

**Framing the Democracy Discourse:
A Post-Structural Analysis of India's Intervention
in Nepal's Protracted Democratization**

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Introduction

On May 28, 2008, the newly-elected constituent assembly declared Nepal a federal republic, thus putting an end to the long and troubled journey undertaken since the 1950s to bring democracy to the country (Hachhethu et al 131). In fact, for the last seven decades, the political history of Nepal saw a continuous struggle between royal and democratic forces attempting to take and maintain power in the state, resulting in a long period of political instability, civil turmoil, and economic hardship (132-133). By adopting modes of transition theory to analyze the democratic history of Nepal, three main non-consecutive phases can be identified as crucial to the gradual establishment of democracy in the Himalayan state (Kantha 59). The first one, starting in 1951 with the demise of the Rana's autocracy, and ending in 1960 with the coup staged by King Mahendra, saw the first multiparty parliament being installed in the country, and brought about the first general elections and the creation of a constituent assembly for the drawing of a new constitution (62). The second one, occurring in the years 1990-1991, saw the abolition of the thirty-year-long Panchayat regime established after the royal coup of 1960, and entailed the restoration of the multi-party parliament together with the formation of a new constituent assembly (64-65). The third, and final, one, initiated in 2005, was the outcome of a joint effort made by the seven political parties and the Maoist insurgents to finally overthrow monarchic rule in the country, and culminated with the proclamation of the Republic in 2008 (66).

Indeed, from the point of view of democracy studies, the political history of Nepal presents a very interesting case study, and has therefore been analyzed thoroughly. In democratization theory, the successful democratization of a given country is understood as the result of a

combination of internal and external factors (Huntington 92). One of the external factors identified as crucial for democratic transitions worldwide is what Samuel Huntington labelled “neighborhood effect”, a theory inferring that a country is more likely to become democratic if its neighbors are-or become- democracies (93-94).

Indeed, in the context of Nepal, given its landlocked position and its geographical proximity to India, the biggest republic in the world, the neighborhood effect has been quintessential. In fact, in spite of not possessing a clear democracy promotion agenda, the Republic of India has constantly intervened, both openly and covertly, in the democratization of Nepal, in the attempt to establish there a solid form of government which would favour its interests in the domestic as well as international arena (Destradi 286-287). India’s interference in Nepal’s domestic affairs should not come as a surprise, considering the relevant position that the Himalayan state has always occupied in New Delhi’s foreign policy. In fact, because Nepal not only shares a long and open border with India, but also abuts on China, it has always been of critical importance for India’s strategy to extend its hegemony over South Asia (Destradi 291-293).

Scholars worldwide have interpreted India’s influence in Nepal’s democratization process by endorsing different theories adopted to understand states behavior in international relations, thus providing insights of the bilateral relationship between the two countries through liberal, realist, and constructivist interpretations (Bansh Jha 44; Dhakal 133; Destradi 289; Mazumdar et al 79). Indeed, the literature covering this subject provides a clear and comprehensive picture of the “India Factor” in Nepal. However, what has been so far missing, is an analysis of how the democratization process of Nepal has been fostered by India through the use of language. In other words, no author has focused yet on how India has presented democracy through a discourse, aimed at concealing New Delhi’s interests in a democratic Nepal. As it will be argued in this paper, a post-structural approach to

international relations can contribute to fill in this gap. Poststructuralism is a school of thought that emerged between the 1960s and 1970s from the notions and theories formulated by De Saussure, Derrida, and Foucault, and focuses on uncovering relationships of power embedded in the use of language (Easthope 14). Under this light, democracy can be studied as a discourse, a text whose real meaning can be found in the intentions hiding behind the strategic adoption of language (Newman 141-142). The strength of post-structuralism in international relations theory does not lie only in its ability of challenging master narratives and uncovering relationships of power between two nations, but also in its capability to look into the context shaping the discourse, thus being able to trace its evolution (De Goede 60). Consequently, following a post-structural approach, the purpose of this thesis is to pinpoint and study the evolution of the democracy discourse adopted by India over Nepal's political developments, in order to show how such discourse changed over time to reflect India's different approaches to its foreign policy as well as its changing interests in a democratic Nepal.

The relevance of such a topic lies on two main tenets. Firstly, on the fact that Indo-Nepal relationship is a hot and trending topic today, especially since the adoption of the newly-drawn constitution of 2015 (Saati 30). Secondly, on the promise of a major contribution to the already-existing analysis of India's impact on the democratization of Nepal, and of its hegemonic role in South Asia. In fact, a thorough analysis of the discursive practices adopted by the Indian government in the context of Nepal would provide a poststructural perspective on the issue at hand, and would do so by uncovering hidden relationships of power between the two countries through the study of language.

This thesis will be structured as follows:

Chapter I will adopt modes of transition theory to provide a succinct history of the democratization of Nepal and of the role played by India in its unfolding, with the purpose to

identify the three main transitional phases of the Himalayan state. Chapter II will be dedicated to an analysis of the existing literature covering the bilateral relationship between India and Nepal over the democratization of the latter, and will pinpoint its contributions as well as find the gap that will be analyzed in the paper. Chapter III will lay the foundations of the theories necessary for a good understanding of this paper, thus elaborating on post-structuralism, the democracy discourse, and the contributions that these theories can bring to the study of international relations. Chapter IV will revolve around an explanation of the methodology adopted throughout the paper, and will explain what political discourse analysis consist of, and the series of sources that it will analyze. The following three chapters will analyse the democratic discourse adopted by India to enhance democratization in Nepal, thus being divided on the basis of the period taken into consideration and the approach to foreign policy endorsed by New Delhi in that period. Chapter V will study the discourse during the first transitional phase of Nepal (1951-1959), and will see how it reflects India's foreign policy under the leadership of Nehru. Chapter VI will study the discourse in the year 1990-1991, and will examine it vis-a-vis India's structural approach to foreign policy embraced between 1962 and 1991. Chapter VII will look at the democracy discourse in post-liberalization India during the last transitional phase of Nepal, the one spanning from 2005 to 2008. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the findings of this paper, and will point out its strengths as well as its shortcomings.

Chapter I. Historical Background

The democratic history of Nepal traces its origins back to the end of the Rana regime in 1950, and culminates in 2008, with the establishment of the Federal Republic of Nepal (Hachhethu et al 131). Nepal's path to democracy has been a troubled one, with royal forces and internal conflicts hindering the smooth transition process in several points in time. India, as the hegemonic power in South Asia, has played a crucial role in the democratic transition of the Himalayan state, often disregarding ideas of national sovereignty and intervening, either openly or covertly, in the affairs of its neighbour (Bansh Jha 43). If one analyses the democratic process of Nepal in terms of modes of transition theory, three non-consecutive main phases can be pinpointed as decisive to the gradual achievement of democratic rule in the country: the first one covering the decade from 1951 to 1959; the second one spanning through the years 1990-1991, and the last one starting in 2005 and ending in 2008 with the abolition of the monarchic system (Kantha 59). The narrative explaining Nepal's political history in terms of modes of transition theory is arguably the most suited to illustrate the continuous alternation between democracy and monarchy in the Himalayan state, as it not only captures the volatility of the Nepali political system, but also helps uncovering the major factors and actors that have contributed to these transitions.

Therefore, after providing a short explanation of modes of transition theory, this section aims at presenting a succinct history of democracy in Nepal, looking both at the three major transitional phases as well as at events and contexts shaping them, while simultaneously analysing India's influence in the process.

Modes of transition theory has been formulated in the 1970s to obviate the issues that emerged in the empirical analyses of democratic transitions worldwide. According to the supporters of this theory, its application allows for an understanding of democracy based on “minimal procedures rather than substantive outcomes” (Linz et al 33). By following this theory, scholars can drift away from previously-adopted approaches that search for prerequisites of democratic installation, and focus on the “strategic choices and sequential patterns” that bring about the gradual attainment of democracy (Kantha 60). In so doing, modes of transition theory emphasizes the role played by political actors and contributes to the formulation of several analytical models, distinguishable amongst them on the basis of the actors, the strategies, and the different forms of democracies they bring about (Linz et al 37-38). In the context of Nepal, such theory allows for the identification of three models, namely ‘reforms through transaction’, ‘reforms through extrication’, and ‘reforms through rupture’, which vary based on the role played by the local elites as well as by external actors, and together bring about a concise explanation of democracy in Nepal as the result of gradual transformation (Kantha 61-65).

