 91).

The article reports on the actions of Madhesi protesters in relation to the transport of medical goods, with an emphasis on the prevention of this transport through destruction of the transporting vehicle. Furthermore, an increase in violence on the protesting side in contrast to their previously announced course of action regarding this transport, is described.

The title refers to the ongoing protests in the Terai region, thematizing a change in the protest methods which 'turn violent'. The verb 'turn' in present tense connotes that the 'protests' have not been 'violent' before and are now taking a new form. The adjective 'violent' clearly has a negative connotation, which in combination with 'turn' implies that the 'protests' have previously been less harmful. The description of the location as 'Terai districts', in plural, connotes a generalization of the protests,

which implies that the violence increased on multiple protest sites. This generalization creates a picture of violence in the region as a whole.

### **Subtitle**

*Truck carrying drugs torched in Birgunj, dozens of vehicles vandalised* ([Appendix b, Article 1, p. 90](#)).

Asyndeton has been used in the subtitle to in order to emphasize the events in the clauses and the relation between them. Thus, the reader is brought to the conclusion that a high amount of damage has been caused on objects, uninvolved in the protests, i.e. the mentioned 'truck' and 'dozens of vehicles'. The non-involvement is implied through the added action of the 'truck' which was 'carrying drugs'. 'Drugs' in this context refers to medicine, which has already been scarce in Nepal, at the time when the article was published, due to the unofficial blockade and the protests. Also the 'vehicles' that have been 'vandalised' are unspecified, since it is not mentioned what kind of 'vehicles' were 'vandalised' and who they belong to; further implying that they had no connection to the events and that non-involved parties, the owners of the 'vehicles', were affected through the mentioned actions of protest. The indication of quantity, 'dozens', is unspecified and thereby connotes that a vast number of 'vehicles' has been damaged. The transitive verb 'torched' referring to the 'truck carrying drugs' connotes an intended destructive action which is deliberately harmful, since it implies an act of arson. Furthermore, 'vandalised' has been used in the second clause which in this context not only connotes an act of destruction but also the motivation behind the action, since one connotation of vandalism is that it can be used to emphasize and draw attention to problems and frustration. Thus, even though the actors who 'torched' and 'vandalised' are not directly mentioned it can be assumed that it has been an act performed by the protesting side, which was intended against the government but hit the civilian population.

## Paragraph 1

*Nov 21, 2015- Protests in various Tarai districts turned violent on Friday, hours after the agitating Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha decided to intensify its agitation in the region. (Appendix b, Article 1, p. 90).*

In the first sentence of the first paragraph the term 'protests' has been used, which does not necessarily have a positive or negative connotation in general. The information entailed in the headline are repeated here, emphasizing that the 'protests in various Tarai districts turned violent', again the verb 'turned' has been used to imply that they have not been violent before 'Friday', the specified date on which the described course of action changed. The adjective 'various' added to 'Tarai districts' connotes that the events happened in multiple places. The clause begins with the time designations 'hours after' referring to the 'Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha's' decision to 'intensify its agitation', which connotes a sudden acceleration of the events and thus a chaotic scenario which made it hardly possible for the opposition to bring order into the situation and to some degree absolves them from responsibility. The subject of this clause is a particular protesting group, who the author refers to as 'Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha', their official name. This nomination connotes a more organized course of action than for example the term 'protesters', which can connote a rather loose group of demonstrating people. The term 'morcha' in its direct translation means organized march or protest but historically it is connoted with hostile demonstrations against the government. By employing the name that includes this word, instead of protesters or demonstrators, it is clarified who the actions are directed against - the government and its politics, thus emphasizing that there are two opposite groups: the protesters against the government. This is furthermore reinforced through the adjective 'agitating' which connotes the act of 'stirring up' public interest often in relation to political or social issues. Moreover the transitive verb 'decide' connotes determination and intention, implying that the protesters' action to 'intensify' their 'agitations' and thereby reinforce their standpoint, has not been a spontaneous act but an active decision in the knowledge of consequences. To emphasize the change

that occurred in the events, a contrast to the previously employed term 'protests' is created through the use of the term 'agitations', which has a more specific connotation, as it implies the persistent urging of a political or social cause before the public.

## **Paragraph 2**

*Protesters torched a truck carrying medicines in Birgunj while an ambulance ferrying a patient was vandalised in Kathari-8, Morang. On Thursday, the SLMM had decided that it "will allow drugs cargo to pass through" even if it intensified its protests in the Tarai. (Appendix b, Article 1, p. 90).*

The first sentence of the second paragraph begins with a repetition of the action that was mentioned in the subtitle, 'protesters torched a truck'. This time the actors are mentioned and referred to with the term 'protesters', a generalization that associates all 'protesters' with the described action and portrays them as a destructive homogenous groups. The importance of the cargo the attacked vehicle was transporting, 'medicine', is furthermore emphasized through repetition. The sentence continues with the conjunction 'while' separating the first and second clauses, consequently establishing the connection between parallel events, which is further elucidated through the reference to the specified locations of the events 'Birgunj' and 'Kathari-8, Morang'. In the same sentence it is described that 'an ambulance ferrying a patient was vandalised'. The use of the verb 'ferrying', which is associated with sea travel, implies that the ambulance was transporting the 'patient' to a 'safe harbor' outside of the conflict scene. The 'patient' is not specified as one of the protesters' or the authorities' side, which implies that he or she is a civilian, creating a feeling of empathy on the reader's side for the uninvolved 'victims' of the protesters' actions and thus adding to the 'us' versus 'them' notion. As in the subtitle the use of the transitive verb 'vandalised' implies violence and deliberately destruction with the aim to reinforce a position.

The focus of the second sentence is once more on the 'drugs cargo'. A short direct quote by the protesting group, here referred to with the abbreviation 'SLMM', is

embedded in the statement to put an emphasis on the statement that the group 'decided that it will "allow drugs cargo to pass through"', a decision they reneged on. The verb 'decide' is used, which is more explicitly implying an original intention of the protesters to follow their statement, than for example the verb 'say'. The use of a direct quote from the protesters, thus their own words, reinforces the connotation that they are unpredictable and unreliable by stressing that they do not comply with their statements. Furthermore, an adverb clause of condition is added, 'even if it intensified its protests', with the adverb 'even' connoting that the previously mentioned decision should have been adhered to, according to the protester's statement. This furthermore clarifies the contrast between the events that happened and what was supposed to happen. The rest of the quote is indirect and appears paraphrased in a way that it fits what the author wants to convey to the reader - the protesters not complying to their statements. Moreover, the sentence begins with the time designation 'on Thursday' to furthermore stress the contrast between the previously described actions of 'Friday', the day mentioned in the first paragraph, to the course of actions that actually had been 'decided' one day before by the 'SLMM' and that they did not follow.

This repeated reference to the 'truck' transporting medical supplies is significant because at the point in time when the article was published, the protests and the border blockade have been going on for two months and medicine was already scarce in Nepal's hospitals. Thus by stressing on the cargo through repetition the author emphasizes that the 'protesters' prevented the delivery of goods that could be important for the survival of people who are uninvolved in the protests. Hence, it is implied that the actions are not only directed against the attacked objects or the government but also against civilians, which again creates an 'us' versus 'them' notion on the reader's side, adding further emphasis and persuasive power to the statement. It feels as though the reader is being pushed towards sympathizing with the civilians, and thus also the government who can be associated with operating against the protesters and thereby for the people who are suffering from their actions.

Finally, the paragraph consists of two sentences that create a juxtaposition. By placing these two sentences next to each other, the reader is led to compare and notice the contrast between what happened during the events and what the protesters had previously stated they would do. The use of this rhetorical device further emphasizes that the 'SLMM' reneged, which connotes their actions as unpredictable and them as not reliable.

## Article 2

**Publication Date:** 28 November 2015

**WebAddress:** <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-11-28/hundreds-of-flowers-one-nepali-garland.html>

**Appendix Location:** Appendix b, Article 2, p. 94

**Title:**

**Hundreds of Flowers, One Nepali Garland**

[\(Appendix b, Article 2, p. 94\).](#)

As one of the first three results of the data search for *The Kathmandu Post*, Google showed an article from the 'On Saturday'- Section where guest authors are regularly featured. The article reports on the increasing disunity between the Madhesi and the government after the promulgation of the new constitution.

