

THE LANDSCAPE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES JOURNALS PUBLISHED FROM NEPAL: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

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Introduction

As is the case elsewhere, practitioners of social science and humanities research in Nepal have created and published their own written media to communicate their findings and analyses to their academic peers, students and the interested public at large. These media have come in the form of academic articles published in journals, as stand-alone papers or chapters in edited volumes, and as full-length monographs.¹ Such forms of communication are crucial to the progress of any disciplined inquiry in the social sciences and humanities. In European history, prototypes of such journals (with the word 'journal' in the title) had been brought into existence by the late 17th century. During the first half of the 19th century, several journals focused on specific domains of research were founded. Some of the influential journals that are still being published were established in the mid- and late-19th century by various individuals (Steig 1986). In contrast, Nepal had to wait until 1952 to see its first academic journal. This is not surprising given the intolerance of the Rana regime (1846–1951) to most forms of social inquiry.²

That said, we might still want to ask: 'What is an academic journal?' Perhaps a broad definition would serve our purpose here: publications described as journals by its academic editors and producers (and this can be any person, group or institution) that appear in a series that can be numbered by volume (1, 2, 3, etc.) or volume and issue combination (such as volume 1 no 1, volume 1 no 2, etc.) can be called journals.

¹ Academics also communicate their analyses and findings to their peers and the public via popular media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the internet. How that is being done in Nepal would make for a fascinating study. To my knowledge, such a study has not been done thus far.

² This is not to argue for making the Nepal case an exception. Social science journals were founded in most parts of the world only after World War II (for the case of Africa, see Adebawale 2001) and even in the Euro-American world, their numbers started to grow significantly only after 1950 (Horowitz 1991: 222-223). This point was emphasized by Chaitanya Mishra in his comments on an earlier version of this article.

Journals typically carry several academic analyses by different individuals, each of which is usually of article-length. There is no standard format for how long an article ought to be but on average journals publish articles that are anywhere from 2,000 to 10,000 words long. On exceptional occasions, they also publish articles longer than 10,000 words. Apart from main articles, journals also carry review articles, commentaries, book reviews and bibliographies. The contributors could be individuals who are not involved in the editorial management of the concerned publications, but those with editorial responsibilities also publish in journals under their care. We can use a more restrictive definition but that will delimit the field of our inquiry needlessly.

In the almost 60 years that have passed since the publication of the first academic journal edited in Nepal, many other journals – some 125 plus in number as discussed below – have been published.³ These have been editorially prepared by academics based at the colleges and universities of Nepal as well as by researchers located in government and semi-government bodies, not-for-profit organizations and private institutions. Some of these journals only publish articles written from within a specific discipline (e.g., history, geography, etc.) whereas others are multidisciplinary as far as the content they publish are concerned. Some journals that were founded in the 1960s are still being published today whereas others that came into existence after the turn of the century have already folded.

Given that the collective corpus of the content of all social science and humanities journals published from Nepal over the last 60 years is not insignificant, it comes as somewhat of a surprise that no systematic inquiry has been made into the social lives of these journals which comprise a special published genre of scholarly media. Some previous reviews of specific disciplines in Nepal or articles discussing the state of research have, almost in passing, mentioned the titles of some journals or done brief analyses of journal contents. Examples of such work would include Adhikari (2010) for geography, Hachhethu (2004) for political

³ Several journals related to various natural science disciplines, business, management, law, public administration, etc. have also been published from Nepal. About 30 such journals are listed in the Nepal Journal Online (NepJOL) Portal (www.nepjol.info/) where one can also access the full text of some of their articles. These journals are outside of the remit of this article in which I am only concerned with social science and humanities journals. With respect to publications in the humanities, I have *not* included those journals which are mainly forums for creative writing.

science, Mishra (2005) for sociology and anthropology, Onta (2003a) for history and Hachhethu (2002) and Dahal (2009) for the social sciences in general. These studies looked at journals not so much to inquire about the publications themselves but to find evidence on which arguments regarding the state of the various concerned disciplines or the social sciences and the humanities in general in Nepal could be made. More sustained reflections on specific journals have been executed in the case of *The Himalayan Review*, a journal established by geographers in 1968 that is still in publication, first by late Harka Gurung (1980) and more recently by Bhim P. Subedi and Padma C. Poudel (2002). Similar reflections based on the experiences of editing *Miḍiyā Adhyayan* have been recently written up by one of its editors (Humagain forthcoming). Also some discussion related to *Studies in Nepali History and Society* can be found in the editorials that have been published in the journal itself (e.g., Des Chene and Onta 1999) and in the conversation between Onta and Harper (2005).

Since there has been no comprehensive research on Nepali journals as mentioned above, this article first tries to establish some basic knowledge of this field. Its aim is a modest one. In the following section, I provide an account of some of the basic *structural* characteristics of the landscape of Nepali journals by focusing on a few parameters: journal titles, institutional and physical sites of their production, their disciplinary focus, circulation and the languages in which contents are published. In the second section that follows, I argue that a combination of factors were responsible for the almost explosive growth of journals that we have witnessed since 1990 and discuss those factors briefly. In the following section, I identify some journals that are no longer in print and discuss some factors that influence the longevity and continuity of journals in Nepal. Since the orientation of this article is to provide an overview, many sub-themes touched upon here deserve a fuller treatment in subsequent analyses. I must also say that readers with a liking for historical sociology will find this paper deficient on both counts of theory and comparison. However, brief comparative notes are provided when possible and I certainly hope that historically informed sociological studies of Nepali journals will be made possible in part by the information and analysis presented here.⁴ In addition, in this article I do not address

⁴ There are some similarities between the analytical approach pursued in this article and those found in Gopinathan (1992), Gopinathan and Clammer

the many facets of journal content production and consumption in Nepal. The practices related to peer evaluation or quality control (or lack thereof) of articles, editorial engagement with the text of accepted articles, journal reading habits of Nepali researchers and the variety of readings of journal texts made by variously situated academics, etc. are some of the more important aspects of content production and consumption that will have to be addressed in a future article.

What I have to say here is based on personal experience and research. Over the last fifteen years, I have worked in the editorial teams of two journals published from Kathmandu: *Studies in Nepali History and Society (SINHAS)*, established in 1996, and published by Mandala Book Point and *Miḍiyā Adhyayan (Media Studies)*, established in 2006, and published by Martin Chautari (MC). Doing this work has taught me a lot about the social lives of journals in Nepal. With respect to research that I have done on this theme, there are two parts to it. First, while trying to enhance the collection of social science and humanities journals published from Nepal in the MC Library in Kathmandu, I have been involved in the identification and procurement of such journals for most of the past decade. Much of this work has been carried out in collaboration with several of my MC colleagues. Second, as part of my long-standing interest in the national and international institutional structures of scholarship on Nepal (see Onta 2001, 2003a, 2004, 2005, 2009), I have recently done research on the nature of scholarly communication in Nepal through the media of academic journals.⁵ For this latter work, I have thus far assumed the subject-position of a researcher who is mostly a reader of journal contents. While I have communicated with journal editors seeking information that I have used in my analysis here (as should be evident from the text and footnotes of this article), I am yet to reach a stage in my research where I would want to actively interview editors, contributors and publishers to know more fully about their work-world experiences, namely, the motivation, frustration and rewards they have experienced in connection with journal editing and production work. I intend to do that research later.

(1986), and Tiew (1999), all of which I discovered and read after the first draft of this article was completed.

⁵ See also Onta (2010) for a bibliography of academic reflections on the state of various social science disciplines in Nepal.