The first democratic transition took place in the period spanning from 1951 to 1959, and saw Nepal gradually transforming from an autocratic feudal state to a constitutional monarchy (Kantha 62). In this phase, the main proponents of change were the Nepali Congress and the Indian government. In 1950, the NC took advantage of the popular discontent created by the Ranas since their ascendance to power in 1846, and gathered strength to start a military rebellion that culminated with the anti-Rana forces seizing control of most of the territories constituting eastern Nepal (Hacchethu et al 132). Indeed, whilst the NC was crucial in pressuring the Ranas to leave power, the most significant action bringing about the democratic transition in this phase was undertaken by India. In fact, following King Tribhuvan’s decision to escape to New Delhi in 1950, PM Nehru called for a diplomatic

meeting that would decide on the fate of Nepali politics, and that was joined by the Rana rulers, the NC, and the King, whilst being mediated by the Indian Prime Minister himself (Destradi 294). The decisions made in the diplomatic summit were summarized in the 'Delhi Agreement', signed by all the competing forces at the end of 1950. The accord set the foundations for a political system of governing that, as stipulated by the Interim Government of Nepal Act of 1951, was labelled 'King in Parliament', and envisaged the return of King Tribhuvan to the throne, the formation of a coalition government presided by the members of the NC and of the Rana dynasty, and the creation of a constituent assembly for the writing of a new democratic constitution (295-296). Therefore, the Delhi Agreement paved the way for the beginning of the 8-year-long first democratic transition of Nepal, a transition referred to as 'reforms through transaction' (Kantha 60). In modes of transition theory, this model entails a prolonged period of power-shifting where the opposition becomes more influential, while simultaneously still leaving some lingering power in the hands of the elite, who can still shape the political arena of the country and implement rules and reforms which are not optimal for the achievement of democracy (60-61). In fact, if, on the one hand, this first transition brought about the establishment of several democratic features, such as a multi-party system, an independent judiciary, the rule of law, and periodic free elections; on the other hand, it gave, through a series of special provisions inserted in the constitution, substantial power to the King, who could claim power in alleged states of emergency (Hachhethu et al 132-133). It was particularly the presence of the King and his supporters in parliament which hindered the smooth democratic process of Nepal in this phase. In fact, the royal forces caused the general elections to be continuously postponed, and brought about political instability concretized in 10 different appointed governments ruling the country in 8 years (133). Furthermore, the special provisions giving power to the King were the final straw which put an end to the first democratic transition of Nepal (Kantha 63). When, in

1959, the NC won the first general elections and formed a new government under B.P. Koirala, this only lasted a few weeks, as King Mahendra declared the state of emergency, and, in 1960, staged a coup which dismantled the parliament and established absolute monarchy (135-136). The royal coup marked the end of the first democratic transition of Nepal, and caused the democratic progression of the country to come to a halt for the next 30 years (Destradi 289).

The second democratic transition was of shorter length, and occurred between the years 1990-1991. In the interlude to this transition, Nepal saw the royal power consolidating, as the new constitution of 1962 set the foundations for the establishment of the Panchayat system, a system of governing which was defined as a “guided partyless democracy” (Kadhka 429). In fact, the alleged emergency of 1960 gave the King the pretext to abolish the parties and increase its influence in the political arena, as it was argued that the parties presented a threat to the independence of Nepal, and that the King only was able to guarantee stability in the country (Hachhetu et al 134-135). By 1990, a series of factors had stirred discontent amongst the Nepali population, thus eroding the legitimacy of the Panchayat regime and paving the way for the second transition. In fact, not only had the despotic regime of the King failed to cater to the needs of its population, but it also enraged India which, following King Birendra’s decision to buy weapons from China, imposed an economic blockade on Nepal and worsened its already critical situation (Bansh Jha 45-46). By adopting modes of transition theory, three main actors can this time be identified as crucial in bringing about the second transition: the political parties of Nepal, the urban class, and, once again, although in a more marginal way, the Government of India (Kantha 64). The frustration of the urban class, fostered by the intensification of the economic crisis in the late 80s, led to several scattered protests emerging – and being repressed by the royal army- throughout the country. The NC, this time backed up by the left parties of Nepal unified under the Unified Left Alliance, took

advantage of the popular discontent and called for a mass protests for the restoration of democracy (“Jan Andolan I”), joined by the urban class and several oppressed ethnic groups, which pushed King Birendra to abolish the 30-year-long Panchayat regime, restore the Parliament, call for general elections, and grant a new constitution (Hacheethu et al 134-135). This transition can be framed in terms of ‘reforms through extrication’, and culminates with the success of the first general elections of 1991 which saw the NC win and form a government. (Kantha 63) The model of ‘reforms through extrication’ entails the opposition defeating the elite, and the creation of a more solid form of democracy, but it also allows for some continuity with the old regime, which can undermine the efficiency of the democratic system (60-61) The relative strength of the new democratic system imposed through the second transition is proved by the fact that two other free and competitive parliament elections were held after 1991, one being in 1994 and the other one in 1999, which saw different parties winning and forming a government, hence meaning that Nepal passed what in democracy studies is called ‘the turnover test’¹, a “sign of solid democracy”(Hachhethu et al 134) The continuity with the old government was provided by the fact that the constitution was granted by the King, and it presented a series of provisions, such as article 127, which granted special powers to the head of state, making the King head of the Nepali army and allowing him to dismiss the parliament in unspecified cases of emergency. (135) Therefore, this second transition saw a consolidation of the democratic rule in Nepal, but it still presented a series of features which made such democratic establishment non-optimal, and brought about its end in 2005, with the occurrence of another royal coup (Kantha 65). India’s role in this phase, although still fundamental, was more marginal if compared to its intervention in the first transition. The marginality of India in this period has to be understood by looking at its foreign policy approach towards Nepal in the period spanning through the

¹ The two turnover test is a form of measurement adopted in political science to evaluate the stability of a democratic system. A country passes such test when, in general elections, the opposition wins, and the old government hands in power peacefully.

1960s-1990s (Bansh Jha 45-46). In fact, because at this time the Government of India was concerned with the threat that China presented to its northeastern frontier, and was worried about Nepal's closer ties with the communist Republic, New Delhi adopted an approach towards Nepal labelled 'Twin Pillar Policy', which saw the country limiting its tampering in the domestic affairs of the Himalayan state, and in New Delhi supporting simultaneously both the democratic forces and the King, in the hope that such refrain from intervention would cause Nepal to drift away from China (Dhabade et al 166).

The third democratic transition initiated in 2005, after King Gyanendra took power to contain the Maoist insurgency afflicting Nepal since 1996, and culminated in 2008, with the signing of the peace deal that put an end to the civil war, and the proclamation of the Republic (Kantha 66-67). This transition saw the participation of a wider range of actors, as the Seven Party Alliance, the Maoist insurgents, India, and the rural section of the population all took part in the political process putting an end to the rule of the Shah dynasty in Nepal (67). Such final changeover can be interpreted in terms of 'reforms through rupture', which envisages a radical shift of power from the elite to the opposition, a smooth and quick democratic progression, and the establishment of a sound democratic system which has strong roots (60-61). In 1996, the civil war between the state and the Maoist insurgents broke out, as the latter, dissatisfied with the scarce impact that the new democratic establishment had on social equality, attempted to proclaim a People's Republic in the country (Hachhethu et al 137). To face the Maoist threat, King Gyaendra assumed power according to the special provisions granted by the constitution, and once again put a halt to the democratic advancements achieved in the previous decade (138). In this phase, Nepal was afflicted by social and political chaos, and the different factions (the Maoists, the King, and the parties) struggled to find a compromise that would promote peace in the country. It was only in 2005, when India's diplomatic intervention contributed to finding an agreement between the Maoists and

the seven parties, that the two factions joined forces against the despotic rule of the King (Bansh Jha 46). The result of India's mediation was the '12-Point Agreement', which stipulated peace and cooperation and envisaged the entrance of the Maoists in the political arena of Nepal under the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-M) (47). The cooperation between the two competing forces set the foundations for the second movement of restoration of democracy ('Jan Andolan II') that, joined by the rural population, pushed King Gyanendra to leave power and put end to monarchy forever (Hachhethu 138). From 2006 onwards, the history of Nepal saw a quick process of transition and consolidation of democracy, and the signing of the peace deal, together with the call for new elections which proclaimed the CPN-M victorious, concluded this transition (138-139). The rupture from the old regime was quite evident, not only did Nepal become a republic, but it also underwent a secularization process that erased all traces of the old kingdom (139-140). Indeed, although the democratic transition ran smoother and faster than in the past, it was concretized only in 2015, with the new constitution officially coming into effect, and proclaiming Nepal a federal secular Republic (Muni 16).