The title of this article consists of a metaphor. 'Hundreds of Flowers' connotes the diversity of the Nepali population ('Flowers', standing for the various tribes and ethnic groups of different ancestry, having their own religions, castes etc.). The second clause of this metaphor, 'One Nepali Garland' connotes the unity of the Nepali people. This unity is symbolized by the 'Garland', a wreath of flowers, which is an essential symbol in the Nepali culture, used in all kinds of important ceremonies to honor the person it is given to.

## Subtitle

*Amid violent aftershocks of the new constitution, Nepal now faces an identity crisis in which it must live up to its own claims of cultural pluralism and acceptance (Appendix b, Article 2, p. 94).*

The first sentence of the second paragraph employs another metaphor, 'aftershocks of the new constitution', which connotes an earthquake scenario. The 'violent aftershocks' refer to the Madhesi protests as a consequence of the 'new constitution', which would be the earthquake in this context. The author draws on earthquake discourse, to stress on the intensity of the situation. The modifying adjective 'violent' furthermore connotes that the consequences of this 'new constitution' have been devastating and that they are still going on. The preposition 'amid' implies that an ongoing atmosphere is created by these 'aftershocks', which perpetrate the 'identity crisis' mentioned in the second sentence.

'Nepal' here refers to the government that promulgated the 'new constitution' and has to 'deal' with its ramifications; it 'faces an identity crisis' among its people. 'Identity crisis' connotes a disunity that has been produced among the people of Nepal, with 'crisis' connoting a time that is extremely difficult. The pronoun 'now' connotes the present time, after the promulgation of the 'new constitution', implying it as the reason for the 'identity crisis' caused by the Nepali government. Furthermore, the author here is compelling or instructing the Nepali government to fulfil an obligation, 'its own claims of cultural pluralism and acceptance', which is reinforced by the use of the modal auxiliary verb 'must' and the phrasal verb 'live up to'. It is furthermore implied by 'its own claims', that the government itself made these 'claims of cultural pluralism and acceptance', by which their responsibility is emphasized.

## Paragraph 1

*Nov 28, 2015- When members of the Nepal government decided to finally put forth a new constitution this year, it is highly unlikely that they had anticipated the ocean of Madhesi protests that have come to engulf Terai. (Appendix b, Article 2, p. 94).*

In the first sentence of the first paragraph, the subjects are ‘members of the Nepal government’ who ‘decided to finally put forth a new constitution this year’. The plural noun ‘members’ suggests that not the whole government made the decision, connoting a disagreement within the government about the ‘new constitution’ being ‘put forth this year’. This connotes that there have been flaws in the constitution that have been ignored by the majority of the government in a democratic decision. The phrasal verb ‘put forth’ in connection with the adverbs ‘finally’ and ‘this year’, implies that the government put effort into creating a ‘new constitution’ after a long time of inaction, which has been almost eight years after the first interim constitution became effective. The author expresses his certainty about the government’s expectations through epistemic modality and the use of two adverbs in a row as in ‘it is highly unlikely’, which implies that there is almost no possibility that the government ‘anticipated’ the consequences of their action. The author furthermore uses a metaphor ‘the ocean of Madhesi protests that have come to engulf the Terai’, in which the term ‘ocean’ connotes a high if not endless number of protests and the verb ‘engulf’ suggest the powerful effect they had on the ‘Terai’, with the phrasal verb ‘come to’ connoting that they swept over it like a big wave bringing chaos and destruction. This furthermore backgrounds the demands of the protesters and thereby decreases the possibility of compassion and understanding for their reasons on the reader’s side. The adverb ‘when’ at the beginning of the sentence connotes that at the time the decision was made, the government did not expect the following consequences to be of that extent, which furthermore suggests limited to no intention behind the obvious discrimination of certain groups in the new constitution, which is controversial since there have been ongoing protest by the Madhesi from when the draft of the constitution has been released to the public.

## Paragraph 2

*One can imagine that the passing of the new constitution was supposed to be something exclusively symbolic - a ribbon of hope pinned to a year of devastation brought forth by the April and May earthquakes. What the government has prompted, however, is a movement of citizens demanding real change. In a wave of police killings and a blockade that practically shut down the entire country, Madhesi have made it clear that inaction is no longer an option. (Appendix b, Article 2, p. 94).*

The pronoun “one” in the beginning of the paragraph addresses the readers and due to its gender-neutral indefinite nature, connotes a sense that all readers ‘can imagine’, with the modal auxiliary verb ‘can’ emphasizing the reader’s ability to comprehend what the author suggests. Thus, the reader becomes involved and is thereby led towards agreeing with the author. What is suggested to the reader is that ‘the passing of the new constitution was supposed to be something exclusively symbolic’. The author is drawing in constitutional discourse to further emphasize that the new constitution can be seen as the main reason for the Madhesi protests. Furthermore, the use of the modal verbs ‘was supposed to be’ implies the government’s attitude towards ‘passing of the new constitution’, either connoting the probability or the government’s desire for it to be ‘something exclusively symbolic’.

Either way, the adverb ‘exclusively’ in connection with the ‘symbolic’ strongly implies that any kind of change, has never been the government’s aim in the promulgation of the ‘new constitution’. This change would include the elimination of the unequal treatment of minority groups, which is one of the main reasons for the Madhesi protests. The clauses are separated by dash, indicating an added emphasis on the following metaphor, in which the ‘new constitution’ is referred to as

‘a ribbon of hope pinned to year of devastation’, implying that the government’s intentions behind passing it at this point in time have been to symbolically improve the situation of the Nepali people in a difficult time; to give them hope. The mentioned ‘devastation’ is referred to as having been ‘brought forth by the April and May earthquakes’. By drawing in earthquake discourse, it is emphasized that the situation in the country had already been difficult without the protests and thus the good intentions of the government are highlighted, not allowing for the assumption about other possible reasons for passing the constitution in the same year when the earthquakes had devastated the country.

The second sentence is a statement about ‘what the government has prompted’. The transitive verb ‘prompted’ in past tense implies a responsibility of the government for their actions but furthermore no negative intentions. The sentence consists of a single main clause, which is interrupted by the conjunctive adverb ‘however’, implying that instead of the effects the constitution was supposed to have, its consequence ‘is a movement of citizens demanding real change’. The Madhesi protesters are here referred to as ‘movement of citizens’, which connotes them as a peaceful group, ‘demanding real change’. The verb ‘demanding’ suggests an urgency of the political or social issues they are expressing. Furthermore ‘real change’ implies that possible changes within the constitution have been superficial or not ‘real’, which portrays the Madhesi’s demands as appropriate and legitimizes their claims.

The final sentence of the second paragraph begins with the metaphor ‘in a wave of police killings’. The term ‘wave’ implies that a high number of people died through the continuous actions of the ‘police’. Since the context of the actions is the

Madhesi protests, it can be assumed that the people who died are members of the protesting groups. The compound noun 'police killings' furthermore connotes deliberate actions of the police and gives the impression of murder. The term can be attributed to the discourse of minority killings, especially in the US when for example Afro-Americans are involved as victims of the police's action. Police brutality is thus a significant theme of the second paragraph. Moreover, the discourse on 'India's unofficial blockade' is drawn into this paragraph by referencing the 'blockade that practically shut down the entire country'. The events are connected by the conjunction 'and', suggesting that they happened simultaneously. The reference to the blockade implies India's role in the events, connoting that the situation in the country has not only developed due to the protests but also to the border blockade which has been imposed on Nepal by India and had a severe impact on daily life, as well as business.