The Landscape of Journals

Since this article is a first step towards an understanding of the full landscape of Nepali scholarly journals, I shall first be concerned with their historical chronology arranged by the year of their establishment. Subsequently I will discuss the institutional and physical geography of their editorial/publisher locations and identify the disciplinary orientation of some journals. I shall also discuss the languages in which their contents are being published and their circulation status.

Numbers

We don't know exactly just how many social science and humanities journals have been published from Nepal to this date. To my knowledge *Nepāl Saṃskritik Pariṣad Patrikā* published in spring 1952 (Baisakh 2009 v.s.) is the first academic journal to be published from within Nepal.⁶ In the almost 60 years since then, it would be safe to say that more than 125 such journals have been published. At the current status of my knowledge, I have been able to trace the names and verify the year of establishment of the journals as shown in Table I. Out of these, three journals were established during the 1950s; six during the 1960s; seventeen during the 1970s; fourteen during the 1980s; 27 during the 1990s; and 62 since the year 2000. These make for a total of 129 journals.⁷

Some observations on this historical chronology can be made to further enhance our understanding of the landscape of Nepali journals. The very first journal, established in 1952, *Nepāl Saṃskritik Pariṣad Patrikā*,⁸ was the publication of an organization named Nepal Samskritik

⁶ I have not counted *Nepāl Śikṣā*, established in the fall of 1948 (the first issue is dated 15 Aswin 2005 v.s.) as a monthly magazine of the Education Department of the Rana regime in its dying phase, as a journal. It does not contain researched articles.

⁷ I have not been able to verify the year of establishment for a few journals. Hence there might be some variation in these figures eventually with respect to the decadal classification used here. While I am confident that all journals that have been in existence for a significant number of years are listed here, I am also certain that I have missed listing some which might have existed for short durations. Guidance from knowledgeable readers to make this list more complete will be much appreciated.

⁸ The word *Patrikā* in this title clearly shows the influence of the periodical *Nepālī Sāhitya Sammelan Patrikā* (est. 1932) published by the organization Nepali Sahitya Sammelan (est. 1924) based in Darjeeling, India. I am grateful to Ramesh Parajuli for drawing my attention to this influence and to Kamal

Parisad. The latter was founded in 1951 by some of the then most influential writers, researchers and politicians and its main objective, as mentioned in its constitution was “the overall development of Nepali culture and to do research on ancient past subjects” (NSP 2052: 65).⁹ The journal was edited by the polymath Isvar Baral and the first issue contained articles by him (on the Tharu and their culture), the historian Baburam Acharya (on ‘Nepal, Newar and Newari language’), and several other contributors.¹⁰ The second journal, *Education Quarterly* was founded in 1957 by the College of Education whose mandate was to train educators in Nepal. In its premier issue, its editor, Krishna Raj Aryal described the publication as a magazine and asserted:

This magazine stands for help, enlightenment, guidance and direction towards new education and a better education. We hope to present articles of interest to both educators and laymen, which will stimulate thinking and discussion on our critical problems of education. In this way, this magazine may contribute its small bit to advancing the goals of modern education, thus democracy, and thus our country (K.R.A. 2057: 3).

Although *Education Quarterly* described itself as a magazine, it warrants to be called a journal because it did publish researched articles and commentaries and eventually bibliographies and footnotes also began to appear as part of the articles it printed.¹¹ The third journal, *Nepāli*, was published from a literary foundation, Madan Puraskar Guthi, from 1959.¹²

Dixit for confirming it. The Nepali word *patrikā* generically refers to all types of publications which in English we would today separately call newspapers, magazines and journals.

⁹ Persons involved in the Parisad included the likes of B.P. Koirala, Balkrishna Sama, Keshar Bahadur K.C., Yadunath Khanal, Keshar Shumsher JB Rana, Isvar Baral, Hemraj Sharma, Baburam Acharya, Leknath Paudyal, Laxmiprasad Devkota, Dharmaditya Dharmacharya, Chittadhar ‘Hridaya,’ Siddhicharan Shrestha, Dharanidhar Sharma and Suryabikram Gewali.

¹⁰ Isvar Baral is primarily known in the Nepali speaking world as one of the founders of the field of Nepali literary criticism. That was his pen name. Under his formal name L.S. Baral, he did a PhD in history from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London in 1964. During the 1960s and 1970s, he wrote a series of articles on Panchayat era politics in Nepal while teaching at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi.

¹¹ For instance, readers can find bibliographies in some articles published in volume 11 no 1 (June 1967) issue and endnotes in volume 16 no 1 (January 1973) issue.

¹² Although *Nepāli* is a periodical mostly devoted to matters related to the world of Nepali literature, I have included it here as a journal because it has *also*

Table I: Social Science and Humanities Journals Published from Nepal
(by year established)

<p>1950s</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Nepāl Saṃskritik Pariṣad Patrikā (Baisakh 2009 v.s. = 1952)¹³2. Education Quarterly (1957)3. Nepālī (Kartik 2016 v.s. = 1959) <p>1960s</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Pūrṇimā (1964)2. Tribhuvan University Journal (1964; initially Journal of Tribhuvan University)3. Civil Service Journal of Nepal (1966)4. Ancient Nepal (1967)5. The Himalayan Review (1968)6. Regmi Research Series (1969) <p>1970s</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prajñā (1970)2. Pancāyat Darpaṅ (2027 v.s. = 1970/71)3. Kailash (1973)4. Contributions to Nepalese Studies (1973)5. Voice of History (1975)6. Education and Development (1975)7. Vikas (1975)8. Vikāsko Nimti Śikṣā (1977)9. Prashasan (1977)10. The Economic Journal of Nepal (1977; initially The Economic Monthly)11. The Journal of Development and Administrative Studies (1978)12. Geographical Journal of Nepal (1978)13. Occasional Papers in the Humanities and Social Sciences (1978)14. Journal of Political Science (1979; initially The Nepalese Journal of Political Science; CDPS, TU)15. Nepalese Culture (1979)16. Nepalese Economic Journal (1979)17. Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus Journal (1979; Ilam)
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published academic articles related to both literary and socio-political history of Nepal.

¹³ Unless otherwise noted, the journals were/are published from Kathmandu.

1980s

1. Bāñmaya (2037 v.s. = 1980)
2. Nepalese Linguistics (1980)
3. Jhilko
4. Rolamba (1981)
5. Rajaswa (1981)
6. Literary Studies (1982)
7. Strategic Studies Series (1984)
8. Vibek (2041 v.s. = 1984/85; Chitwan)
9. Nepalese Development Studies (1986; Biratnager)
10. Prajñā-Mañc (2043? = 1986/87?; Pokhara)¹⁴
11. Praveśdwār (2043 v.s. = 1986/87; Jhapa)
12. Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology (1987)
13. Water Nepal (1987)
14. Paleswan (1988)

1990s

1. Anweshana (2046 v.s. = 1989/90; Ilam)
2. The Economic Times (1991)
3. Mountain Environment and Development (1991)
4. Strategic Studies (1991)
5. Prājñik Jhilko (2048 v.s. = 1991/92)
6. Nepal Population Journal (1992)
7. The Geographer's Point (1992)
8. Population and Development in Nepal (1992)
9. Nepali Political Science and Politics (1992)
10. Nepalese Psychologist (1992)
11. Nepali Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Exercises (1993)
12. Nepalese Economic Journal (1993)¹⁵
13. Historia (1995; Pokhara)
14. Voice of Culture (1995)
15. Nepālī Ārthik Jagat (1995)
16. Studies in Nepal History and Society (1996)

¹⁴ I have not seen the first issue of this journal. An informant in Pokhara suggested to my colleague Shekhar Parajulee that the first issue was published around 2043 v.s. (1986 or 1987).