To conclude, this section has provided a short history of the democratic history of Nepal, focusing mostly on internal changes as well as the role played by India in supporting them. The first transition (1951-1959) saw India direct intervention in the democratization of its neighbor, and its participation was concretized in the stipulation of the 'Delhi Agreement', which put an end to the Rana regime and set the foundations for the establishment of democracy. In the second transition (1990-1991), the main proponents of change were the NC and the United Left Alliance, which together cooperated to bring down the Panchayat system. In this phase, India's role was more marginal, and was limited to the imposition of an economic blockade, perceived as a security measure against the political manoeuvres of the King. Finally, in the last transition (2005-2008), through the stipulation of the '12-Point

Agreement'and the peace deal, India paved the way for the cooperation between the Maoist insurgents and the Seven Party Alliance, resulting in their joint effort to bring down monarchy in the Himalayan state forever.

The next section will look into how the gradual democratization of Nepal has been analyzed in the existing literature, and will provide a more critical perspective on the role played by India in the three transitional phases.

Chapter II. Literature Review

The literature covering the democratization process of Nepal can be divided into two main strands. The first one focuses on the internal factors fostering the democratic transition of the country, and therefore emphasizes the crucial role played by the local elite and the civil society in bringing down the monarchic system (Khan 59; Lawoti 7-18; Parajulee 13-16). The second strand, instead, turns its attention to the “India Factor”, arguing that India has been too influential in the democratic transition of its neighbour to consider Nepal’s political developments in an isolated context (Bansh Jha 44). The first group of scholarship, although indeed relevant in identifying domestic elements influencing Nepal’s political transition, will not be analyzed in this section, as its arguments go beyond the purpose of this paper, which will instead concentrate on the second strand.

The authors covering India’s foreign policy with regard to Nepal have studied the bilateral relationship between the two countries on the matter of democratization by embracing different theories adopted to understand states behavior in international politics. Amongst the theories endorsed, realist and liberal interpretations stand out, while constructivism retains minor importance in the academic analysis of the issue at hand. Therefore, this section has a double purpose. For one thing, it will analyze the literature examining India’s involvement in Nepal’s democratization, associating the authors’ opinions to the three main systemic theories of international relations. For the other, it will identify a gap in the general narratives covering the role played by India in Nepal’s attainment of democracy, a gap that this thesis will attempt to bridge through the following chapters.

In the scholarship analyzing India's impact on the three major phases of democratic transition of Nepal, realist perspectives proliferate, whilst liberal ones are limited -mostly- to the first transition phase (1951-1959), and constructivist analyses are scarce and sporadic, but fundamental inasmuch they contest the democratic ideology as homogenous and static.

Liberal interpretations, which stress the importance of international cooperation for the establishment of peace², are mostly provided by Schaffer and Schaffer, Ganguly and Pardesi, and Destradi, who demonstrate how India fostered democracy in Nepal with the stated goal of enhancing peace in the region and simultaneously facilitating the economic development of the republic in its post-independence period. However, as Destradi explains in his article published in *Democratization*, such liberal perspective contributes to framing India's participation in the first democratic transition only, and it is not pertinent in framing its foreign policy in the period following the Sino-Indian war. In *India at the Global High Table: the Quest for Regional Primacy and Strategic Autonomy*, a book illustrating the trajectories of India's foreign policy in South Asia, Schaffer and Schaffer explain how, in the 1950s, India's approach to international relations revolves around the principles of non-alignment and decolonization promotion, and state that India's intervention in the first democratic transition of Nepal can be framed in liberal terms (21). In fact, they argue, that India, traumatized by its colonial past, and scared by the evolution of the cold war and its threat for national sovereignty, was in this decade mostly concerned with "creating a peaceful environment in its backyard", and, in this context, a democratic Nepal was seen as conducive of such stability in South Asia (24-27). Besides, Destradi adds, "although India did not possess a concrete agenda of democracy promotion", it indeed believed that "democracy would entail stability and prosperity both in India and in its periphery" (289). Ganguly and Pardesi corroborate Schaffers' argument by inferring that in this phase India was focused on

² See Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics" (1159-1164).

its domestic development, and that Nehru just wanted to make sure that, with the exception of Kashmir, no conflict on its territory could hinder India's supposedly smooth path to development. The 'Treaty of Peace and Friendship' signed in 1950, Destradi continues, demonstrates India's peaceful intentions in this phase (289-290). Because the treaty envisaged an open border with consequent flow of Indian citizens and goods in Nepal and vice versa, Nehru aimed at safeguarding its people through political stability, and also at "guaranteeing the maximization of provision of public goods to its domestic audience" (290). Under this light, Schaffer and Schaffer argue, one has to understand India's preference of a democratic system over the autocracy of the Ranas (26). In fact, Destradi infers, although the Ranas proved to be a reliable ally in the short story of post-independence India - assisting the Republic in his war against Pakistan over Kashmir-, their rule did not guarantee neither political stability in their neighborhood, as the civil war between democratic forces and Rana supporters often reversed on the Indian border, nor protection of basic human rights, as citizens freedom was constantly undermined by civil unrest (290-291). Furthermore, Schaffer and Schaffer insist, India's liberal tendencies in the 1950s are demonstrated by its continuous appeals to the UN for conflict resolutions, thus validating India's sincere belief in the relevance of international institutions in the global order (Schaffer et al 31). Indeed, if, on the one hand, liberalism is effective in explaining India's support of a democratic Nepal for the creation of a peaceful environment, on the other hand, it seems to credulously assume that India did not have any personal interests, as in terms of security issues, in having a democratic Nepal in its sphere of influence. It is in the analysis of India's main interests and concerns, that realist explanations of India's foreign policy towards Nepal take over. Realist perspectives³, as the ones provided by Dabhade and Pant, Bansh Jha, and Mazumdar and Statz, analyze India's interests in a democratic Nepal from the point of view of its

³ See Waltz, *The Theory of International Politics* (66-69)

security concerns vis-a-vis China, its internal conflicts, and “its constant desire of extending its hegemony all over South Asia” (Dabhade and Pant 159). Such perspective dominates the narratives of India’s influence on democracy in Nepal from the first transition to the promulgation of the latest constitution (159-160). Both the ‘Treaty of Peace and Friendship’ and the ‘Twin Pillar policy’, according to Mazmudar and Statz, can be interpreted in terms of India’s wish to have a stable ally in South Asia and to increase its influence in its domestic affairs (91). Nayak, in his analysis of the treaty, believes that such political document should be understood in the context of India’s attempt to guarantee an alliance with Nepal which would not only guarantee its loyalty in case of war with Pakistan, but which would also allow India to directly intervene in Nepal’s domestic affairs whenever it perceives that its own security is threatened (584). Consequently, Nayak continues, the treaty must be seen as a continuation of British India’s attempt to limit Nepal’s sovereignty and increase its own influence on its political as well as economic arenas (590-591). In addition, Sigdel goes as far as stating that the “Treaty sets the foundations for India’s attempt to play in Nepal the same role that it plays in Bhutan”, where the Republic is completely in charge of Thimphu foreign policy (4-5). The ‘Twin Pillar policy’, Mazumdar and Statz believe, also proves that India does not care much about democracy as about its own security. The fact that India decides to simultaneously support the monarchy and the democratic forces proves that New Delhi just wants to guarantee itself a strategic ally, no matter what form of government is ruling it (93-94). From a realist point of view, also India’s marginal role in the second democratic transition of Nepal does not have to be understood as an acceptance of Nepal’s sovereignty, but rather as “an attempt not to further alienate the King”, which was slowly leaning towards China (Destradi 289). When the Maoist insurgency broke out in 1996, India’s realist approach to international relations became more evident. In fact, as Baral points out in his historical analysis of India-Nepal relationship, India decided to mediate the conflict not to

bring peace in Nepal, but rather because of its fear that the Maoist forces would corroborate the Naxalite insurgencies which were already thriving in its Northeastern region (819). Finally, as Destradi points out when tracing the evolution of India's democracy promotion agenda in Nepal, in the final democratic transition of its neighbor, India's democratic promotion initiatives share similar features with the one of the United States, and, he continues, this should come as no surprise given India's rapprochement with America in the post-2000 period (294). Therefore, whilst "India promotes democracy in Nepal as an escape to political instability and economic hardship", its real intentions are once more an increase in its influence in the domestic affairs of the Himalayan state, and under this light the increased development aid to Nepal must be interpreted (294-295).