The second clause of the sentence suggests a strong stance and deliberate action of the protesters by the use of a transitive verb in connection with an adjective, 'made it clear'. The actors are here referred to with the generalization 'Madhesi', encompassing all individuals belonging to the ethnic group as a coherent entity that have the same point of view about the 'inaction'. This implies that all Madhesi agree with the protesting groups in the Terai. Thus, the author implies a former 'inaction' of the government, in relation to the 'Madhesi's' demands for equality, which is not being accepted by the group any more. This puts the government in a position of responsibility again, since they were the ones 'passing the new constitution'. This furthermore creates a distinction between the 'Madhesi' and 'the government as opposing actors.

## Article 3

**Publication Date:** 21 December 2015

**Web Address:** <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/printedition/news/2015-12-21/tarai-protests-embargo-sour-local-level-ties.html>

**Appendix Location:** Appendix b, Article 3, p. 99

**Title:**

**Tarai protests, embargo sour local-level ties**

[\(Appendix b, Article 3, p. 99\).](#)

The headline employs a personification of the ‘Terai protests’ and the ‘embargo’, referring to India’s unofficial border blockade, as causing a worsening of the relations between people in the neighboring countries of India and Nepal. The verb ‘to sour’ is used to describe an action directly attributed to the ‘Terai protests’ and the ‘embargo’. ‘Sour’ has a connotation of a situation becoming unfriendly, here referring to ‘local-level ties’, which are not specified but in the context that the ‘protests’ and the ‘embargo’ are mainly taking place in the Terai district on the Indian border it can be assumed that relations between the people living in this area are referred to. Thus, the headline implies that the political disagreement between the Nepali government and the Madhesi people, as well as India’s involvement have consequences for uninvolved people living in the area that has been the venue of the disagreement between these parties.

### Paragraph 1

*Dec 21, 2015- The protracted protests in Tarai, India’s unofficial border blockade and subsequent stand-off between Kathmandu and New Delhi have soured local-*

*level relations between people on both sides of the Nepal-India border. (Appendix b, Article 3, p. 99).*

The first paragraph employs a personification of ‘the protracted protests in Tarai’, ‘India’s unofficial border blockade’ and the ‘stand-off between Kathmandu and New Delhi’, establishing them as the perpetrators of the worsening relations between Nepali and Indian people in the border areas. Personification can have the effect of concealing the actual actors, thus taking away responsibility from certain groups or persons, in this case Madhesi protesters as well as the Indian and Nepali governments. The adjective ‘protracted’ connotes that the ‘protests’ have been going on for a long time. The word can also be connoted with a disease that has been prevalent for a long time, which would compare the ‘protests’ to an illness one has difficulties to overcome, thus diminishing the legitimacy of the protesters’ demands. Furthermore, by attributing the ‘unofficial border blockade’ to India it is emphasized who caused the embargo that has affected the relationships between the people living on the border of Nepal and India, implying India as one of the main perpetrators of the situation. The conjunction ‘and’, as well as the adjective ‘subsequent’ imply the ‘stand-off between Kathmandu and New Delhi’ as a direct consequence of the protests and the blockade. The noun ‘standoff’ connotes a situation in which agreement in an argument seems hardly possible, thus suggesting the seriousness of the situation between ‘Kathmandu and New Delhi’. The capitals of Nepal and India have furthermore been personified, standing for the respective governments of the two countries. The described action of all three agents is that they ‘have soured local-level relations between people on both sides of the Nepal-India border’. Again the verb ‘to sour’ has been used, this time in past tense, implying that the action has been going on continuously, with the effect of

worsening the mentioned relations. Who these ‘people’ are exactly is not specified, a generalization that connotes primarily uninvolved parties being affected by the prevalent political disagreement.

## **Paragraph 2**

*People in various Tarai districts are worried that the age-old ties might deteriorate further. They said it is not only difficult to establish marital relationships between people of the two countries but has also put already established relations at risk. (Appendix b, Article 3, p. 99).*

The second paragraph begins with a generalization ‘people in various Tarai districts’, it is not specified who these people are but it can be assumed that they are neither authorities nor protesters but rather civilians. Through the use of an auxiliary verb and an adjective, the author expresses a certainty about the feelings of these ‘people’, who ‘are worried’. The adjective ‘worried’, connoting concerns and unpleasant feelings emphasizes the negative effects the crisis has on civilians. The implied concern refers to ‘age-old ties’, the use of this hyphen, achieves an emphasis on the importance of the relations between the Indians and Nepalis living on the border, which furthermore draws a connection to the Madhesi’s ethnic Indian origin. Furthermore, the modal verb ‘might’ has been employed suggesting the probability that these relations ‘deteriorate further’. The adverb ‘further’ implies that they have already been affected negatively to some degree because of the unstable situation in the region. The second sentence of the second paragraph begins with the representational term ‘they’, referring to the unspecified ‘people’ from the first sentence. The statement ‘they said’, implies that the sentence consists of an indirect quote by ‘people’, who expressed their concerns about the worsening relationships.

By including this indirect quote, the author gives voice to 'the people' and thus creates legitimacy for his statement about the topic.

The focus of the paraphrased statement lies on the complications in forming new 'marital relationships' between Indians and Nepalis and furthermore to preserve 'established relationship' which are 'at risk'. The noun 'risk' here connotes the possibility of more severe consequence resulting from the situation in the Terai. A parallelism is established through the use of 'not only...but also', emphasizing the relationship between, as well as, the importance of the two described consequences. The statement that the crisis 'put already established relations at risk', implies a continuity. The relationships between Indian and Nepali people seems to be an important topic here, which connotes that the connection between the neighbouring countries is emphasized and the people want to stay united and fear that this is difficult due to the political unrest that affects them even as uninvolved parties suffering from the situation.

### **Paragraph 3**

*As violence in the border area increased, around two dozen wedding ceremonies have been cancelled in Rupandehi district alone. ([Appendix b, Article 3, p. 100](#)).*

The third paragraph further highlights the impact of the crisis on civilians, by stating the cancellation of 'around two dozen wedding ceremonies'. The rather unspecified number connotes that a lot of weddings 'have been cancelled', which is furthermore emphasized by mentioning that these numbers apply to one particular area 'alone', indicating that the total number of cancelled events must be even higher. That the

'violence in the border area increased' is implied as the reason for this development, suggesting that the situation does not allow for festivities due to the dangers of getting affected by this 'violence'. The repetition of the relationship-topic throughout the first parts of this article, implies a deliberate emphasis on the consequences the blockade and particularly the protests bring for the civilian population, who are kept from living their normal lives and even see their personal relationships being affected negatively. Thereby the reader is pushed towards a feeling of empathy and compassion for the 'people', which can lead to a rather negative attitude towards the protesters, as well as the Nepali and Indian government, since they are the ones who are responsible for the situation.

## **7 Discussion and Results**

Following the discursive analysis of the selected articles, in this section the findings will be discussed, i.e. the strategies that have been employed to construct meanings as well as their possible implications as social practices. The analysis, as well as the discussion, is guided by the posed research question, even though they are addressed in an indirect way to allow for a better flow in the discussion. Furthermore, although the analysis of the events for both sources has been divided, I decided to draw comparisons and differentiations between them when it was adequate or reasonable and added to the discussion.

### **7.1 The Times of India**

In its reporting on the Terai protests, *The Times of India* primarily portrays the protesters as perpetrators of violence, who can hardly be controlled by the

authorities. Adding to this image is the presentation of the police as a passive actor, who only applies force as a necessary reaction to protect themselves and civilians from the protesters' violent actions. Furthermore the Madhesi protesters are partly depicted as enjoying deliberate destruction and criminal activities, which is particularly highlighted through statements like 'the protesters indulged in arson' and 'vandalism' (Appendix a, Article 2, p. 87), consequently placing them in a 'villain' role. Another important feature in the portrayal of the protesters is that they are given significant responsibility for the crisis situation in Nepal. The allocation of blame here does not only refer to the protests in the Terai but also to the border blockade, which is presented as being caused by the protesters and thus consequently not by the Indian government. Hence, the effects of the blockade on the civil population, especially a lack of essential supplies and destruction of property, are emphasized as a direct result of the protesters' actions. The underlying demands of the protesters are constantly downplayed, if not completely ignored in the articles, which leads to a discursively constructed emphasis on their misbehavior, especially when they are referred to as 'agitators' (Appendix a, Article 1, p. 84), whose main purpose is intentional harm for uninvolved actors. As a consequence, the issue has been oversimplified as the broader context of the protesters' grievances related to the content of the new constitution, including social and political discrimination based on ethnicity, rights of citizenship and territorial rights, is disregarded. This exclusion is leading to a delegitimization of their cause and thereby also of their course of action.