¹⁵ The editor/publisher of this journal was identified as Mr Subhas Sitoula. Another journal with the same title was founded in 1979 by the Banker's Club of the central bank of Nepal, Nepal Rastra Bank.

17. Journal of Nepalese Literature, Art and Culture (1996, initially Journal of Nepalese Studies)
18. Journal of NELTA (1996)
19. Ritambhara (1996; Nepal Sanskrit University)
20. Sahabhagita (1997)
21. Journal of Political Science (1998; Pokhara)
22. CAMAD (1998)
23. Discourse (1998)
24. Nepālbhāṣā (1998)
25. Gipan (1999)
26. Janajāti (1999)
27. Vishleshan (late 1990s; Biratnagar)

2000s

1. The Journal of Economic Society (2000; Biratnagar)
2. Jana Prajñāmañic (2000; Pokhara)
3. Economic Journal of Development Issues (2000)
4. Friendship: A Bi-annual Journal on China Studies (2000)
5. Samaj (2000)
6. Third Pole (2000)
7. The Inner Space (2000)
8. Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies (2001)
9. Culture and Preservation (2001)
10. Journal of Forest and Livelihood (2001)
11. The Himalayan Geographers (2001; Pokhara)
12. Anveshan: A Research Journal of History and Culture (2001; Biratnagar)
13. Mechi Campus Journal (2058 v.s. = 2001/02; Jhapa)
14. Prithvībānmaya (2058 v.s. = 2001/02; Pokhara)
15. Awalokan (2058 v.s.? = 2001/02?)
16. Humanities and Social Science Journal (2002)
17. Readings on Governance & Development (2002)
18. Samakālīn Mātribhūmi (2002)
19. Journal of Early Childhood Development (2002)
20. Nepāl Bhūgol Patrikā (2060 v.s. = 2003/04)
21. Himalayan Journal of Sociology and Anthropology (2004; Pokhara)
22. Nepalese Journal of Development and Rural Studies (2004)
23. Itihās Prabāha (2005)
24. Bahā: Journal (2005)

25. Rupāntaraṅ (2005)
26. Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology (2005; Baglung)
27. Bureaucracy (2005)
28. Perspectives on Society and Culture (2005)
29. The National Inventive Review (2005)
30. Shodhmala, Journal of Magar Studies Center (2062 v.s. = 2006)
31. Janamukhī Śikṣā (Basanta 2062 v.s. = 2006)
32. Miḍiyā Adhyayan (2006)
33. Devkota Studies (2006)
34. Research Journal (2006; Surkhet)
35. Loksanskriti (2006)
36. Prājñāik (2006; Biratnagar)
37. Journal of SASS (2006)
38. Bodhi (2007; Kathmandu University)
39. Socio-Economic Development Panorama (2007)
40. Nepalese Journal of Qualitative Research Methods (2007)
41. Society and Education (2007)
42. Bhrīkuṭī (2008)
43. Journal of Education and Research (2008)
44. Nepal Indigenous Journal (2008)
45. The Voice of ESA (An Economic Journal) (2008; Nepalgunj)
46. Kirat (2065 v.s.)
47. Journal of International Affairs (2009)
48. Tamang Journal (2009)
49. Sangam Journal (2009)
50. Voice (2009; Nepalgunj)
51. Rāto Jhilko (2009)
52. The Gaze: Journal of Tourism and Hospitality (2009)
53. Bicār Biśeṣ (2010)
54. Communist Outlook (2010)
55. Samayabaddha (2010 as a bi-monthly)
56. Ārthik Sarokār (2010)
57. SASON Journal of Sociology and Anthropology (2010)
58. Prajñā (2010)
59. Prabartak: Saṃskriti evaṃ Kalācintanko Anuṣandhānātmak Ardhabāṣīk (2010)
60. Adhyayan: Mechi Multiple Campus Journal (2010; Jhapa)
61. Limbuwan Journal (2010)
62. Anweshan Research Journal (2010; Dharan)

Among the six journals that were founded during the 1960s, two (*Pūrṇimā* and *Regmi Research Series*) came from private collective and individual efforts, the former from the members of the Samsodhan Mandal *gurukul* founded by the late Nayaraj Pant and the latter from the pre-eminent economic historian, the late Mahesh Chandra Regmi,¹⁶ two came from Nepal Government bodies (*Civil Service Journal of Nepal* and *Ancient Nepal*) and one each from a university (*Journal of Tribhuvan University* which was later re-named *Tribhuvan University Journal*) and a professional organization of academics (*The Himalayan Review* published by the Nepal Geographical Society, NGS).

It is not very surprising to see that even though only a few journals had been founded by 1969, they were produced from a variety of institutional entities. The political and civil freedoms that became available to Nepali citizens after the end of Rana-rule in 1951, the establishment of institutions of higher educational activities (such as the College of Education in 1956 and Tribhuvan University (TU) in 1959), and the establishment of professional academic bodies (such as the NGS in 1961) and research collectives contributed to the institutional diversity of academic locations from which journals were conceived, edited and published.¹⁷ As Nepal government's state apparatus grew in the immediate aftermath of the complete takeover of Nepali politics by King Mahendra in 1960, some state bodies also became editorial homes for a couple of journals. It is also worth noting that four of the journals (started by 1969) were mainly history-oriented; one each was focused on geography, education and the civil service respectively, and two were publication forums for research from various disciplines in the humanities, social and natural sciences.

In the 1970s, we see this pattern of growth achieving more density and reach. Among the seventeen journals published in that decade, some were published by extant institutional entities such as the central departments of various disciplines at TU. Between 1975 and 1979 several such journals were launched: *Voice of History* (from the central department of

¹⁶ On the work of the Samsodhan Mandal, see Uprety (1995) for a sympathetic account and Malla (1984) for a critical view of the same. I have discussed Regmi's life and work elsewhere (Onta 2003b).

¹⁷ These aspects of the immediate post-Rana years have not been thoroughly examined by historians of Nepal. Some essays in Malla (1979), among others, provide useful intellectual guidance to these aspects of those years. Recently Parajuli (2009) has analyzed the social history of civil formations in Pokhara for the period 1949–1972.

history),¹⁸ *The Economic Monthly* (which was later re-named *The Economic Journal of Nepal* from economics), *Geographical Journal of Nepal* (from geography), *The Nepalese Journal of Political Science* (which was later re-named *Journal of Political Science* from political science) and *Nepalese Culture* (from the central department of Nepalese history, culture and archaeology). Journals were also launched from TU's new research centres. These included the *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* from the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), *Education and Development* and *Vikāsko nimti Śikṣā* from the Centre for Educational Research Innovation and Development (CERID) and *The Journal for Development and Administration* from the Centre for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA). Looking back, the 1970s seem to be a decade during which the central departments of TU announced their coming of age with the publication of their journals. Similarly the university's newly established research centres announced their arrival in the scene with their own journals. Following the promulgation of the New Education System Plan (NESP) in the beginning of the decade, various educational innovations at the university level were recorded during the 1970s.¹⁹ Although it would be difficult to demonstrate that the new journals were a direct outcome of NESP, they seem to have been part of this decade of innovations.

New journals were also launched from governmental and semi-governmental bodies. Examples of these included the *Nepalese Economic Journal* (from the central bank of the Nepal Government) and *Prajñā* (from the semi-governmental Royal Nepal Academy). Moreover during this decade we also saw the establishment of a unique (for Nepal) working partnership between a group of academics and a commercial publishing house in the form of the journal *Kailash*. This journal was editorially prepared by a group of academics, some independent ones and

¹⁸ Strictly speaking, the premier volume (1975) of the *Voice of History* was published by the Tribhuvan University (TU) History Association and only from the second volume (1976) was the central department – then known as the History Instruction Committee – identified as its publisher. Since the board of editors of the first issue was led by a faculty member of the central department of history at TU and its other members were mostly faculty members and students of the same department, we can say that it was in essence a publication of the central department of history.