Indeed, although realist claims bring forward a more pragmatic interpretation of India's intervention in the democratic transition of Nepal, they are still flawed inasmuch they analyse the concepts of democracy and sovereignty as given and static, thus failing to consider how they are shaped by the ever-changing reality of the world and how they are negotiated in the international arena (Dassbach 144). Indeed, constructivist⁴ interpretations of India-Nepal relationship contribute, at least in part, to bridge this gap. Anil Sigdel, in his article published in the *Telegraph Nepal* of 2013, examines notions of sovereignty and democracy as socially constructed, and argues that these concepts, in the history of India-Nepal relations, have been "continuously metamorphosed [...] as they are contingent upon the interaction and practices between the two states" (2). Therefore, he goes on, "when studying these concepts one has to analyze how they reflect the reality in which they have been constructed" (3). In this context, he interprets the Treaty of Peace and Friendship as a political document embodying the mutual negotiations of the two countries' sovereignty (4). Suresh Dhakal contributes to the constructivist argument by claiming that democracy cannot be analyzed as a homogenous

⁴ See Ravenhill, "Constructivism and International Relations" (66-68)

concept in Nepal, as it is “conceptualized and practiced differently in different times and places” (133). Furthermore, he continues, it is “historically and ethnographically emergent”, thus highlighting once more the changing nature of the democratic discourse, which assumes different meanings from different perspectives (134). Indeed, the constructivist approach helps examining democracy as a constructed concept which is fluid and shaped by the reality it is used in, but it fails to see how such discourse has been presented by India to Nepal in his several transitional phases.

To summarize, this section has illustrated how India’s intervention in the democratization of Nepal has been analyzed in the literature by referring to three systemic theories of international relations. Whilst liberal perspectives have showed India’s concerns with peace and the freedom of citizens, and realist points of view have complemented the analysis by looking at India’s own interests in a democratic Nepal, the constructivist approach has shed light on the constructed nature of democracy, arguing that the democratic discourse is fluid and heterogenous. Indeed, when combined, the three approaches provide a broad picture of India-Nepal relationship on the issue of democratization. However, they fail to see how the democratic discourse has been created and promoted by India in the different transitional phases. It is with the purpose to bridge this gap, that this thesis aims at introducing a post-structuralist approach to the analysis of India’s intervention. In fact, as the next section will articulate, poststructuralism, when applied to international relations, can contribute to examining democracy as a discourse constructed and spread through language, thus uncovering India’s own structural interests in a democratic Nepal.

Chapter III. Theoretical Framework:

Democracy, Democracy Discourse, Hegemony, and Post-structuralism

In political science, democracy is traditionally framed as a system of government with fixed structural characteristics aimed at empowering the citizens. Democracy emphasizes the collective participation of the citizens of a given state not only in choosing the government that better represents their interests, but also in checking its performance and, if necessary, in overthrowing it by means of free elections (Tilly 3). Citizens are invited to participate in the political arena through the formation of political and apolitical organizations, the bulk of which is enclosed in the concept of civil society, a fundamental aspect of democratic rule (4). On the theoretical level, democracy embraces the principles of participation, representation, and protection of human rights, thus endorsing the ideas of the French revolutionaries of the 18th century, whose beliefs are stated in the famous motto “égalité, fraternité et liberté” (Cunningham 28-31). On the institutional level, democracy entails the installation of a series of institutions aimed both at guaranteeing the sovereignty of the people, and at allowing citizens to pursue their own interests in a free and competitive manner (Tilly 13-14). These democratic institutions usually include a multi-party parliamentary system to guarantee representation, a constitution emphasizing the importance of human rights and their protection, and a solid rule of law intended to provide stability and the flourishing of the individual (15-16). Indeed, at least in theory, the promise of maintaining and enhancing such values explains why democracy is so appealing worldwide, and why it is reputed more representative of the people’s interests and needs. However, such system of rule is the embodiment of liberal principles which, put in Marxist terms, are the mere “superstructure”

of an economic system allocating power in the hands of a specific group, and as such it is meant to justify and make acceptable the power structure of a country (Newman 141).

In the 1970s, with the cultural turn occurring in the social sciences, democracy and its claims came to assume a different shade of meaning in academia. A newly-formed strand of scholarly work starts analyzing the concept of democracy as a discourse, thus applying Foucault's notions of power to the study of the liberal political system (Keane 7). Discourse, as explained by Foucault, entails an institutionalized way of thinking that simultaneously produces its subject. Therefore, the French scholar advocates the existence of an interrelationship between knowledge and power, where the latter shapes the former and naturalizes it by means of reiteration (Newman 141). In other words, related to the concept of intertextuality, discourse limits the creativity of writers and thinkers, as it creates the framework for everything that can be thought or said about a specific matter (143-144). By introducing the concept of discourse, Foucault points out the capillarity of power, as it imperceptibly spreads through every institution representing the state both at the public and at the private level (144). Language becomes therefore one of the main tools adopted for the creation and perpetration of discourse, and language itself becomes the primary object of analysis. In analyzing the democratic discourse, scholars focus on examining how ideas of democracy are created and presented, and the role that language plays in concealing power structures in what would otherwise seem apolitical concepts (145-147). In studying the discursive aspect of democracy, its ideological nature comes to light. Ideology, or "false consciousness" in Marx's words, is a system of beliefs and ideas used to motivate and naturalize present political and economic situations, and is created by a dominant group to support in a socially accepted way its domination over its subjects (Keane 6-7). When democracy is analyzed as an ideology, its hegemonic nature becomes evident. Hegemony, as elaborated by Antonio Gramsci, is understandable as a form of dominance established

through a combination of force and consent (Riley 9). On this note, Giuseppe Vacca, one of the most famous interpreters of Gramsci's writings, argues that there is "no hegemony without democracy", as only through democratic ideals a dominant group meets the consent of its subjects, who possess the credulous belief of being the main actors in the political system (9-11). In international relations, hegemony comes to be understood in terms of soft power, explained by Nye as "getting the others to do what you want". Unlike hard power, which emphasizes economic and military superiority, soft power aims at giving the illusion to the other of having freedom in deciding which actions to undertake, whilst concealing the domination embedded in such persuasiveness. In this sense, soft power comes to undermine the sovereignty of other countries in an imperceptible way, and tends to naturalize such imbalance by using linguistic as well as cultural tools (Keane 7).

But how can one understand, frame, and study the democracy discourse, its hegemonic practices, and its relation to power? This is where post-structuralism steps in. The post-structural school of thought emerged in the 1970s from a combination of Foucault's ideas of discourse, the linguistic theories of De Saussure, and Derrida's theory of deconstruction (Easthope 14). Whilst Foucault's theories contribute to an understanding of the association between power and text, De Saussure and Derrida's linguistic theories allow for a more in-depth linguistic analysis of the text. De Saussure's theories are at the basis of post-structuralism as he portrays, in his analysis of linguistic signs, the difference between signifier and signified, where the former represents the form, and the latter its actual content (15). Derrida's idea of "difference" further reinforces De Saussure's distinction between signifier and signified, as he argues that the signified can be understood in terms of difference between the selection of a signifier rather than another (28-29). Derrida also brings forward the idea of linguistic deconstruction, where he argues that the text has to be fragmented in order to capture its real meaning which is "postponed" throughout its different components

(31) .In deconstructing discourses and understanding how language takes part in their production, post-structuralism takes a critical stand towards what is generally accepted and recognized as truth and knowledge. In other words, post-structuralism is critical of major narratives, and entails a linguistic and rhetorical analysis of texts to search for the relationships of power embedded in them (13).

In international relations theory, post-structuralism can contribute to uncovering the power imbalance hidden in the adoption of political discourses and hegemonic narratives by a specific country (De Goede 60). By looking at language and its strategic use, post-structural theory can examine a country's creation and consolidation of power, and, by differentiating between signifier and signified, can challenge its main narratives, and see how they conceal power structures (61-62). Furthermore, because post-structuralism, building on Marxist notions of historical materialism, studies the context in which discourses are created and perpetrated, it identifies discourses as fluid and shaped by specific political, historical, and economic circumstances, thus being able to trace their evolution and transformation over time and space (Newman 148).

To conclude, this section has set the foundations for understanding the theories adopted in this paper for analyzing India's influence in the process of democratization of Nepal. By introducing post-structuralism and its belief in the construction and reproduction of power relationship through language, this chapter has shown the importance of examining the discursive nature of democracy, presented as a hegemonic narrative used to consolidate one state's power over another in the field of international relations. The next chapter will look into political discourse analysis, a necessary tool for a post-structural interpretation of India-Nepal relationship.