The articles furthermore create a scene of a hostile environment in Nepal, perpetrated by the protesters, which is negatively influencing the relationship between India and Nepal on government level and on a local level, affecting the

people who live in the border area. The protesters are thereby represented as the main actors who are to blame for this scene, causing unnecessary suffering for themselves as well as uninvolved people of the civil society on both sides of the border. This furthermore takes away the legitimacy of their cause and leads to a picture of them as not deserving empathy and understanding. This media reporting on distant suffering may have the underlying intention to generate a kind of 'profit' from selling human tragedies, by the means of a propaganda system which depicts "worthy and unworthy victims" in a way that correlates with the government's "interests and ideology" (Höijer, 2004: 516). In this context, the portrayal of the Madhesi protesters can be regarded as that of unworthy victims, who according to Chomsky & Herman (1988), are addressed with a higher amount of relentlessness by their own government. One can argue that the discursive strategy of "negative other-representation" has been employed here not only to diminish the protesters' demands and place them in an aggressor role but furthermore to establish a separation between the reader and the Madhesi who become the "distant others" (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 24), thus allowing for a discursive construction of 'us' versus 'them'.

Furthermore, a discursive differentiation of the Madhesi can be perceived through the portrayal of the group as uncivilized and their actions as purposeless. As a consequence, this sensationalist discursive practice, that operates as a way of social control, leads to the reproduction of unequal power relations between the actors in this crisis (van Dijk, 1993b) – on the one hand the Madhesi protesters whose demands are constantly backgrounded or entirely ignored, delegitimizing their protest, on the other hand the Nepali government who is placed in a protector role, bringing order into the situation to benefit its citizens, which legitimizes their

exercise of power and thus shapes discourse according to their interests. As a result of the simplification of the issue, a deeper comprehension of the Madhesi's underlying reasons for contesting the new constitution becomes difficult for the reader, which benefits the position of the Nepali government and the impression of them attempting to manage a country that has been stricken by political unrest for a long time. Additionally, democratic discourse has been used, in order to justify the controversial promulgation of the new constitution which '*was passed by 85% of the constituent assembly*' (Appendix a, Article 3, p. 90) this attributes legitimacy to the decision since the government has been elected democratically for the first time in Nepali history. Hence, it is implied that the result should be peacefully accepted by the population, including the Madhesi. The Nepali government is thus placed in the powerful position of trying to operate in favor of the people of Nepal through their action, for the greater good, which can be regarded as an attempt to further legitimize their severe approach on the protesters who are put in direct opposition to the government. As a consequence of the choice to emphasize the government's actions as rightful, an ideological inclination towards a pro-government stance can be perceived in the reporting of The Times of India. This discourse practice can be seen as a means to persuade the reader and thereby achieve hegemonic attitudes, i.e. their acceptance of the "moral, political and cultural values" of the Nepali government as legitimate and natural (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 3; Gramsci, 1971). Furthermore, India's role in the whole crisis, their interference which caused the lack of essential supplies and thus added a further level of complexity to the situation, has simply been blamed on the protesters as causing the blockade through their violent action. This furthermore adds to the discursively created inferiority of the protesters on the one hand and absolves the Indian government from any responsibility on the other hand.

## 7.2 The Kathmandu Post

The Kathmandu Post's discourse on the Madhesi protests can be regarded as partly controversial. On the one hand, the protesters are portrayed as a violent group, however, The Kathmandu Post's reporting indeed acknowledge but do not emphasize this violence; it is rather portrayed as a means of the protesters that is used to express their grievances and not for the purpose of gratuitous destruction. Furthermore, the articles present the protesters as determined and partly organized people who are fighting for their rights. This is for example expressed through the reference to the protesters as a 'movement of citizens demanding real change' (Appendix b, Article 2, p. 94), as well as to 'politicians from the Terai', as disagreeing with parts of the new constitution and thus standing behind the protesters demands. The Nepali government is depicted as standing in opposition to the protesters and as ignoring their demands. The role of the police is portrayed as following the government's instruction to bring order into the situation, disregarding the consequences that include the deaths of protesters, which are referred to as 'police killings' (Appendix b, Article 2, p. 94).

The emphasis of The Kathmandu Post's discourse lies primarily on the impact the whole situation has had on the civil population of Nepal. This is especially emphasized in two articles, one reporting on the protesters' vandalism against a transport of medical goods when they have already been scarce in the country and one stressing on the worsening private relationships between the people living on both sides of the Nepal-India border in the protest area. Yet, the responsibility for the crisis is not only allocated to the protesters, even though their actions are highlighted. The controversial part is that even though the legitimacy of the Madhesi's demands is partly admitted, the government's underlying intentions for the promulgation of the new constitution are depicted as inherently positive; it is represented as a figurative savior whose decisions have been an attempt to improve the political, social and economic situation in Nepal. These intentions are reinforced by drawing in earthquake discourse as a reminder that the situation has already

been difficult without the crisis and to further highlight the government's good intentions to improve the situation. Thereby the discriminatory content of the constitution and its effects on the Madhesi, are to some degree accepted as a sacrifice for the public good, which legitimized the government's approach on the situation.

As a consequence of this, different roles are assigned to each of the parties: the Nepali government becomes the superior actor, representing the interests of its population and also holding the power to resolve the situation in a thoughtful way and the Madhesi are placed in a subordinate position, trying to force their will through by the means of violence, thus presented as incapable of a more peaceful and civilized approach to convey their demands (van Dijk, 1993a; Sztompka). Furthermore the Terai is stressed as the main site of the events, representing the Madhesi's closeness to their Indian neighbors and them as a sole entity in the south, which adds to their segregation from the rest of Nepal, not only geographically but also symbolically in terms of cultural differences. According to Eder (2000) this discursive strategy is constructing and maintaining collective identities in cultures and societies, which allows for a differentiation between 'us' and 'them'. Thus, along with the emphasis on the consequence for the uninvolved people, this representation also allows for a binary between 'us', the hill-population and 'them' the Madhesi in the Terai. The articles furthermore carry a latent moral suasion for all involved parties to solve the problem and end the violence and thus the unnecessary suffering of the population. The wider socio-cultural context, however, has been disregarded and India's role in the crisis has been excluded as well.

### **7.3 Limitations**

The data choices and the reliability of the findings that derived from the analysis are a critical topic in most research projects, especially when they are conducted in a qualitative approach like the thesis at hand.

Validity is concerned with the accuracy in terms of 'measurement' and if the means that have been applied in this regard actually analyze what they are intended to analyze (Trochim, 2006). Hence, from a positivist perspective the validity of the results in this thesis could be questioned to some degree, since the choice of qualitative interpretive methods like CDA, implies that the researcher cannot be utterly impartial because of their subjective point of view and experience, which can influence their analysis and thus their findings. However, this study included an ongoing critical reflection of methods and furthermore the approach has been a carefully considered choice, because it provides the possibility for findings, one would not be able to extrapolate with quantitative methods. This is, from my social constructivist perspective, the point of this analysis was not to statistically measure the intentions and impact of media news media reporting, since no amount of analysis can provide an absolute truth on what people think or feel and why. Yet, what has been observed through the qualitative methods of CDA, is how journalists constructed an argument, and how this argument fits into broader social practices. Thus, through the demonstration of cohesion within the thought processes during the data analysis and the following interpretations, I argue that I have achieved an adequate degree of validity within the underlying research paradigm. Reliability relates to the degree of stability in the findings of an analysis, thereby a higher degree of stability can be regarded as an implication for reliability (Trochim, 2006). As can be perceived from the analysis and discussion of this research project I have achieved relatively coherent and comprehensible results throughout the data analysis, which leads to an adequate degree of reliability.