¹⁹ For instance, the much praised National Development Service for MA level students was put into practice during this decade (Messerschmidt, Yadama and Silwal 2007).

others associated with various institutions. The founding editor was the late Hallvard K. Kuloy, a Norwegian lover of the Himalayas and he was assisted by a group of Nepali and non-Nepali academics with research interests in Nepal and the Himalayan region in general. The editorial team's composition was testimony to the fact that studying Nepal had become an international enterprise (with full participation by Nepali members of the scholar-community) by the early 1970s. This journal was published by Nepal's leading commercial publisher, Ratna Pustak Bhandar. At the end of the 1970s a TU campus located outside of Kathmandu published a journal. *Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus Journal* was published from the eponymous campus in Ilam.

During the 1980s, new journals were founded by the central departments of TU, one of its research centres, professional organizations of academics, a government body, private research centres and a unit of teachers' association in a campus in Jhapa in east Nepal. The decrease in the number of new journals established, from seventeen in the 1970s to fourteen in the 1980s is almost counter-intuitive. After the political referendum of 1980 in which a so-called reformed Panchayat System was selected by a slight majority of Nepali voters, the intellectual and academic environment became relatively more open. In that environment where functionaries of the Panchayat System exercised less control, one would have expected the establishment of more new journals than in the previous decade; at least the trend would have suggested as much. However my current research reveals just the opposite and I am unable to fully explain why this happened. Perhaps much of the intellectual energy of academics in Nepal during the 1980s – with respect to journal work – went into keeping the journals that had been founded before 1979 alive and *not* into starting new ones. There is reason to suspect that this was in fact the case when we look at the journals in Table I that had been founded through the 1970s. Barring two or three journals (including the *Geographical Journal of Nepal*), all of the rest continued to be published regularly through the 1980s. It is also likely that the relatively more open space for newspapers and magazines meant that academics chose to write for them in the short length format than for academic journals in the longer length format.²⁰

After the end of the autocratic Panchayat regime and the beginning of a multi-party political dispensation in 1990, 89 new journals have been

²⁰ This possibility was suggested by Ramesh Parajuli but it needs further research.

established. Among them 27 journals were founded in the 1990s and 62 since the year 2000. The 1990s must be noted as the decade when journal publications were taken up seriously in cities outside of the Kathmandu Valley. New journals were established in Pokhara (*Historia* and *Journal of Political Science*), Biratnagar (*Vishleshan*), and Ilam (*Anweshana*), among other cities. Other journals were established by academic NGOs (e.g., *Studies in Nepali History and Society*), professional academic organizations (e.g., *Nepal Population Journal*, *Nepali Political Science and Politics*), government bodies (*Janajati*) and students (*Discourse*).

Since the year 2000, more journals have been established by various institutional entities. Among them, it is to be noted that more new journals were established by institutions located outside of Kathmandu in cities such as Pokhara (three new journals) Biratnagar (three new journals), Baglung, Bhadrapur, Dharan, Surkhet (one journal each), etc. In terms of the number of journals established outside of the Kathmandu Valley, this decade has surpassed the record of any previous decade. Independent organizations of academics also established new journals (e.g., *Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies*, *Journal of Forest and Livelihood*, *Bahā: Journal*, *Shodhmala*, *Sangam Journal*, etc.). In the second half of the decade (2005–2009), at least 30 new journals were established, which is a record for any five-year period in Nepali history. It is to be noted that the total number of new journals (namely, 62) established since the year 2000 almost equals the number of journals established in the preceding five decades.

In Table I, I have also listed journals published by social formations that are semi-academic in nature but have an explicit commitment to this or that political ideology. These journals include *Rāto Jhilko*, *Bichar Biśeṣ*, *Communist Outlook* and *Samayabaddha*. To not include them because of their political ideology would be restricting our understanding of a Nepali journal unnecessarily. In other countries, journals such as *Signs: A Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *Feminist Studies*, and *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* with an explicit feminist agenda of politics against patriarchal academic establishments have attained high academic standards and influence (McDermott 1994). Similarly journals in the discipline of history have been closely associated with specific nationalist political ideologies in Europe (Steig 1986) and elsewhere.

Institutional geography of publishers

As mentioned previously, many journals in Nepal have been published by various entities associated with TU. For instance TU's research centres,

central departments, other departments of its constituent campuses, its teachers' association and its students publish journals. Such journals are also published by other universities of Nepal (Kathmandu University, Nepal Sanskrit University), associations of specific-discipline oriented academics, government bodies, and semi-governmental bodies established by various acts (e.g., Nepal Academy). They are also published by academic NGOs (such as Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies and MC), private research centres, private/commercial publishers and political solidarities. Table II shows the diversity of the institutions from which journals are published in Nepal. It is a non-exhaustive list by design. In each category of institutions, I only list a few journals which are currently being published as examples.

Six of the thirteen institutional categories listed in Table II are related to universities in Nepal. Among the six, five are related to the oldest and biggest university, TU. As Philip G. Altbach, an American academic who has done extensive research on the history of scholarly publications in the Southern countries wrote a quarter of century ago, "Scholarly journals are, with few exceptions, dependent on institutions of higher education for their survival. It is not an exaggeration to state that without the support, direct and indirect, of academic institutions, all scholarly journals would collapse" (1987: 72). Data in Table II also suggests that there exists a strong relationship between the existence of journals in Nepal and institutions of higher learning. We must also note that the associations of academics in Nepal are mostly run by academics associated with TU and the work of academic NGOs is supported in part by university faculty as external consultants. So a bulk of journal content production, editing and publishing is done by academics associated with TU and other institutions of higher learning.

With respect to government bodies, the three journals listed in Table II are published by a department, a commission, and a ministry of the Nepal Government. A fourth journal, *Janajati* (est. 1999) was published from a development committee formed within a particular ministry. After being defunct for almost a decade, this journal was revived in 2010 as *Adivasi Janajati: Journal of Indigenous Nationalities of Nepal* by the semi-governmental body, the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN). As mentioned above, the academic NGOs that have become part of the research landscape in Nepal (Onta 2009) are also involved in journal editing work. A couple of commercial

Table II: Institutional Geography of Nepali Journals
(by publisher type)

1. Tribhuvan University: Research Centres

- a. Contributions to Nepalese Studies – CNAS (established year 1973)
- b. The Journal of Development and Administrative Studies – CEDA (1978)

2. Tribhuvan University: Central Departments

- a. Voice of History – History (1975)
- b. Nepalese Journal of Development and Rural Studies – Rural Studies (2004)

3. Tribhuvan University: Other Campuses/Departments

- a. Historia – Department of History and Culture, PNC, Pokhara (1995)
- b. Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology – Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Mahendra Multiple Campus, Baglung (2005)
- c. Research Journal – Birendranagar Multiple Campus, Surkhet (2006)
- d. Adhyayan: Mechi Multiple Campus Journal – Mechi Multiple Campus, Jhapa (2010)

4. Tribhuvan University: Teachers' Association

- a. Anweshana – Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus, Nepal Teachers' Association (NTA) Unit, Ilam (2046 v.s.)
- b. Jana Prājñamañc – Janapriya Multiple Campus, NTA Unit, Pokhara (2000)

5. Tribhuvan University Students

- a. Discourse – Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Patan Multiple Campus (1998)
- b. Journal of SASS – Sociology/Anthropology Students' Society (SASS), Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology (2006)

6. Other Universities

- a. Ritambhara – Nepal Sanskrit University (1996)
- b. Bodhi – Kathmandu University (2007)

7. Associations of Academics

- a. Nepalese Linguistics – Linguistic Society of Nepal (1980)
- b. SASON Journal of Sociology and Anthropology – Sociological and Anthropological Society of Nepal (2010)

8. Government Bodies

- a. Ancient Nepal – Department of Archaeology (1967)
- b. Vikās – National Planning Commission (1975)
- c. Prashasan – Ministry of Public Administration (1977)

9. Government-financed Semi-autonomous Bodies

- a. Prajnā – Nepal Academy (1970)
- b. Journal of Nepalese Literature, Art and Culture – Nepal Academy (1996)

10. Academic NGOs

- a. Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies – Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies (2001)
- b. Miḍiyā Adhyayan²¹ – Martin Chautari (2006)

11. Private Research Centres

- a. Pūrṇimā – Samsodhan Mandal (1964)
- b. Rolamba – Joshi Research Institute (1981)

12. Private/Commercial Publishers

- a. SINHAS – Mandala Book Point (1996)
- b. Bhrīkuṭī – Bhrikuti Academic Publications (2064 v.s.)