Chapter IV. Methodology

With the purpose of answering its research question, this paper will adopt the methodology of political discourse analysis, which will be applied to the study of primary sources. Political discourse analysis aims at uncovering reproduction of power, power abuse, and power imbalance in political texts, thus bringing together an understanding of concepts pertaining to the academic field of political science, and a post-structural analysis of language and rhetorics. (Van Dijk 253). By political texts, it is meant every source produced by political actors, referring therefore to political speeches as well as treaties and agreements. Furthermore, political messages can be found also in other forms of text which aim at creating a particular discourse over a subject, such as media (260). It is for this reason, that this thesis aims at studying the language of both political speeches and media coverage by India over the issue of democratization of Nepal. Through a qualitative analysis of such primary sources, combined with the study of secondary sources where necessary to corroborate arguments pertaining to the creation, consolidation, and perpetration of democratic discourse in the context of India's foreign policy, this thesis will answer its research question. The selection of the primary sources that will be analyzed is based on a series of set criteria, namely: such texts come from India; they are written in English; and they cover the process of democratization in Nepal. By breaking up the general discourse on democracy in Nepal into the three transitional phases illustrated in the historical background, this paper will present the creation, adoption, and transformation of the democracy discourse in three distinct periods, attempting to see how and why its form is shaped by the context of its creation and utilization. The set of questions that the application of political discourse analysis to this paper can help answering include: what is democratic discourse? How was it created? By whom? For which purpose?

Chapter V. Democracy and Peace:

Nepal's First Democratic Transition (1951-1959)

By 1950, Nepal presented a substantial base for the establishment of democracy. The Rana dynasty was at a tipping point, whilst the democratic forces, embodied in the figure of the King, the Nepali Congress, and their network of alliances, had become more popular both at home and abroad (Kantha 62). In fact, the Ranas enjoyed the support of only a very restricted strand of the population, since their establishment of a feudal system, the dismissal of royal power, and their adoption of an isolationist policy had not catered to the necessities of the Nepali population, plagued by poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment (Hachhethu 132). On the contrary, the democratic faction had strengthened in Nepal, and the NC led a three-month armed revolution which virtually put the Ranas on their knees. Furthermore, democratic ideals started to penetrate in the Himalayan state, as the Nepali civil society looked with admiration at India's democratic achievements occurring in the country since its gained independence (132-133). In this transitional phase, India's contribution was centered around a further consolidation of the NC's achievements, consolidation attained through a diplomatic mediation that led to the stipulation of the Delhi Agreement, which paved the way for the beginning of Nepal's first democratic transition (Destradi 294).

India's foreign policy in this phase, which was dominated by PM Nehru's ideas of "peaceful coexistence", revolved around the five cardinal principles expressed in the Panchsheel, which advocated non-interference in other countries' affairs and stressed the need for a peaceful neighborhood which would allow India to focus on its own domestic problems (Ganguly et al 5-6). Indeed, at this point, democracy promotion was nowhere near the top of India's foreign

policy agenda, which was concerned with a series of internal problems, such as underdevelopment and the Telangana uprising. Nevertheless, New Delhi decided to mediate Nepal's democratization (Destradi 288). As it will be argued in this section, India's decision to take part in the democratization process of its neighbor represents a political maneuver aimed at achieving India's goals in the international arena. In other words, New Delhi believed that a democratic Nepal would be conducive to the achievement of India's own interests in its foreign policy domain. Consequently, with the purpose of supporting such statement, this chapter will be divided into two parts. The first part will illustrate how the democratic discourse was created and presented in the years 1950-1959, and will consist of an analysis of the language adopted by Nehru in his political messages to Nepali high officials which were written with the purpose of fostering the democratic transition in Nepal. The second part will look at how the discourse reflects India's foreign policy, and how it conceals India's interests in this decade.

In the months preceding the demise of the Rana regime, Nehru presented democracy as a solution to political instability and civil unrest, and, in several political letters addressed to Nepali officials, advocated the need for "a peaceful compromise" that would help Nepal "progressing" (Gopal *Volume 15* 338) . In his conversation held with King Tribhuvan in New Delhi after his escape to India, Nehru argued that democracy would entail "stability and prosperity" and argued that "[the Rana government] is not in a position to function as a stable government" and that "other troubles will continue occurring" (343). Likewise, in the same year, in a letter addressed to the leader of the Nepali Congress, B.P. Koirala, the Indian PM stated the necessity of "bringing peace to Nepal", and argued that "democracy would contribute to put an end to conflict and inequality" (351)

When, in January 1951, the Delhi Agreement set the foundation for the formation of an interim government and of a constituent assembly, PM Nehru sent a congratulatory message

to the people of Nepal, expressing his excitement over the decision “of formulating a new constitution that would be more representative of the people of Nepal”, and shared its hope that “all past attempts to violent changes will cease and efforts will be directed towards peaceful cooperation and progress” (*Gopal Volume 19* 212). In the same way, he did not fail to congratulate B.P. Koirala after his party won the first general elections in 1959, stating that “one further step towards the achievement of peace has been taken today” and that “India cheerishees these political developments” (*Gopal Volume 32* 417). In another letter sent to King Mahendra a few months later, Nehru stated to be “deeply interested in the progress of Nepal, and India hopes that stable and progressive conditions will be progressively established there, as it is in the best interest of Nepal and India to create a peaceful border” (418-420). When King Mahendra staged a coup in 1960, Nehru wrote several letters to the dismissed PM Koirala, expressing his concerns over “what this would mean for India” and how the coup could “threaten the peaceful coexistence in the region” (*Gopal Volume 45* 171). Furthermore, as he wrote in a private message to India’s ambassador in Kathmandu, he feared that the coup “would cause Nepal to drift away from India”, and to get closer to other “authoritarian leaders” in the region (*Gopal Volume 46* 283).

Indeed, the most recurring words in the democratic discourse are the ones of peace, stability, progress, and prosperity. Interestingly enough, these words reflect the five cardinal principles expressed in the Panchsheel, the document shaping India’s foreign policy from its independence until 1962, and these are: respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference; equality and cooperation for mutual benefits; and peaceful co-existence (Ganguly et al 6). Therefore, the association of the democratic discourse with such words represents India’s own interests in this specific phase of its foreign policy.

The creation of a peaceful environment, as well as maintaining stability in the region, were the two main goals of India's foreign policy in this period, as New Delhi believed that peace would be conducive to its own internal development. In fact, in this phase, the government of India dedicated much of its internal funds to development spending, thus virtually neglecting its defence sector (Schaffer et al 43) . As the theory of 'democratic peace' explains, a democratic Nepal would have decreased the risk of war, as "democracies never go at war with each other", and would have allowed India to keep focusing on its internal problems (Destradi 291). Furthermore, democracy in Nepal would have contributed to the attainment of another principle of the Panchsheel, the one of non-aggression. In fact, India wanted to make sure to have another solid ally in his neighborhood that would help it contain the Pakistani threat, which since independence had been undermining India's sovereignty and stability in the northern state of Kashmir (Destradi 292). Furthermore, peace and stability in Nepal would have prevented another India's nightmare to come true: the involvement of the URSS and the US in the region. In fact, with the Cold War unfolding, Nehru was extremely concerned that an unstable Nepal could become theatre of another indirect conflict between the two superpowers, thus undermining India's dominance in South Asia, and threatening its newly-achieved independence (Schaffer et al 53). Hence, the desire for democracy in Nepal can also be interpreted as a corollary of India's non-alignment stance in international relations, which was driven by the desire of stemming the cold war and the risks it presented to the independence, freedom, and sovereignty of the countries of the global south. Finally, the demise of the Rana autocracy would have facilitated the achievement of the last principle of the Panchsheel, equality and cooperation for mutual benefit. In fact, since the establishment of an open border which envisaged a free flow of citizens and goods between the two countries, PM Nehru believed that a democratic Nepal would maximize the efficiency of such institution, and that would do so by guaranteeing the continuity of the

flow of goods and services, while simultaneously ensuring the safety of the citizens (Destradi 295-296).