## **8 Conclusion**

The issues stated in the problem formulation have been addressed in the preceding discussion and through both analysis and discussion of the discourses on the Terai protests in The Kathmandu Post and The Times of India, biased positions,

ideological inclinations as well as (re)produced power relations between the parties have been revealed.

The Times of India through their discursive practice presented the protesters as the perpetrators of violence in the crisis situation, which gives them a negative connotation. Furthermore, they are presented as predominantly operating against the rest of the Nepali population. The Madhesi are thus discursively constructed as the 'other', who creates unnecessary suffering for themselves and uninvolved people. As a consequence of this discursively constructed negative other-representation, the binary of 'us' versus 'them' is emphasized. The exclusion and simplification of the underlying reasons for the protests furthermore leads to a delegitimization of their cause, which connotes them as the symbolic 'scapegoats' for the whole crisis situation and the Nepali government as the protector of the civilian population.

The analysis of The Kathmandu Post articles presented varying results. In contrast to The Times of India's reporting style, it had a more moderate approach on the situation. Even though the protester's violence has been mentioned, it is not particularly emphasized. Furthermore, the government is portrayed as ignoring the Madhesi's demands and on the other hand as trying to improve the situation in the country and thus approving of the consequences that emerged for the Madhesi from the new constitution. The emphasis of the articles lies on the effects of the situation for the Nepali population, which is conveyed in an appealing tone directed towards the government and the Madhesi to find common ground in a peaceful way. The Madhesi's reasons for the protests are thereby downplayed and even though they are not delegitimized to the same extent as in The Times of India's discourse, they are still backgrounded. This connotes an inclination towards the government's 'side', particularly through the portrayal of the government as a powerful entity who is acting in favor of its population. Moreover, the Madhesi's distinction from the rest of Nepal is highlighted through an emphasis on their belonging to the Terai and their collective identity that is discursively constructed. As a consequence also here the

dichotomy of 'us' versus 'them' is given place, originating from their part in creating negative effects for the civil population and on the one hand and from the backgrounding of their cause on the other.

The process of writing this thesis has partly been a challenging task. On the one hand because I made the decision to address this topic when I was still in Nepal, in the middle of the crisis, which has been a time when the information provided to the public were still vague, as well as my knowledge about the contexts. On the other hand, because the protests and the blockade were still ongoing and even though there was a short time period when it looked like the crisis was over after India lifted its unofficial blockade, the disagreement between the Nepali government and the Madhesi groups has still not been resolved and the protests resumed after a short period of time. Consequently, the posed research questions could have been revised during the thesis writing process, due to the further developments of this crisis. However, I consider the decision for the chosen time period as appropriate, on the one hand to maintain a clear focus throughout this study and on the other hand to provide a contribution for the public discussion about the topic as well as a possible basis for further research.

Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge that an analysis of the included images in the articles might have led to further insights. Yet the decision to focus on the textual content has been a conscious choice that has been made in order to allow for better comparability between the sources, since there are almost no pictures included in the articles of The Times of India. Regarding the chosen approach on data selection, I am aware that it can be regarded as not objective, since the predefined search criteria have been a subjective choice.

Moreover, I would like to note that this research project has been an important experience, personally and academically. From my perspective it has produced results that can contribute to a better understanding of the discursive practices of The Kathmandu Post and The Times of India and provided an insight on the

implications for their social practice. Media's practice should be critically questioned, particularly in an online environment where information can be distributed and accessed to a global audience. Therefore I believe that critical examination through discursive analysis and deconstruction of the underlying meanings in media content contributes to more awareness for the power that media holds.

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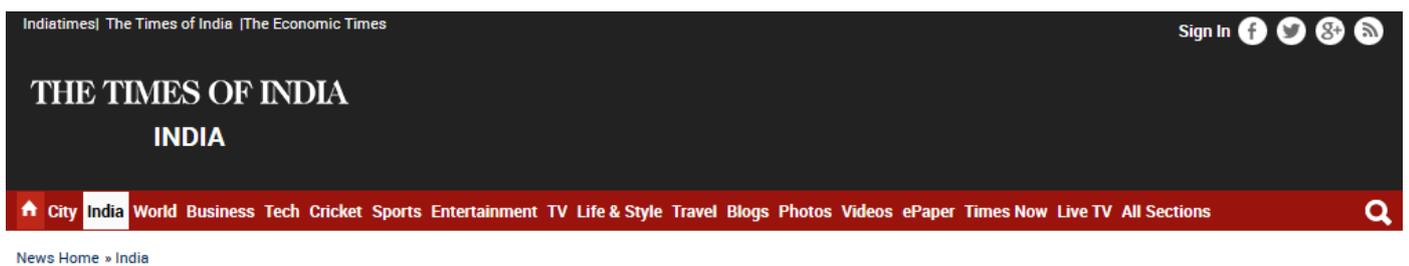
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## Appendix a

The full articles are included in the appendix, in the same order as in the analysis.

The content is partly misaligned, due to formatting and technical limitations,

### Article 1



The screenshot shows the top section of the Times of India website. At the top left, it says "Indiatimes | The Times of India | The Economic Times". On the right, there is a "Sign In" button and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and RSS. Below this is the main logo "THE TIMES OF INDIA INDIA". A red navigation bar contains links for "City", "India", "World", "Business", "Tech", "Cricket", "Sports", "Entertainment", "TV", "Life & Style", "Travel", "Blogs", "Photos", "Videos", "ePaper", "Times Now", "Live TV", and "All Sections". A search icon is on the far right. Below the navigation bar, it says "News Home » India".

## At India-Nepal border, a pile-up of angst, anxiety and 'betrayal' - Times of India

Indrani Bagchi | TNN | Dec 12, 2015, 06.10 AM IST

  A- A+

**Paragraph 1:** BIRGUNJ, Nepal: It's called the Maitri Bridge. But "maitri (friendship)" is the last thing on everyone's mind here.

**Paragraph 2:** Linking Nepal's Birgunj with India's Raxaul is a dusty connector overrun with motorcycles, tongas, rickshaws and cycles. Since September, a bamboo-and-plastic shelter has partially covered it, protestors camping inside imposing a blockade on themselves, refusing food, fuel and essentials supplies from India to get in.

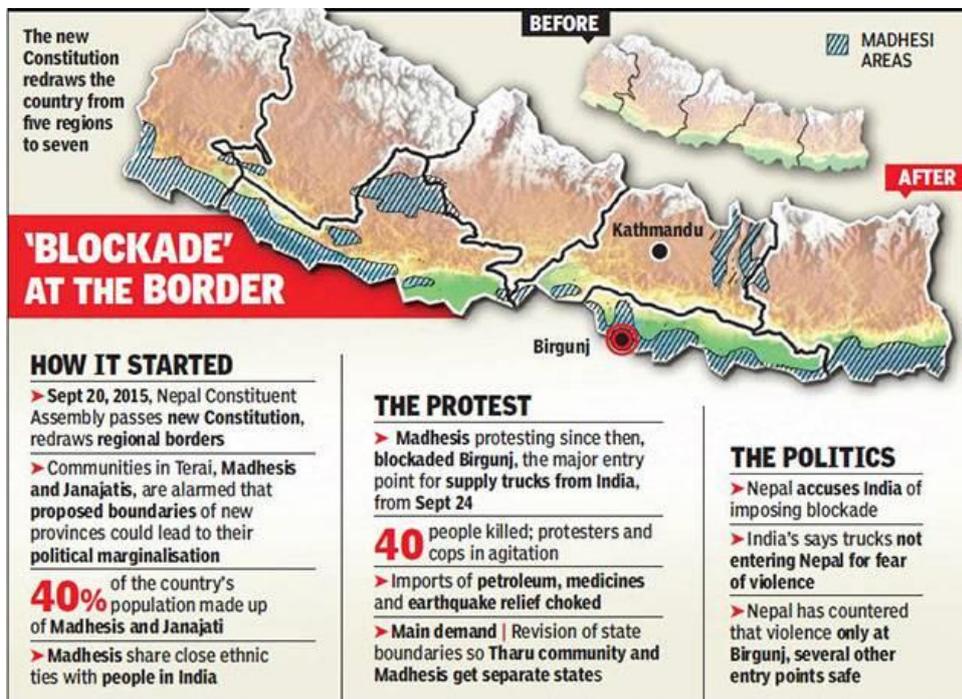
**Paragraph 3:** There are no police lines here or agitators visible, just people hurrying to Raxaul to pick up supplies. Any police force should have broken the protest. But for three months, the stir has continued. How? "Thousands converge here within minutes to take on the police," Aslam, an agitator, says. Policemen have beaten up protestors. But only one

day they managed to clear the bridge for stranded Indian trucks to return.