13. Political Formations

- a. Rāto Jhilko – informed by Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) – Baburam Bhattarai faction
- b. Samayabaddha – informed by UCPN (Maoist) – Mohan Baidya faction
- c. Bīcar Bīṣeṣ – guided by young members of the Nepali Congress

²¹ The complete author index of the first five issues of this journal published between 2006 and 2010 can be accessed at http://www.martinchautari.org.np/journals_authorindex_mediaadhyayan.html. The experience of editing this journal has been analyzed by one of its editors (Humagain forthcoming).

publishers are also involved in journal publication. This number is much smaller than is the case in many other countries including India.

Physical geography of the cities of their production

Given the concentration of institutions of higher learning and research and related practitioners in the Kathmandu Valley, it is not surprising to find that most academic journals in Nepal are published from the Kathmandu Valley. As discussed above, many are editorially cultivated by academics based at the central departments of TU or professional disciplinary associations whose offices are located in the Valley. In terms of the rest of the country, Biratnagar and Pokhara produce a few journals each. Such journals are also produced from Ilam Bazaar, Bhadrapur (Jhapa), Dharan, Bharatpur (Chitwan), Baglung, Nepalgunj, and Surkhet.

Examples of journals currently published from Pokhara include *Historia*, *Journal of Political Science*, *The Himalayan Geographers*, and *Himalayan Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* from the Prithvi Narayan Campus (PNC) and *Jana Prājñamañic* from Janapriya Multiple Campus.²² Similarly journals such as *Vishleshan*, *Anveshan: A Research Journal of History and Culture*, and *Prājñik* are being published from Biratnagar's Post Graduate Campus and *The Journal of Economic Society* is being published from the Economic Society of Nepal, an organization based in the same city. Among the journals published from other locations in East Nepal, there is *Anweshana* published from the Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus in Ilam Bazaar, *Adhyayan: Mechi Multiple Campus Journal* published from Bhadrapur (Jhapa) and *Anweshan Research Journal* published from the Mahendra Multiple Campus in Dharan. *Vivek* is published from Bharatpur in central Nepal. *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* is published from Baglung in west Nepal. *Voice* and *The Voice of ESA* are being published from Nepalgunj. *Research Journal* is published from Surkhet in mid-west Nepal. Apparently no such journals are being produced from cities such as Janakpur, Birgunj, Hetaunda, Dang, Dhangadhi and Mahendranagar.²³

²² PNC is also the editorial home of the *Journal of Nepalese Business Studies*, founded in 2004 by its Faculty of Management. This journal is not included in my study. It is available in the online portal NepJOL where it seems to be very popular with the site's users.

²³ I have no confirmed information on journals published from Butwal. A source has told my colleague Arjun Panthi that a journal with the title *ELT Voices* was established by the Department of English Education of Butwal Multiple Campus in 2009 and its second issue was published in 2010. Similarly the

Given the tendency to start MA-level programs in different disciplines in parts of the country where they don't currently exist, it will be safe to assume that academic journals will be, in the future, published from other new locations. This tendency will be further boosted by the current preparations to establish new universities in mid- and far-western regions of Nepal. Additionally when the existing three universities (Purbanchal, Pokhara and Lumbini Universities) that currently don't produce social science and humanities journals begin to do so (or their affiliate campuses begin to do so), they will add to the institutional and physical diversity of the journal landscape in Nepal. If the culture of evaluating published work gets further embedded in the professional evaluation of academic performance in Nepal's universities, it will most certainly give rise to newer journals (see below) whose editorial homes are not located in Kathmandu. The expansion of the tenure system based on the track record of published work in the American universities during the second half of the 20th century provided the impetus for the growth of regional journals. As the scholar of publishing practices, Irving Louis Horowitz has noted, many such journals were sponsored by regional academic associations and served "as an acceptable bona fide" at the "2000+ universities and colleges who have come to accept hiring and tenure-track practices of the higher learning at face value ... since some sort of referee system in these regional journals is in evidence" (1991: 185). Furthermore, given the federal-bent of the Nepali polity in the future, it is to be expected that journal production will be physically more dispersed in the decade ahead than has been the case thus far for extra-academic reasons

However Kathmandu's dominance is likely to continue for the foreseeable future and those interested in a more regionally balanced production of journals in Nepal will have to ask the same question Indian academic Satish Deshpande (2002: 3629) has asked in a related context while talking about the internal regional inequalities in social science research capacity in South Asia: "Just how much inequality is truly inevitable or should be tolerated?" Extensive concentration of academic resources in Kathmandu is a by-product of the history of the unitary state ruled from Kathmandu and this status, rightfully, is already under challenge. However, we need to ask if some form of resource distribution inequality is a necessary evil if journals produced from Kathmandu (or

same source claimed that another journal, *Journal of Butwal* was published about 25 years ago. I have not seen copies of both and they are not listed in Table I.

Pokhara, Biratnagar, etc.) are to compete, in terms of the quality of their contents, with the best produced elsewhere in the region and in the world.

Disciplinary focus

Many journals do not have a disciplinary focus or emphasis but some do. For instance, a number of journals are published with the following disciplinary focus: history, geography, economics, political science, sociology and anthropology, culture, literature, linguistics, and demography. These tend to be journals published by specific discipline-based departments at TU's central campus or its constituent campuses or associations of academics of a specific discipline. In Table III, we can note some discipline-specific journals currently published to exemplify this situation. There are seven journals each that focus on the disciplines of history (with culture) and sociology and anthropology. In both cases, these journals are being produced from three different physical locations. In the five disciplines mentioned in Table III, most of the journals are published from Kathmandu but there is at least one journal that is published from outside of Kathmandu for each discipline. This is an indication that the erstwhile complete monopoly of Kathmandu on the production and distribution of discipline-specific knowledge is under slow challenge from other parts of Nepal, at least in the case of the disciplines noted in Table III. Considering the involvement of students in the production of at least three journals (*Discourse*, *Samaj* and *Journal of SASS*) and the fact that faculty-run journals are produced from Kathmandu, Pokhara and Baglung, the case of sociology and anthropology journals is probably the most interesting from the point of view of disciplinary dispersion.