The fact that India looked at Nepal as the most fundamental neighbor in the region for the achievement of peace and stability in South Asia is corroborated by the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the two countries in 1950. The language here is not very different from the one adopted by PM Nehru in the political messages aforementioned. In this treaty, India emphasized the importance that a good and peaceful relationship with Nepal could imply for the two countries, and stressed the cultural affinities as well as the historical ties between the two states that should motivate their cooperation in the present (Treaty of Peace and Friendship). India presents itself as Nepal's strongest ally which could help it achieve development and prosperity, whilst asking in return that the Himalayan state would be sensitive to its security issues and to the attainment of peace in the region (*ibidem*). Once more, India's interests expressed in the Panchsheel emerge out of this document: cooperation, peace, and stability. Here, democracy is not mentioned, as it was first signed with the Rana rulers, but it is interesting to see how India's expectations from the Ranas Nepal are the same that New Delhi hoped to secure through the establishment of democracy in the country (Nayak 581). Therefore, it could be argued, that India saw a democratic Nepal as more likely to be conducive to the achievement of its own interests, hence the creation of the democracy discourse.

To conclude, this section has provided a general picture of the democratic discourse adopted by India during the first democratic transition of Nepal. Democracy has come to be associated with the main principles of India's Panchsheel, thus entailing ideas of peace, stability and prosperity. In fact, the analysis of the discourse created through Nehru's political messages to Nepali officials to boost a democratic transition in the country, reflects India's own interests in this specific phase of its foreign policy, whose main concerns revolve around

the creation of a peaceful environment for the attainment of its internal development, and the consolidation of stability in the region which would prevent South Asia to become involved in the dangerous dynamics of the cold war. If, on the one hand, a post-structural interpretation of India's intervention corroborates the liberal perspective, which sees India emphasizing cooperation for peace; on the other hand, it challenges it, as the analysis of language brought to light the concealment of India's own structural interests over a democratic Nepal. The next section will look into how the discourse has changed during the second transitional phase of Nepal, and how this evolution reflects a change of priorities in India's foreign policy.

Chapter VI. Democracy and Security:

Nepal's Second Transition (1990-1991)

By the time of the second democratic transition, a lot of things had changed both in Nepal, and in India's approach towards it. In Nepal, if, on the one hand, the establishment of the Panchayat regime had caused a further centralization of power in the hands of the King; on the other hand, it contributed to the erosion of the popular support for the monarchy, as a series of failed economic reforms brought about the occurrence of an economic crisis characterized by high inflation and skyrocketing unemployment rate (Hachhethu et al 135-137). Meanwhile, the Nepali Congress managed to form an alliance with the United Left Alliance, which agreed to cooperate with the NC to bring down absolute monarchy in the country. The newly-sealed cooperation succeeded in gaining more popular support, particularly amongst the urban middle class, which was severely affected by the unfolding of the crisis. This collaboration resulted in the first mass movement for restoration of democracy in Kathmandu, Jan Andolan I, which pushed King Birendra to put an end to the Panchayat regime, and to re-establish the multiparty parliament (Hachhethu et al 137; Kantha 64). Indeed, whilst the joint effort of anti-royal forces was quintessential in restoring democracy in Nepal, the final straw was the imposition of an economic blockade by India in 1989. In fact, as King Birendra decided to buy weapons from China in an attempt to strengthen their bilateral ties, India decided not to renovate the Transit Treaty with Nepal, thus leaving its neighbor in the grip of a deepening economic crisis which increased the popular discontent towards the Panchayat regime and its policies, and eventually led to the civil uprising (Hacheethu et al 137).

The imposition of an economic blockade perfectly shows the shift in India's foreign policy in the period following the Sino-Indian conflict and the death of PM Nehru. In fact, in the phase spanning from Indira Gandhi's election in 1966 to the economic liberalization occurring at the end of 1991, New Delhi pursued a more assertive approach to its foreign policy, which came to be labelled 'Indira Doctrine' (Wagner 9). The embracement of this doctrine marked the passage from Nehru's liberal ideas and its faith in non-alignment to a more structural approach to foreign policy, characterized by the adoption of hard power for the achievement of India's own interests, particularly so in its backyard (9-10). Whilst 'The Indira Doctrine' envisaged the principles of non-intervention and security enhancement, such approach to foreign policy was accompanied, in the context of Nepal, by the adoption of the 'Twin Pillar Policy', which dominated the Indo-Nepal relationship for roughly 30 years (Mazumdar et al 93). This policy entailed a simultaneous support both for monarchy and democracy in Nepal, and was devised with the purpose of restoring the special relationship with its neighbour that had cooled since India's excessive interference in the first democratic transition and the King's consequent decision to forge closer ties with China(93-94). In fact, by means of not taking a too radical stance towards neither the King nor the party, the Twin Pillar policy aimed at gradually bringing Nepal back into India's sphere of influence, and such approach was deemed ideal to deal with the continuous interplay of royal and democratic forces in the political arena of the Himalayan state.

By providing an analysis of a series of articles written in the years 1989-1991 and published in *India Today* and the *Indian Express*, this section aims at showing how the democracy discourse evolved during the second democratic transition of Nepal, and how such evolution - expressed through language- is reflective of India's changing approach and objectives in the international arena. Because the adoption of the discourse mirrors the duality of India's foreign policy stance towards Nepal, this chapter will argue that such discourse in this phase

is composed of two aspects. On the one hand, it embodies the ideas of the Twin Pillar policy and provides a moderate narrative of the democratic transition of Nepal which includes the figure of the King in the process; on the other hand, it epitomizes the principles of the Indira Doctrine, and therefore stresses India's objective of security enhancement and its attempt of stemming the influence of external powers in South Asia.

The first aspect of the discourse portrayed by Indian media in this period creates an idea of democracy which sees the figure and role of the King as a necessary component for its consolidation, and emphasizes the importance of cooperation between King Birendra and the democratic parties for the attainment of long-lasting stability and security. In an article written for the *Indian Express* in 1990, when the movement for restoration of democracy pushed the King to abolish the Panchayat system, Suri wrote that "democracy guarantees peace, stability, and security" and added that this could not be obtained without "the full cooperation of his Majesty [the King]" ("Security Pact"). Likewise, in another article written for *India Today*, Uttam Sengupta praised the achievements of the democratic parties stating that "the winds of democracy have won a dramatic victory in Nepal [...] but it remains to be seen whether King Birendra can ensure its survival" ("King Birendra Gives in to Demands"). Even in another article published in *India Today* after the free elections of 1991 and including an interview with the newly-elected PM K.P. Bhattarai, the role of the King is described as "fundamental", and is stated that "the King is fully cooperative" and that such cooperation is necessary "to create a safe environment" particularly so in rural areas, where "it will take time to understand democracy" ("The King is Cooperative"). The language adopted in this first aspect of the discourse perfectly reflects India's behaviour towards Nepal since the endorsement of the 'Twin Pillar Policy'. The selection of references to the articles illustrates how, in this phase, India hesitated to take an assertive stance towards the

democratization of Nepal, and rather created a discourse that included both the King and the parties in the attainment of democracy, in the hope not to alienate the King and not to further push him towards China. India's moderate stance towards the second democratic transition of the Himalayan state has to be understood in terms of a lesson that New Delhi learnt from its excessive interference in the first democratic process of Nepal, which drove the royal elite into the arms of China.(Dabhade et al 162). In fact, the strengthening of the Sino-Nepal bilateral relationship in the 1960s ended up increasing New Delhi's concern over China's growing influence in South Asia, and led India to pursue a less radical approach towards the King, in the hope to tame his anti-India political maneuvers (162-163). The lack of an assertive stance towards the King was evident when, at everyone's surprise, India was one of the few countries not to have condemned the Palace's decision to use violence to suppress the civil protests preceding Jan Andolan I (Hacheethu et al 138). In fact, Because New Delhi aimed at restoring its special relationship with its neighbour, it wanted to guarantee its loyalty regardless of which form of government was ruling it (Mazumdar et al 92).Therefore, the adoption of a democracy discourse which does not harshly criticize the King, but rather includes him in the process of democratization, whilst simultaneously praising the parties and their achievements, is a reflection of India's twin pillar policy towards Nepal, aimed at securing itself an ally and simultaneously containing the Chinese threat without recurring to hard power.

Nevertheless, this aspect of the discourse must be read in the bigger framework of India's Indira Doctrine, which aimed at regional domination, and therefore coexists with a second aspect which emphasizes India's principal concern in this phase: security.