Birgunj is the nerve centre of the Madhesi protests against Kathmandu and its elite. Although the border has about 20 transit points, over 60% of trade is through Birgunj. That's been closed for three months.

Factories in and around Birgunj are shut. Last week, schools opened for a few hours every day. No cars ply here, motorbikes are the only way to get around quickly. Petrol and diesel sell in plastic bottles, dirt cheap.

"We have strong roti-beti ties with Indians. My wife is Indian, now I don't know if my daughter will be a Nepalese citizen by birth or naturalization," says Om Prakash Sikariya a businessman. The new Nepal constitution says children born to a Nepalese women marrying foreigners would be naturalized citizens, not by descent. They'll be denied employment in certain government positions.



This is believed to be against the Terai people who marry Indians.

"We won't budge," says Ram Sahay, a protest leader. "Yeh aar-paar ki ladaai hai," Munni Srivastava, who heads the Mahila Morcha cuts in. "The Terai people are with us," Sahay adds.

The protestor's rallying cry has so far been: "ek Madhes, ek pradesh." None wants it to morph into: "ek Madhes, ek Desh." That's what Indian officials, both in Delhi and Nepal, fear. "We don't want Birgunj to be the next Jaffna," an Indian official says.

India's official presence in Birgunj is led by a feisty foreign service official, Anju Ranjan. Anju has ensured that Indian trucks and interests aren't harmed, stressing that the blockade isn't India's doing.

"The dry port (where goods from third countries come in) is working.

If we wanted a blockade, why would we allow it to function? Indian trucks don't want to come because of the agitation," Ranjan reasons.

## ANTI-INDIA

But everyone in Nepal is convinced India is imposing a version of economic sanctions. Last week, India was for the first time criticized in the Nepal parliament. Protests are common outside the Indian embassy in Kathmandu. But Ambassador Ranjit Rae insists: "India's on the right side of history." That may be the case, but, for now, every Nepalese news channel has a single bugbear: India. This has enabled the Nepali leadership maintain the fiction in Kathmandu that the problem is being created by India, not a section of their own people.

The anger in Kathmandu centres on Indian "interference" in Nepal's internal matters. Kathmandu residents feel the blockade pinch most. There are queues outside filling stations, sometimes the wait is for two days. Everything is expensive. In the Terai, the anti-India resentment remains equally strong. The blockade has impacted the livelihoods of the business community. Community members, generally Marwaris, are somewhat unsure of the Madhesis.

They have a relationship with the hill people, but Madhesis are unknown. Madhesis often look at India as a close relative. But some concede: they want India to be proactive.

## CHINA CARD

India has been wary of being upstaged by China in Nepal. This time too, Kathmandu turned to Beijing for fuel supplies. After an agreement with China, on October 28 for 1,000 metric tons of fuel came through its border post at Rasuwagadi. Until the protests, India supplied 1.3 million tonnes of petroleum products worth Rs 9,000 crore annually.

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### Top Comment

*What a shame that our journalist dont have courage to speak the truth. Why no mentioned of other border points. Are there any protest happening. Why trucks are not being routed through those check po... Read More*

**Abob**

But now more trucks aren't taking the quake-hit highway from China.

Negotiations with Beijing on a longterm fuel deal have slowed after differences over whether China should waive taxes on the supplies.

SEE ALL COMMENTS

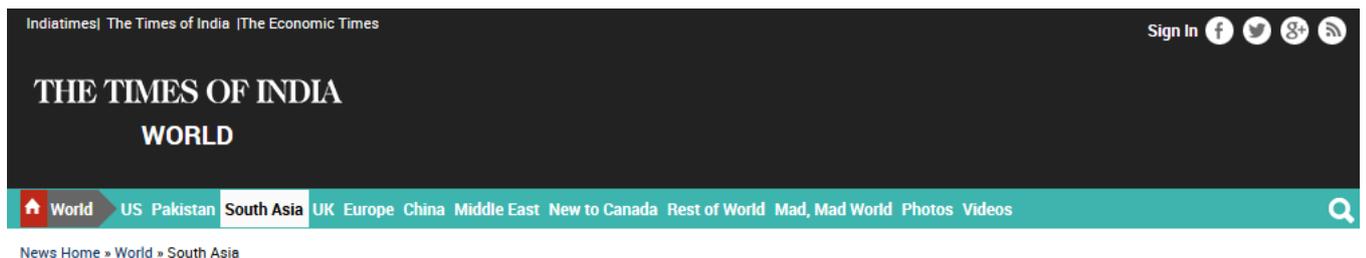
ADD COMMENT

## QUIET BORDER

Many trucks have returned from Birgunj. But this town has learnt to live with the "blockade" - it's now a thriving centre of a parallel black economy. Fuel slips in, so do other supplies. At evening shops are lit up, shelves stocked. In fact, all over Nepal a parallel economy has sprung up and many are benefiting from the so-called blockade.

After refusing to mediate between Madhesi and Kathmandu, India capitulated, hosting Kamal Thapa, Nepal's foreign minister. He came with a written assurance that key Madhes demands would be met.

## Article 2



The screenshot shows the top section of a news website. At the top left, it says "Indiatimes | The Times of India | The Economic Times". On the right, there is a "Sign In" button and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and RSS. Below this is the main header "THE TIMES OF INDIA" and "WORLD". A navigation bar below the header contains links for "World", "US Pakistan", "South Asia", "UK", "Europe", "China", "Middle East", "New to Canada", "Rest of World", "Mad, Mad World", "Photos", and "Videos". At the bottom left of the navigation bar, it says "News Home » World » South Asia".

# Nepal unrest: No solution in sight, Terai death toll 59

IANS | Jan 22, 2016, 10.53 PM IST



**Paragraph 1:** KATHMANDU: With Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and his party CPN-UML hardening their stance against the more than five-month-old Madhesi agitation in the Himalyan nation's southern terai region for a more representative constitution, a resolution receded even farther as three protestors died in police firing on Thursday in the south-eastern Morang district.

**Paragraph 2:** Since early morning on Friday, incensed Madhesi protestors forced markets to shut down and indulged in arson besides clashing with the police in several parts of the

Terai as the protests assumed a more violent form than earlier.

**Paragraph 3:** The Madhesi protestors are demanding, among other things, a redrawing of the boundaries of the provinces in Nepal as proposed in the new Constitution - promulgated on September 20 last year; and representation in Parliament on the basis of population. Significantly, the Nepal Terai has almost 51 per cent of the country's population and yet gets only one-third of seats in Parliament.

The Madhesis also seek proportional representation in government jobs and restoration of rights granted to them in the interim constitution of 2007 which the new charter has snatched away.

With Thursday's three deaths in police firing, the toll in the agitation has risen to 59, including 11 police personnel, and the chances of an immediate political solution receded farther.

Several parts of the Terai saw protests and demonstrations by the protestors with reports coming in of clashes with the police at places. There were no immediate reports of casualty, if any.

The Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha (SLMM) - or the Madhesi Morcha, as it is more commonly known - has been spearheading the Agitation in the country's terai region. It comprises four Madhes-based parties - Terai Madhes Loktantrik Party led by Mahanta Thakur; Sadbhawana Party, headed by Rajendra Mahto; Sanghiya Samajwadi Forum-Nepal, led by Upendra Yadav; and the Terai Madhes Loktantrik Party-Nepal headed by Mahendra Yadav.