Some other journals are multidisciplinary in nature by choice or by the circumstances of their publication. In the former category fall currently published journals such as *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, *Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies*, and *Studies in Nepali History and Society*.²⁴ These journals have published articles from a variety of disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities on various topics. In the same category are other journals which are theme-focused, for instance, on education, folklore and media. With respect to journals that are multidisciplinary because of the circumstance of their publication,

²⁴ The complete author index to the first 30 issues of this journal (June 1996 – December 2010) can be accessed at http://martinchautari.org.np/sinhas_biblio_author.html.

they are mostly journals published by an institution without their being located in specific departments (e.g., *Tribhuvan University Journal*, *Adhyayan: Mechi Multiple Campus Journal*, etc.). Also in the latter category are journals produced by various campus units of Nepal Teachers' Association (*Anweshana*, *Vishleshan*, etc.). Both of these types of journals tend to be a mixed bag of social science, humanities and basic science writings since submissions from all academic staff across faculties present in the campus need to be entertained by the editors.

Table III: Examples of Discipline-focused Journals

<p>History: <i>Pūrṇimā</i>, <i>Ancient Nepal</i>, <i>Voice of History</i>, <i>Rolamba</i>, <i>Historia</i> (Pokhara), <i>Anveshan</i> (Biratnagar)²⁵, <i>Itihās Prabāha</i></p> <p>Geography: <i>The Himalayan Review</i>, <i>Geographical Journal of Nepal</i>, <i>The Himalayan Geographers</i> (Pokhara), <i>The Third Pole: Journal of Geography Education</i></p> <p>Economics: <i>The Economic Journal of Nepal</i>, <i>Nepalese Economic Journal</i>, <i>The Journal of Economic Society</i> (Biratnagar)</p> <p>Political Science: <i>Journal of Political Science</i> (Kathmandu), <i>Journal of Political Science</i> (Pokhara)</p> <p>Sociology and Anthropology: <i>Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology</i>, <i>Discourse</i>, <i>Samaj</i>, <i>Himalayan Journal of Sociology and Anthropology</i> (Pokhara), <i>Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology</i> (Baglung), <i>Journal of SASS</i>, <i>SASON Journal of Sociology and Anthropology</i></p>

This 'mixed bag' tradition has continued for four decades now. For instance, volume 5 of the *Journal of Tribhuvan University* (later named *TU Journal*) published in 1970 contained contributions from practitioners of disciplines such as history, linguistics, Nepali literature, zoology, botany and mathematics. We can see the continuation of this tradition in the premier issue (vol 1 no 1) of *Adhyayan: Mechi Multiple Campus Journal* published in 2010. In this issue of the journal we come across articles from practitioners of the following disciplines: English literature, Nepali literature, demography, sociology and anthropology, history, economics, political science, management, zoology and mathematics. The spread of disciplines is wider (which is not surprising) but the disciplinary mix is remarkably similar in nature.

²⁵ *Historia* and *Anveshan* also entertain articles from the discipline of 'culture' as they are published from departments of history and culture.

Language of contents

The working language of many nationally significant academics in Nepal continues to be Nepali and they have relatively poor access to English as an analytical language. On the other hand, the number of social scientists for whom English is the working language is growing by the day. Hence, not surprisingly, the primary languages of publication of journals in Nepal are Nepali and English. Many journals print articles in both of those languages and are hence bi-lingual (e.g., *Ancient Nepal, Contributions to Nepalese Studies, Voice of History*, etc.). Some only publish articles in Nepali (e.g., *Pūrṇimā, Bāṇmaya, Miḍiyā Adhyayan, Loksamskriti*, etc.) and others only publish articles in English (e.g., *The Himalayan Review, Journal of Nepalese Literature, Art and Culture, Readings on Governance and Development, Nepalese Journal of Qualitative Research Methods, Sangam Journal*, etc.). There is at least one journal that only publishes its contents in Nepalbhasa (Newari), namely, *Nepālbhāṣā*, published by the Central Department of Nepalbhasa, of TU. Several journals are trilingual. For instance two journals, *Ritambhara* and *Samakālin Mātribhūmi* are tri-lingual in that they publish articles in Nepali, English and Sanskrit. *Limbuwan Journal* has published contents in Limbu, Nepali and English. Similarly *Paleswan* has published contents in Nepalbhasa, Nepali and English.

Distribution strategies

Not much is known about the circulation of journals edited and published in Nepal. It seems that 300–1200 copies are the print run range for most journals, the only exceptions being the journals promoted by political formations which are printed in the range of 5,000–7,000 copies.²⁶ Many of the journals currently produced from Kathmandu can be found in some retail bookshops but no single shop functions as a stockist for them. Moreover no shop retains a good run of older issues of these journals. Except for one or two journals, I have not seen any other journals published from other parts of Nepal being sold in the bookshops in Kathmandu. With respect to journals published from other cities of Nepal, it seems like they are mostly *not* available in the appropriate bookshops in the respective cities. For instance, in the past, I have bought *Journal of*

²⁶ The former number is based on what is printed on journal issues and on conversations with several editors. The latter number is based on personal communication with Bandana Dhakal, managing editor of *Rāto Jhilko* and Gagan Thapa, coordinator of *Bicār Biśeṣ*.

Political Science and *Himalayan Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* published by PNC from bookshops outside of the PNC gate in Pokhara but I have been unable to find recent issues of these journals and any issue of the other Pokhara-produced journals in several visits made to those same shops between 2008 and 2010. Similarly journals were not located in the bookshops in the eastern Nepal towns of Birtamod, Ilam Bazaar and Biratnagar in December 2010.²⁷

A few journals have institutional and personal subscribers both inside and outside of Nepal (e.g., *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, etc.) but it seems like most journals do not have subscribers. Most of them are distributed and/or sold to faculty members and students in campuses from where they are published.²⁸ For instance, in the case of the *Himalayan Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* published from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of PNC, MA level students in the department are required to buy a copy each of the journal issues.²⁹ Some journals that are published with full institutional financial support are not sold but distributed for free to interested individuals and institutions. For instance the first three issues of the journal *Bodhi* published by the Department of Languages and Mass Communication of Kathmandu University have been distributed for free.³⁰ Some journals are sold in the market and copies of it are also distributed for free to interested individuals and

²⁷ This information is based on the visit to bookshops in these cities made by MC researchers Arjun Panthi and Devraj Humagain. However they managed to collect journals from college campuses in Ilam Bazaar, Biratnagar and Birtamod.

²⁸ The situation in Nepal today probably resembles the situation of academic journals in India in the early 1980s. One publisher-analyst of the then Indian scene wrote, "A large number of scholarly journals are published in India. Most are published either by research institutes or by university departments. The editors of these journals normally have little time or talent to devote to marketing and so the circulation of many of them is about 100 or 200 copies. Most of them are tantamount to in-house forums and this inhibits authorship.... As a whole, the publishing of scholarly journals is in a depressed state" (Singh 1985: 118–119).

²⁹ This was mentioned by the journal's editor Biswo Kallyan Parajuli in a seminar on 'Social Science Journals in Nepal: Content and Continuity' organized by MC in Kathmandu on 26 December 2010.

³⁰ Personal communication from Nirmalamani Adhikari, one of the editors of *Bodhi*. Adhikari also mentioned that from the fourth issue of the journal expected to be published by spring 2011, it will also be sold in retail academic bookshops.

institutions. For instance, *Miḍiyā Adhyayan* published by the academic NGO Martin Chautari reaches the shops in Kathmandu via the distributor Himal Books. However, more than 200 copies of each issue is distributed for free to the main libraries in Kathmandu, Pokhara and other parts of the country (especially to those libraries from where requests for copies are obtained), and to members of the media fraternity – both practitioners and researchers.