In the aforementioned article written by Uttam Sengupta for *India Today*, in which the unfolding on the civil uprising is described, the author stated that "democracy will provide a soothing promise of security" but added that "excitement is mixed with anxiety over an

uncertain future” (“King Birendra Gives in to Demands”). In the other article by Suri for the *Indian Express*, the journalist even advocated “the necessity of a security pact” between the two countries, which “democracy [in Nepal] is more likely to secure” (“Security Pact”). Ideas of security are also prominent in Ramindar Singh article for *India Today* covering the imposition of the economic blockade in 1989. The economic blockade was here described “as a necessary response to a security threat, [...] as Nepal continuously played the China card”. Singh also pointed out how Nepal’s decision to strengthen its relationship with China has caused India to “stand at attention”, and that “if Nepal does not want to maintain goodwill and trust, then it will be treated as any other country” (“Barricades Go up”). Security concerns are also expressed in Menon Ramesh article explaining the political situation of Nepal on the eve of the first general elections of 1991. In fact, he wrote, “ 40 parties are jostling on the political stage” and went on stating that some of them, mostly referring to the CPN (UML), “have a clear anti-India and pro-China agenda” and that their victory would entail “further security threats” for New Delhi (“Date with Destiny”).

This second aspect of the discourse tends to associate democracy with security, and is therefore a reflection of the Indira Doctrine and its prioritization of maintaining and enhancing security not only in India, but also in its area of influence (Wagner 9). The shift in India’s foreign policy was the result of the 1962 disastrous defeat at the hands of China, which brought about a major change in New Delhi’s vision of the world order, where Nehru’s liberal approach was not sufficient anymore for the achievement of India’s changed objectives in this period: the consolidation of its dominant position in South Asia, with the consequent marginalization of external competitors, and the enhancement of security vis-à-vis perceived threats (Ganguly et al 8). Therefore, this aspect of the discourse did not only allow India to achieve its interests, but it also created a pretext for India’s adoption of hard power in circumstances where threats to security were perceived, thus motivating the

imposition of the economic blockade (8-9). Furthermore, a discourse presenting democracy as a security measure, creates a binary opposition between democracy and authoritarianism, where the former is embodied by India and the latter by China. (Mazumdar et al 93).

To conclude, this section has shown how, in the second democratic transition of Nepal, New Delhi adopted a democracy discourse which mirrors its double stance to foreign policy, both towards Nepal, and towards the international order. For one thing, such discourse presents a form of democracy that entailed the cooperation of the King and the parties, thus resulting in the support for constitutional monarchy. For another thing, it stressed ideas of security, particularly vis-a-vis China and its expansionist policy endorsed since the 1960s, and provided India with a framework for intervention in perceived cases of threats. Consequently, discourse analysis of media coverage has corroborated realist interpretations of India's intervention in this democratic phase, as it has been proven that India's actions have been influenced by its structural interests. Nevertheless, the post-structural approach has shown how in this phase India did not only recur to hard power, but also to soft power, whose adoption is embodied in the endorsement of the democracy discourse.

Chapter VII. Democracy and Development:
Nepal's Third Democratic Transition (2005-2008)

In 2006, the protest carried on by millions of Nepalis overcrowding the cities, and demanding the dismissal of the King, marked the beginning of the third and final democratic transition of Nepal, which officially culminated in 2008, with the proclamation of the republic (Kantha 66-67). Jan Andolan II was the result of the India-mediated cooperation between the Maoist insurgents and the Seven Party Alliance, whose lack of agreement in the previous decade caused the emergence of a civil war which tormented the country for 10 years (Hacheethu et al 137). In fact, in 1996, dissatisfied with the new democratic establishment and its inability to address the problems of inequality and corruption afflicting Nepal, the Maoist forces launched a war against the state, that was aimed at the establishment of the People's Republic and concretized in a series of attacks targeting the state's institutions all over the country. It was with the stated goal of putting an end to the civil war, that, in 2005, King Gyanendra declared the state of emergency and staged a royal coup which halted once more the democratic progression of Nepal (138). However, this time, the political developments of the Himalayan state had attracted the attention of several international actors which, concerned with the threat that the civil war posed to the whole security of South Asia, and preoccupied with the appalling level of underdevelopment and human rights protection in the country, assumed a more radical stance towards the King, and frowned upon its coup, pushing for the re-establishment of a multi-party democracy. The emergence of the civil conflict awoken the interest not only of the UN, but also of the United States, which in the 2000s was extremely concerned with the growing threat that terrorism

presented to the world order, and consequently became more involved in the political developments of the country (Destradi 287). India itself, which since the mid-1990s had entered another phase of its foreign policy, openly criticized the royal coup, and directly intervened in contentious politics of Nepal (288). In fact, not only did New Delhi stop the flow of military aid sent to its neighbor to tackle the Maoist insurgents, but also intervened in the stipulation of a treaty which sealed the cooperation of Maoists and parties for the overthrow of the King, the 12 point Agreement, and brokered a peace deal that, in 2006, led to Jan Andolan II (Hacheethu et al 138).

New Delhi's open support for democracy in this phase does not have to be understood in terms of a change in its attitude towards democracy promotion in Asia, but rather as a radical change in its foreign policy which occurred since the mid-1990s (Ganguly et al 13-14). In fact, following the series of reforms envisaged and implemented by Manmohan Singh, India's Finance Minister, at the end of 1991, India liberalized its economy, and initiated a series of projects aimed at increasing its economic and political cooperation with the rest of the world, particularly with the United States(14). In the foreign policy realm, the liberalization of the economy brought about the endorsement of the Gujral doctrine, which entailed the principle of "non-reciprocity", meaning that India not only had a bigger responsibility towards the smaller countries in South Asia, but also that it should assist them by "giving more than it would receive" (Wagner 12). The promised assistance to India's neighboring countries concretized in the creation of a series of developmental projects, which transformed New Delhi into "the biggest donor of South Asia" (13). But how was this change in India's foreign policy reflected in its adoption of a democracy discourse? The purpose of this section is, by providing an analysis of relevant political speeches as well as newspapers articles, to frame the democracy discourse adopted by India in the final

transitional phase of Nepal, and to show how it is used to conceal New Delhi's changed interests both in Nepal and in the international arena.

In September 2008, in his famous speech given in Kathmandu in front of the members of the newly-formed government of Nepal, the Indian foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee praised the establishment of the republic, and stated that "the democratic transition in Nepal has passed several key milestone" and added that "against all odds [...] the ongoing transition has come a long way" (Mukherjee) . He also went on stating the new priority of India-Nepal relationship: development. "It is important to note here that lasting democracy and true development are intrinsically interlinked [...] as one cannot exist without the other", and concluded "Nepal's political stability and economic growth are in India's best interest, [...]" and i am convinced that the peace process will entail stability and development for Nepal" ("Partners in Democracy and Development"). Indeed, Mukherjee was not the only one in this period to stress the link between democracy and development, and such association became the milestone of the democracy discourse adopted in this phase. In another political speech given in the same year by Nitish Kumar covering the restored special relationship between India and Nepal, the chief minister of Bihar, after summarizing the cultural and historical ties that the two countries share, stated: "as a close friend and neighbour [...], India remains committed to supporting the people of Nepal in their pursuit of achieving economic growth and development", and concluded by inferring that "development can be the solution to many problems, [...] from civil unrest to endemic poverty" ("Emerging Trends in India-Nepal Relationship"). The interrelationship between democracy and development was also corroborated by the Indian media. T.V. Rajeswar, in an article published in *The Tribune* in 2002, after the King's dismissal of the newly elected PM Deuba, described the civil war and the effects that it had on Nepal, and stated that "the Maoist insurgency is a threat that will not end by merely resolving the constitutional crisis" and concluded by saying that

underdevelopment is behind the civil war and that “only a series of well-targeted developmental plans can obviate [the issue]” (“Constitutional Crisis in Nepal”). Likewise, another article published in *The Hindu*, harshly criticized the royal coup of 2005, defining it as “authoritarian and dangerous” and denounced the several infractions committed by the King in his ascent to power, ranging from “disrespect for human rights” to “lack of interest in the development of its people” (“King dismisses Government”). The newly-adopted discourse also left room for the agency of other states, and particularly sealed the beginning of the cooperation between India and the United States. In a set of articles published in *The Times of India* between 2005 and 2006, the authors stressed the newly-forged alliance of India and the US and inferred that “The US and India share the common goal of restoring democracy in Nepal and curbing the Maoist insurgency”, and that “the US urged the King to move quickly” to restore democracy (“US Rejects King”). Likewise, in another article including several interviews with American officials, *The Times of India* emphasized the role that New Delhi could play in the attainment of development in the region, and, quoting David Camp, a senior US official, wrote “India [in Nepal] plays an absolutely critical role [...] the US is far away, India is right next door , [...] and it has most to lose if things go wrong” (“US India to Restore Peace”).