The Madhesi Morcha, condemning the three deaths in Thursday's police firing, has called for an immediate stop to "the state-sponsored terrorism" let loose in the Terai.

A concerned southern neighbour India has expressed concern over the repeated violent incidents in the Nepal Terai and urged the political parties in the Himalayan nation to seek a political solution to the ongoing unrest and the political standoff.

Vikas Swarup, spokesperson of India's External Affairs Ministry said India was deeply concerned at the loss of three lives in police firing in Morang district in the Nepal Terai. "Political problems require political solutions," he tweeted on Thursday.

The escalation in the agitation intensity follows an attempt by Prime Minister Oli's CPN-UML to try to take head-on the Madhesi protestors.

Tension flared up in the southern Nepali town of Biratnagar, bordering India, after Morcha cadres attempted to disturb a programme organised by the Youth Association of Nepal (YAN), the militant youth wing of Oli's CPN-UML [Communist Party of Nepal (Unified

Marxist-Leninist)].

Oli, who is also CPN-UML chairman, was scheduled to address the programme but cancelled it later, sensing the mood of the protestors.

The government and the Madhesi Morcha leaders have so far held more than a score of meetings in Kathmandu aimed at finding a solution to the prolonged agitation -- but without success

A government-sponsored amendment to the less-than-four-month-old statute is slated to come up for discussion and voting on Saturday - but observers see little chance of it finding approval among the aggrieved Madhesis.

Morcha leaders have affirmed that they were not ready to accept the amending bill unless their rightful concerns were addressed.

"This government cannot address the demands of indigenous Janajati and Madhesi people," said Upendra Yadav, chairman of Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum-Nepal. "The major parties need to show flexibility and seriousness."

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*Prolonged agitation in Nepal will affect the economy of the country adversely. Both sides should thrash out their differences.*

**mahendra kumar Nayak**

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"The major three parties are just doing drama in the name of negotiations... the government is ignoring the demands raised by Madhesis despite our having presented the demands to the government in written and oral forms time and again," said Mahanta Thakur, who leads the Terai Madhes Loktantrik Party.

"I don't know how many times we will have to say that the bottom-line demand of the Madhesi Morcha is demarcation of states... we need two federal states in the Terai region from Jhapa till Kanchapur, but this government acts like it knows nothing about it," Thakur said.

## Article 3

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# Protests echo in Terai region as Nepal adopts constitution

TNN | Sep 21, 2015, 09.58 AM IST

  A- A+

**Paragraph 1:** NEW DELHI: After decades of political unrest, Nepal put the world's newest constitution into effect on Sunday. Although the constitution was passed by 85% of the constituent assembly, there are areas of disagreement signified by Madhesi protests and dissenting notes from politicians from the Terai who have not joined the promulgation process.

**Paragraph 2:** Even as security was stepped up in southern districts of Nepal, a man was killed and several injured in police firing on protesters in Birgunj near the border with India.

**Paragraph 3:** "The three major political parties, Nepali Congress headed by Sushil Koirala, NCP/ML by K P Oli and UCPN by Puspa Kumar Dahal, instrumental in drafting the new constitution must listen to the voice of dissent and take them along to carry forward the democratic process," Ramesh Nath Pandey, former Nepal foreign minister, told TOI on Sunday.

"Nepal has taken a historic step. This is an opportunity to bring long-sought political stability in the country. Maoist armed conflict and nine years of political instability and resurrect the economy ravaged by the earthquake in April 25 this year," the former foreign minister added.

# Appendix b

## Article 1

Kathmandu: 20.8°C Weather: Mostly Cloudy, Humidity: 94% [Print Edition](#) | [Archive](#)

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**NATIONAL**

## Protests turn violent in Tarai districts

*Truck carrying drugs torched in Birgunj, dozens of vehicles vandalised*

- Abdes K Kumar Jha, BHUSAN YADAV, BIRGUNJ, MORANG

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ekantipur

**Paragraph 1:** Nov 21, 2015- Protests in various Tarai districts turned violent on Friday, hours after the agitating Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha decided to intensify its agitation in the region.

**Paragraph 2:** Protesters torched a truck carrying medicines in Birgunj while an ambulance ferrying a patient was vandalised in Katahari-8, Morang. On Thursday, the SLMM had decided that it “will allow drugs cargo to pass through” even if it intensified its protests in the Tarai.

Protesters hurled petrol bombs at the truck (Na 2 Kha 8292) loaded with medical supplies at Shripur in Birgunj-14. Medicines worth around Rs2 million were destroyed, said police. Pharmaceutical entrepreneurs had loaded the truck with medicines stored at the godown after the SLMM announced to allow trucks carrying medicines, oxygen cylinders and health-related equipment to pass through.

“The truck was carrying essential medicines. We were preparing to supply them to Chitwan, Janakpur and Kathmandu following the SLMM’s decision,” said Dr Anuj Yadav of Shivarati Pharmaceuticals. He said some medicines imported from India before the blockade came into force were stored in the godown and that they were being transported following SLMM’s decision on Thursday.

According to the truck driver, the protesters threw three Molotov cocktails at the vehicle just after midnight. The vehicle also had a banner that read “essential medicines”. A police team reached the incident site soon after they were informed about the incident and doused the fire.

When asked, Sadbhawana Party Chairman Rajendra Mahato said he had no knowledge of the incident. “Why would protesters torch a truck carrying medicines as the SLMM has decided to allow vehicles carrying medicines to pass through? There could be infiltration,” he said, adding: “The SLMM does not have any policy to torch and vandalise ambulances and trucks carrying drugs.” He, however, said medicines “should not be transported during the night without coordinating with the SLMM activists”.

Dozens of vehicles were also torched and vandalised for defying the Morcha-imposed banda in Tarai districts.

In Morang, SLMM cadres vandalised a Biratnagar-bound ambulance (Ko 1 Cha 7379) along the Biratnagar-Rangeli road section.

The ambulance was carrying 18-month-old Manasi Bhattarai, a chronic pneumonia patient, and his mother Hira to a clinic in Biratnagar.

According to driver Dilip Mandal, a group of 10 protesters attacked the vehicle with bricks without letting the patient and her mother get off the vehicle. “They snatched the key from me and vandalised the vehicle when the child and his mother were still inside the vehicle,” said Mandal.

Hira, a police constable at Rangeli Police Office, sustained minor injuries in the incident. She was taking her daughter to Biratnagar from Rangeli as other vehicles had stayed off the roads due to the banda.

In Biratnagar, SLMM supporters took out a rally in Biratnagar and enforced banda. Marketplaces remained shut and vehicles stayed off the roads since morning due to the banda.

Meanwhile, protesters vandalised eight trucks and two motorcycles that were parked at National Cement Factory in Katahari-8 on Friday morning. They also threw stones at the factory. Similarly, demonstrators vandalised two rickshaws and eight motorcycles at

Mahabir Chowk. A clash between security personnel and protesters had briefly flared up in the area.

Meanwhile, an unidentified gang torched a truck (Na 4 Kha 5983) at Barhathawa in Sarlahi district on Thursday night. A group of some masked men torched the Kathmandu-bound vehicle near the Choraniya bridge.

Likewise, SLMM activists took out a protest rally in various places in Saptari district. They staged demonstrations at Bhardaha, Portaha, Rupani and Rajbiraj among other areas in the district. The protesters have decided to block the highway from Saturday.

Meanwhile, SLMM activists also attempted to vandalise the house of former prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal in Gaur, Rautahat. However, security personnel intervened in time and dispersed the mob.

*(With inputs from local correspondents)*



*Published: 21-11-2015 08:44*

NEXT STORY



Transitional justice: NHRC urges govt to implement SC verdicts



# on saturday

## Hundreds of Flowers, One Nepali Garland

Amid violent aftershocks of the new constitution, Nepal now faces an identity crisis in which it must live up to its own claims of cultural pluralism and acceptance

- David Caprara,



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*There is no streamlined leadership or singular voice for Madhesi concerns; and internal squabbling, differing demands, and flares of violence certainly do not make cooperation from Kathmandu easy*

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**Paragraph 1:** Nov 28, 2015- When members of the Nepal government decided to finally put forth a new constitution this year, it is highly unlikely that they had anticipated the ocean of Madhesi protests that have come to engulf Terai.