With respect to the online presence of Nepali journals, there are three main highways through which their contents are becoming available in the Internet. First, back issues (sometimes with a time lag) of some journals such as *Ancient Nepal*, *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, *Kailash*, *Nepalese Linguistic*, *Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology*, *Pūrṇimā*, and *Regmi Research Series* can be found in the online collection of Digital Himalaya which is an initiative coordinated by Mark Turin with the help of other scholars of the region.³¹ Second, some 20 plus social science and humanities journals – the full text of their articles included in many cases – are available at the Nepal Journal Online (NepJOL) portal (www.nepjol.info/) which was officially launched in September 2007. This portal is supported by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), an entity which seeks to, among other things, further the access of researchers, especially in the global South, to research information and publications via the Internet. NepJOL uses the Open Journal Systems, an open source software for journal publication in the Internet developed by the Public Knowledge Project based at the University of British Columbia (for more details on the latter, see Willinsky 2006).³² Third, at least one journal has struck a deal with a major commercial provider of online contents. *SINHAS* is

³¹ Other journals (which fall outside of the remit of this article), magazines, policy papers, etc. are also available as part of the online collection of Digital Himalaya at www.digitalhimalaya.com/collections/journals/. The project is described in the following manner in its home page: “The Digital Himalaya project was designed by Alan Macfarlane and Mark Turin as a strategy for archiving and making available ethnographic materials from the Himalayan region. Based at the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, the project was established in December 2000.”

³² I thank Mark Turin for drawing my attention to the book by Willinsky. The number of Nepali journals available in NepJOL compares favorably with the numbers uploaded by most African countries in African Journal Online (AJOL) which has been recently assessed by Ezema (2010). During the first six months of 2010, NepJOL received, on average, about 1000 visitors per day.

available via one of the databases of the company EBSCO to its subscribers since early 2010. In addition some journals have prepared a CD containing most of their back issues and sold them in the market. For example such a CD for *The Himalayan Review* was available in Kathmandu bookshops in 2010 and it covered all issues of the journal from volume one to 38 (1968–2007).

Reasons for Growth since 1990

As can be deduced from Table I, almost 70 percent of the journals that have been published from within Nepal were founded since the year 1990. In this section I argue that this growth can be attributed to several factors that have come to play in the Nepali social world in the last two decades. This growth has taken place in an environment structured by relatively more open political and economic dispensation and in the context of the general expansion of college and university level academia in Nepal in terms of the number of institutions, academic practitioners, disciplinary portfolios and students. This growth has also taken place amidst growing urbanization and deeper de-sacralization of social life in Nepali society, a symptom of which is the increased valorisation of empirical modes of enquiry, colloquially and professionally referred to as ‘fieldwork.’³³ The number of journals has also increased at a time when new communication and printing technologies became available to Nepali practitioners and international sources of funding were partially re-directed towards intermediate level institutions such as think-tanks, academic non-governmental organizations and the like.

In this general context, I have identified a few factors that need to be highlighted and discussed here. Foremost among them is the constitutional guarantee (both in the Constitution of Nepal, 1990 and the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007) with respect to the right to organize and the right to freedom of expression. This guarantee is fundamental to the rise of academic journal collectives and their ability to aspire according to their own needs and ambitions. Second, the expansion of higher education across the country, especially the growth in the number of disciplines offered at the masters’ level is also responsible for the increase in the number of journals. We can take up a few examples to

³³ I owe this particular formulation to Chaitanya Mishra. For a succinct discussion that links the rise of the social sciences to greater transformations in the social world (including the diminishing belief in divine constructions of that world), see Mishra (2005: 93-101).

show this link. For instance, the Central Department of Rural Development was established in TU in 2001. Three years later it published its own journal. Explaining why this department decided to publish its own journal, its editor-in-chief has written in the journal's first issue:

Even before the completion of the first year of its establishment, both teachers and students of the Department felt the dearth of reading and reference materials in this area. Keeping in view of this shortage of reference materials and the increased demand from both teachers and students for the publication of an academic journal, the Central Department of Rural Development decided to publish *Nepalese Journal of Development and Rural Studies* (NJDRS) on biannual basis (Shrestha 2004).

For an instance of this same phenomenon outside of Kathmandu, we can take the example of Mahendra Multiple Campus (MMC) in Baglung which started the MA program in sociology and anthropology in 2002 and the journal *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* in 2005.³⁴ With respect to the journal, the editors of its first issue had the following to say:

The conception of this journal was first laid down when Mahendra Multiple Campus, Baglung, with financial support of the local communities, courageously began teaching Sociology and Anthropology in M.A. level program. Some of us (faculty members) made commitment to publish a journal of Sociology and Anthropology as a product of our creative activity in this area.... Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology aims to contribute in understanding local socio-economic and cultural realities. The major objective of this journal is to empower teachers and students of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of Baglung. Through its publication, the journal will also supplement reading materials as additional texts (The Editors 2005).

The editors also encouraged students to convert their dissertations into articles for this journal and added that such an opportunity will allow "local students to take part in academic exercise to promote sociological and anthropological knowledge" (The Editors 2005). Journals then are a productive response to the demand for reading materials as MA programs in new disciplines are established in different parts of the country and a forum for the output produced by related faculty members and students.

³⁴ Information on the latter was provided by Man Bahadur Khattri, a faculty member of the program at MMC.

The third factor behind the growth of journals is the change in the eligibility criteria for registration of students for doctoral programs at TU. Previously such students had to submit three articles, none of which had to be published ones. Around the turn of the century, this criterion was changed whereby those applying to register their candidacy for a doctoral program in TU's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences had to still submit three articles but at least one of which had to be a previously published one in the academic format (namely, with references and footnotes). The growth in the number of journals in recent years is partially fuelled by this link. However not everybody in the know is willing to give credit to this change for the increase in the number of journals in the last decade.³⁵

The fourth factor behind the growth of journals is the link between the granting of specific points to research articles when TU faculty members are up for promotion, from the position of a lecturer to a reader and from a reader to a full professor. In the latest regulations published by TU's Sewa Ayog that describe the bases for faculty appointments, promotions and job performance evaluations, research articles have been given some priority. For instance, while only two research monographs can be counted for this purpose for a TU-employed Reader contesting to be promoted to the rank of a Professor, up to seven articles can be used for the same purpose (Sewa Ayog 2064 v.s.). It is suspected that this provision has indirectly fuelled the growth of journals in Nepal, especially outside of Kathmandu where faculty members working in TU's various constituent campuses feel like they are discriminated against by their colleagues based in Kathmandu who edit journals published by the corresponding central departments of TU.³⁶ To get around this perceived and real bottleneck in their career path, the faculty members based outside of Kathmandu are said to have started some journals.

The fifth factor is related to the workings of organizations of specific-discipline practitioners. For example, the journal *Nepali Political Science and Politics* was started by the Political Science Association of Nepal

³⁵ Among those who have read previous drafts of this article, Chaitanya Mishra, Chudamani Basnet and Devendra Upreti emphasized this link, the latter two stressing that it deserved a deeper investigation. However a former dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at TU during whose tenure the change in the PhD registration criteria was realized, Dr Tri Ratna Manandhar, stressed that this link was weak at best. Personal communication.

³⁶ This is a point emphasized by Devendra Upreti when he read an earlier draft of this article.

(POLSAN) in 1992, barely two years after the organization had been established. More recently in 2010, the Sociological and Anthropological Society of Nepal (SASON) has established its own annual journal, *SASON Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. In a note published in the premier issue, the journal's two editors write:

The Sociological/Anthropological Society of Nepal (SASON) established by the professional academicians in 1985 has now “come of age.” Albeit three major academic publications were made in the past by SASON, no institutional effort had been made to publish its own journal. Therefore, ever since the election of the current executive committee in April 2008, it was effortful to begin SASON Journal of Sociology and Anthropology. Belatedly, it has succeeded in publishing its first volume (Dahal and Uprety 2010: i).