As the quotes point out, in this phase India adopted a democracy discourse which entailed ideas of development. Arguably, the construction and adoption of such discourse is not only reflective of India’s changed stance in its foreign policy, but it also contributed to the achievement of India’s structural interests in this phase, such as strengthening its bilateral relationship with the US, stemming the Maoist insurgency from spreading to its territory, and providing stability for the implementation of projects aimed at securing its economic growth. By presenting democracy through a discourse entailing development, New Delhi managed to corroborate its hegemony over Nepal by means of soft power. In fact, if, in the past, the series

of episodes involving India's direct intervention and use of hard power had provided the component of force to the formation of hegemony, the promise of development aimed at enhancing the welfare of the people have complemented it with consensus (Riley 9). By promising the double package of democracy-development, India has followed in this decade the path of the US, and created a discourse that portrays it as the benign superpower, with the skills and will to enhance the development of the region (Wagner 12). The creation of a hegemonic discourse by means of soft power is indeed reflective of the Gujral doctrine where, by proposing itself as bringer of development and peace, India attempts to validate its increasing intervention in the domestic affairs of its neighbors (13). The adoption of this discourse also consolidated the newly-formed relationship with the US. India presented itself as a valid ally of America in its fight against terrorism and authoritarianism, and it did so in the hope to obtain a bigger share of power in the international arena. In fact, because in this phase New Delhi aimed at becoming more influential in the international high table, it believed that a closer cooperation with the US would help it achieve its goal. India's involvement -starting from the 2000s- in several multilateral international initiatives for democracy and development promoted by the United States has to be understood under this light (Destradi 287).

Furthermore, by intervening in the democratization of Nepal with the stated goal of enhancing its development, India also addressed the Maoist insurgency. New Delhi justified the rise of such allegedly terrorist groups as a consequence of underdevelopment, and therefore proposed development as a solution to their problems (Bansh Jha 51). Arguably, India was not really concerned with the Maoist threat in Nepal as much as it was about the links it had with the Naxalite groups operating within its borders. In fact, the 2000s saw the emergence of naxalite groups all over the country, and particularly in the northeast, which, by ideology and stated goals, presented affinities and links with the Nepali Maoists (Chitralkha

42). Consequently, by mediating the peace deal between Maoists and the Nepali parties through a democracy discourse entailing development, India also hoped to contain the domestic threat that had been challenging its sovereignty in its peripheral regions (Chitrlekha 42-43; Hachheetu et al 138).

In addition, the adoption of such discourse also allowed India to increase its economic influence in Nepal. By promoting development and providing funds aimed at enhancing economic growth, India hoped to create a stable and peaceful environment in Nepal which would be able to increase India's economic influence in it, and which would have enhanced India's own economic advantages according to the economic theory of comparative advantage (Wagner 16-17). Besides, Nepal's position was crucial for the consolidation of India's trade with its eastern neighbors, as most of its goods and services passed through the Himalayan state's transit areas, and a series of violent episodes in the past had hindered their smooth passage, and affected negatively India's trade (17-18).

To conclude, a post-structural approach to the study of India's intervention in Nepal's final democratic transition has shown how the democracy discourse adopted by New Delhi has changed in this phase, and how such changes are reflective of India's new approach to its foreign policy, characterized by the Gujral doctrine. Discourse analysis has illustrated how the creation of a democracy discourse which entails ideas of development has been used by India to conceal the achievement of its structural interests, such as the corroboration of its alliance with the US, the containment of the Maoist threat, and the consolidation of its economic ties with Nepal and Asia. Such approach has shown that, although India still did not endorse a democracy promotion agenda, it supported a democratic installment in the country as believed to be conducive to the achievement of its goals, thus corroborating once more the realist interpretation of India's intervention in Nepal.

Conclusion

To conclude, through political discourse analysis, this paper has provided a post-structural interpretation of India's intervention in the democratic transition of Nepal. By analyzing a set of primary sources, ranging from political speeches to media coverage, this thesis has demonstrated how, in spite of not possessing a clear democracy promotion agenda, India has encouraged the democratization of its neighbor through a discourse which, being historically contingent, changed over time to reflect India's different approaches to its foreign policy and to conceal its structural interests in a democratic Nepal. The findings are summarized in the table below.

Nepal's Democratization		India's Foreign Policy	
Phase	Type of transition	Approach	Discourse
1950 - 1959 1st transition	"Reforms through Transaction"	The Panchsheel (1947-1962)	Democracy as Peace
1990 - 1991 2nd transition	"Reforms through Extrication"	Indira Doctrine / Twin Pillar Policy (1966-1991)	Democracy as Security
2005-2008 3rd transition	"Reforms through Transformation"	Gujral Doctrine (1991- present)	Democracy as Development

As the table illustrates, the first democratic transition of Nepal spanned through the years 1951-1959, and saw the King, the Nepali Congress, and India cooperating for overthrowing

the Rana regime and establishing a democratic government. In this transitional phase, as this paper has shown through an analysis of PM Nehru's political messages to Nepali high officials, India has, through language, created a discourse which associates democracy with peace. The adoption of such discourse, it has been argued, is not only reflective of India's foreign policy in this phase, which was dictated by the 5 principles of the Panchsheel, but also conceals India's structural interests in a democratic Nepal. Firstly, as the theory of democratic peace explains, a democratic Nepal would have contributed to the creation of a peaceful environment in South Asia, which would have in turn allowed India to focus on its own development; secondly, democracy in the Himalayan state would have prevented the country from becoming involved in the dynamics of the Cold War, which could have challenged India's domination in the region and threatened its newly-achieved independence. In the second democratic phase of Nepal (1990-1991), which sees the NC working together with the left parties and the urban section of the population to put an end to the authoritarianism of the Panchayat system, India's intervention has been more marginal. Nevertheless, this thesis has shown how, although not directly intervening in the democratization process, India has fostered democracy through a discourse which, mostly created through newspapers, emphasized security and was, in turn, reflective of India's changed stance to foreign policy, at this time characterized by the Indira Doctrine and the Twin Pillar policy. In fact, by associating democracy to security, New Delhi has been able to achieve its goals in the international arena, this time revolving around its attempt to contain the Chinese threat and its growing influence in Nepal and South Asia. In this phase, this aspect of the discourse has been juxtaposed to another one, which aimed at including the King in the democratization process, as an attempt to tame its recent political maneuvers which leaned towards China and drifted away from India.

In the final transition, occurred between the years 2005 -2008, and bringing about the permanent demise of the Shah dynasty and the establishment of the republic, the analysis of a set of political speeches and newspapers articles has shown that the democracy discourse changed again. This time, shaped by the Gujral doctrine and its principle of non-reciprocity, India has promoted democracy through development jargon, and has done so in the attempt to consolidate its hegemony over the Himalayan state. By associating democracy to development, in this phase India has not only managed to strengthen its grip on Nepal, now completely dependent on India for developmental funds, but has also corroborated its newly-formed relationship with the United States. Besides, the association of development and democracy has allowed India to tackle the Maoist insurgency, spreading through its borders and forging closer ties with Indian Naxalite groups, whilst simultaneously providing the foundations for a stable environment which would allow India to increase its trade with the rest of East Asia, for which Nepal was seen as a getaway.

Arguably, the contributions of this thesis are manifold. By building up on the existing literature covering India's influence in Nepal, and combining it with the insights provided by post-structuralism, this thesis has not only corroborated realist interpretations of India's intervention, but has also shed light on the capillarity of power, pointing out how language became a major tool adopted by India for the achievement of its own interests in Nepal. If, on the one hand, this paper has paved the way for further studies of India's construction of hegemony through language; on the other hand, it presents a major shortcoming. In fact, one of the main deficiencies of discourse analysis is its inability to illustrate the way a discourse is perceived by the audience it is targeted for. In other words, what this paper fails to provide is an understanding of how the democracy discourse created by India was perceived by Nepal, and to what extent it affected its transition and political developments. The Himalayan state has in fact been analyzed throughout this paper as a mere passive receiver of the

discourse, and little attention has been paid to its agency throughout the democratic process, and to its response to India's constant interventions in its affairs. This shortcoming could be easily obviated through an analysis of the Nepali perceptions on India's role throughout its democratization, obtainable either through interviews or through an analysis of the discourse created by Nepali political texts on India's intervention. Furthermore, future researchers could corroborate the argument of this thesis by analyzing it from different angles. For example, one could look at differences between English and Hindi sources, to see to what extent the language adopted influences the discourse. Likewise, this study of India's intervention in Nepal could be strengthened by comparing it to an analysis of New Delhi's intervention in the democratic transition of other countries in South Asia –such as Myanmar and Pakistan- with the purpose of uncovering general patterns and trends in the adoption of language for the creation of hegemony.

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