**Paragraph 2:** One can imagine that the passing of the new constitution was supposed to be something exclusively symbolic—a ribbon of hope pinned to a year of devastation brought forth by the April and May earthquakes. What the government has prompted, however, is a movement of citizens demanding real change. In a wave of police killings and a blockade

that practically shut down the entire country, Madhesis have made it clear that inaction is no longer an option.

Madhesis have occupied the center stage of this movement, but the calls for equal rights and representation in Nepal extend to all of the country's marginalized groups. Demands for change have increased in intensity amongst women, Dalits, and other marginalized groups in the country, and a positive revolution is in the air if Nepal's upper-caste politicians are willing to act like democratic leaders and listen to the people of their nation.

Of all countries in the world, the national anthem of Nepal has always struck me as one of the most beautiful. "Hundreds of flowers, we are one Nepali garland," it begins. The anthem highlights the diversity of Nepal and acclaims its ability to live in harmony. The lyrics continue: "The diverse races, languages, faiths, and cultures are so extensive, our progressive nation, long live Nepal."

Echoing this theme, the preamble of the new constitution promulgated in September states that the new Nepal government "end[s] discriminations relating to class, caste, region, language, religion and gender discrimination... in order to protect and promote unity in diversity, social and cultural solidarity, tolerance and harmonious attitudes," and that it aims to "create an egalitarian society on the basis of the principles of proportional inclusion and participation, to ensure equitable economy, prosperity and social justice."

Now, like the blacks fighting for civil rights in the USA who challenged the racist US government on its constitution claiming all citizens to be equal, Madhesis and other marginalized groups are demanding that Nepal live up to its own standards.



*Broken Garland: Not all of Nepal's ethnic groups are given a place within the national identity of Nepal.*

Madhesis feel that they are not valued as citizens in the country beyond the material and historical resources found within the Terai. Though this region accounts for over 51% of Nepal's population and produces over 45% of Nepal's GDP, ethnic groups like Madhesis and Tharus often face lifelong discrimination for their dark-complexions and suffer from racist allegations that they are just Indians trying to influence Nepali politics and take over the country. Marginalized groups in the Terai often refer to their situation as an "internal colonization."

"We Madhesis are called rough words like "dhoti" and "bhaiya" in school and in the workplace here in Kathmandu," says Ram Pukar Mahara, a Madhesi student of Conflict Peace and Development studies at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan University, who came to the capitol city for more opportunity. "The word "bhaiya" isn't even a curse word; it means 'brother,' but people say it with so much hate that it comes to mean something like the racial slurs used against minorities in other countries."

A wide variety of non-Nepali languages are spoken in the Terai, and people belonging to a caste or area in this region that speak Nepali rarely find themselves woven into any sort of "floral garland" of a tolerant Nepal.

"We are badly harassed, so when we have to stay together in a friendly environment and help each other," says Lalu Ray Yadav, a migrant Madhesi construction worker that was making repairs on the UNESCO-listed Swayambhunath at the time of our interview. "Even the children here call us names and spit on us. The Pahari adults here have no problem with this." When asked why he only makes 365Rs/day when the normal wage is 700Rs, Yadav responded matter-of-factly: "the minimum wage does not apply to us."

One of the biggest points that are often used to bolster a sense nationalistic pride in Nepal is the assertion that the Gautama Buddha was Nepali. Historical artifacts do indeed indicate that the Buddha was born in the balmy Terai town of Lumbini, but with the current discrimination that Terai inhabitants are facing and the ubiquitous attitude in Kathmandu that Terai inhabitants are actually Indians and not "real Nepalis", it makes one question whether or not the Buddha would be respected if he was born in his hometown today, and also just what sort of Buddha people are imagining when they assert that the Buddha was Nepali. Perhaps what they have in mind is a Buddha dressed in Daura-Suruwal, the traditional outfit of hill Nepalis.



*Pahari Buddha: The sort of “Nepali Buddha” that it seems most Nepalis have in mind when they picture a “Nepali Buddha.”*

Madhesi concerns may be legitimate, but the chosen means of making their voices heard through self-destructive bandas and blockade are not. It has been over 100 days that the region has been shut down due to bandas. The truth is that the banda is not so heavily-enforced in the Terai: shops are open, vehicles crowd the road, and people carry about their daily business. The ones who have suffered the most through this banda have been the children who have not been to school in over three months. The damage that is done to the future generation in these self-destructive protests is far more damaging to the side of the protesters than to their political targets in Kathmandu. If Madhesis are to move forward with their demands for civil rights, they should do so in a way that will empower their future generations—not force them into child labor and illiteracy.

Nepalis who make the claim that Madheshi demand slack a certain degree of solidity or an ending point are not without ground. There is no streamlined leadership or singular voice for Madhesi concerns; and internal squabbling, differing demands, and flairs in violence certainly do not make cooperation from Kathmandu easy.

But is it really a list of territorial and political demands that are what Madhesis are really after? Though there are obvious problems that need to be remedied, such as discriminatory citizenship policies, zoning issues, and unequal representation in government bureaucracy (which the new constitution of Nepal claims to address in its preamble), in one sense these are all red herrings. What Madhesis want more than anything else is to be accepted as a part of the country on a level deeper than paper documents, and this is a change that is going to have to come not from politicians, but from the hearts and minds of Nepali

citizens. The desire to be accepted is one of the most fundamental desires of human beings, but currently Madhesis and other inhabitants of the Terai feel like they are outcast and unwanted in their own homeland.

If Nepal is to rise and fulfill its highest potential as a nation, the greatest task of the 21st century will have to be a remaking of national identity that stems from a realization that Nepal's greatest strength is its diversity. Minority groups are not threats to national unity, but are its greatest seeds for success and flourishing. Nepal has been in a state of developmental paralysis for years, and this is largely because a small minority of privileged groups have taken power and stifled the bulk of the country in order to maintain the country's age-old Brahminical power structure. In fostering a framework for developing the Terai and the other educationally and economically parched communities of the country, Nepal will break its spell of developmental drought and witness a renaissance as a mosaic-nation of great strength and empowered diversity.



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Published: 28-11-2015 10:25



## Tarai protests, embargo sour local-level ties

nepal-india relations  
- AMRITA ANAMOL, BUTWAL

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*In Bhairahawa, several wedding ceremonies between nationals of the two countries were cancelled due to disputes*

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**Paragraph 1:** Dec 21, 2015- The protracted protests in Tarai, India's unofficial border blockade and subsequent stand-off between Kathmandu and New Delhi have soured local-level relations between people on both sides of the Nepal-India border.

**Paragraph 2:** People in various Tarai districts are worried that the age-old ties might deteriorate further.

They said it is not only difficult to establish marital relationships between people of the two countries but has also put already established relations at risk.

**Paragraph 3:** As violence in the border area increased, around two dozen wedding ceremonies have been cancelled in Rupandehi district alone.

Locals said the ongoing situation has led to several difficulties between people from both countries. Though many Nepalis and Indians are relatives, they are trying to show themselves as a superior one due to the ongoing political crisis.

Last month, a Nepali family was planning to organise a marriage reception for their Indian relatives in Bhairahawa. The Nepali family said they are planning a low key programme due to the shortage of fuel and other essential materials. However, the discussion led to a heated dispute and some elderly people had to intervene.

This is just an example. There are several other cases in which people from the two sides of the border were involved in disputes. In Bhairahawa, several wedding ceremonies scheduled to be held between youths from the two countries have been cancelled due to such disputes.

Traditionally, people from the Gupta, Dhawal, Kanyouje, Harijan and Muslim families in Nepal have marital relationships with Indian nationals. However, the recent deterioration in the ties between the two countries due to border blockade by the Indian side has affected the age-old people-to-people relations.

Some Indian nationals who have relatives in Nepal run business firms in the border areas. They, too, are worried as their businesses are facing a huge loss due to the ongoing protests and blockade.

*Published: 21-12-2015 08:49*



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