In other words, one of the activities to do for such associations formed by academic practitioners – as is the case with their counterparts in other countries – seems to be to publish a journal. In the case of SASON, it is clear that the publication of a new journal was made an issue of prestige by the executive committee elected in 2008.³⁷

Sixth, new universities that broke TU's monopoly also published journals. For instance, *Ritambhara* was published from Mahendra Sanskrit University – now renamed Nepal Sanskrit University – in 1996 and *Bodhi* and *Journal of Education and Research* were established by faculty members at Kathmandu University in 2007 and 2008 respectively. The editorial published in the premier issue of *Bodhi* described its creation in the following terms:

Bodhi is an attempt of the Department of Languages and Mass Communication to create a forum for academic discourse. It is born out of the desire to contribute [to] the academic field through the collection of researched, semi-researched and analytical writings on disciplines such as mass media, communications, sociology, politics, economics, education, language, literature, culture, music and art (Bodhi 2007).

Seventh, the increase in the number of academic NGOs interested in specific types of academic work was also responsible for the growth of Nepali journals in the social sciences and the humanities. These journals include *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, *Nepali Journal of*

³⁷ For SASON to establish a journal some 25 years into its existence might seem like an anomaly to some but that is not anything unusual. According to Tomlins (1998), the American Society for Legal History was created in 1956 and its journal, *Law and History Review*, was founded only in 1983.

Contemporary Studies, Bahā: Journal and *Miḍiyā Adhyayan*. In launching *SINHAS* in 1996, its editors wrote:

Reflection on the state of Nepal Studies has motivated the creation of this new journal. We have noticed several divides which lessen the contribution of scholarly work published in English to our understanding of Nepali history and society. First, there is a linguistic divide. Studies in English rarely make use of the large body of scholarship written in languages of Nepal. Second, there is a divide between description in the mode of area studies and analysis in the mode of metropolitan theory. Third, there is a divide between Nepali and foreign scholars who, with some individual exceptions, do not communicate as much as they might. In our view these various divides are related, and scholarship on Nepal would be enhanced by their elimination.

Studies in Nepali History and Society (SINHAS) endeavors to overcome these divides (SINHAS 1996: 1).

This expressed desire to redress a specific lack is also shared by the other journals in this category.³⁸ It must also be noted that the growth of Nepali academic NGOs (and the journals they have editorially supported or published) is partly related to the fact that some Nepali academics who returned to Nepal after long years of graduate training abroad chose not to work for the erstwhile universities. Instead they have invested their energy into creating forums and journals that not only cater to their academic expertise and needs, but also to their ‘taste’ of academic rigour and style.³⁹ It must also be added that even NGOs which are otherwise not immersed in academic production have encouraged research and publication, including in journals.

Eighth, rights seeking social movements have also created an environment for related research and journal publications. Although no academic journals seem to have come out of the Nepali women’s, dalit and madhesi movements to date, there are several journals that are products of (and part of) the janajati movement including *Shodhmala: Journal of Magar Studies Center, Nepal Indigenous Journal, Tamang Journal* and *Limbuwan Journal*. The premier issue of *Shodhmala* was published in 2006 and a total of four issues had been published by the end

³⁸ It is interesting to note what scholar of publishing Albert Henderson has to say: “New journals ... are born with increasing regularity, each displaying innovations, refinements, and variations. Each attempts to serve a new audience well, an old audience better, or a community of interests more effectively” (2002: 133).

³⁹ This point was emphasized by Chudamani Basnet and Devendra Upreti when they read a previous version of this article.

of 2010, mostly in Nepali with some articles in English. The only issue of the *Tamang Journal* published in 2009 in Nepali, is an impressive one. At almost 300 pages it contains more than 20 full-length articles divided in four different sections: Tamang society, culture and history; Tamang literature and arts; Tamang mass media; and miscellany. In the editorial it is written: “The idea of this journal has been floated to especially encourage Tamang youth to write research-based articles and to make available to readers serious writings on the Tamangs” (Tamang Journal 2009).

The ninth factor responsible for the growth of journals was related to the fact that some students were interested in starting new journals devoted to their disciplines. Examples of such journals include *Discourse*, *Samaj*, *Journal of SASS*, and *Anweshan Research Journal*. The first three are publications of students in the discipline of sociology/anthropology at the Patan Multiple Campus, Tri-Chandra Campus and TU’s central campus respectively. The fourth is a publication of students in the Postgraduate Nepali Department at Mahendra Multiple Campus in Dharan. In the premier issue of the *Journal of SASS*, the two editors wrote:

This journal intends to inspire academic insights among students. It encompasses articles covering a wide gamut of sociological as well as anthropological perspective. We have done our level best to make this journal worth-reading (Subedi and Joshi 2006)

One of the two editors, Milly Joshi has added that in publishing the journal, the Sociology/Anthropology Students’ Society (SASS) of TU was responding to the demands of the students

who for a long time had awaited and anticipated SASS to avail them with not merely academically useful publications but a platform wherein students could articulate and communicate their ideas and knowledge pertinent to socio-cultural issues and the ilk. Relentless suggestions cum criticisms against SASS for reneging to bring about academic publications on behalf of students added more to our realization that it’s high time we started working on producing a journal that would not only encompass articles of Department faculty members but students as well.⁴⁰

There might be other linked motivations. As more and more Nepali students seek avenues for further graduate education in Western universities, it is likely that the fact that such institutions look positively at applicants with previous history of publications might have motivated

⁴⁰ Personal email communication.

the founding of student journals. It must be added that these student journals publish articles by both faculty members and students, and some of the articles by students are very good. For instance Mahesh Raj Maharjan's (2006) article, published in the *Journal of SASS*, is one of the best criticisms of patriarchy among the Newars I have read anywhere.

Tenth, in the most recent years, as part of the Second Higher Education Project (SHEP, 2007–2014) supported by the World Bank, some of TU's constituent campuses have been encouraged to seek further autonomy from the university's centralized form of bureaucratic control. They have formulated multi-year strategic plans for this purpose. As part of this process, interested campuses are getting into the business of publishing journals as a marker of their enhanced autonomy. As much is indicated in the publisher's preface written by the campus chief Chintamani Dahal (2010) in the inaugural issue of the journal *Adhyayan: Mechi Multiple Campus Journal* published from Mechi Multiple Campus in Bhadrapur, Jhapa.⁴¹

Finally, the two decades since the political transition of 1990 also coincided with an increase in the professional differentiation of the middle-class in Nepal.⁴² One of the ways in which academics have tried to mark their difference from literary writers, journalists and other producers of written texts and periodicals is through the publication of journals that embody the written output of their research enterprise, supposedly an integral marker of the academic practice. In this endeavour, the growth of the Internet, the accessibility of layout and printing technologies and at times, even some financial aid from donor agencies to cover research or publishing costs have facilitated this particular middle-class practice.⁴³

⁴¹ According to Bajracharya (2010), 24 constituent campuses of TU have already taken steps to achieve the status of an autonomous campus. By mid-2010, the Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus of Ilam had already succeeded in becoming the first such campus and had been awarded an incentive grant of rupees thirteen million from the SHEP. Apparently it had become eligible for more money (in the magnitude of one hundred and sixty plus million rupees) as reform grants from the same project. See Bajracharya (2008) for an overview of the SHEP.

⁴² For analyses of the middle-class in Kathmandu, see Liechty (2003, 2010).

⁴³ The indirect links between practices within the development industry in Nepal and the growth of Nepali journals should be explored by some analyst. While commenting on an earlier version of this article, Chudamani Basnet wrote, "[I]nteraction between the knowledge publication field and labor market could be one of the possible causes of journal proliferation in the 1990s. Local

Longevity and Regularity of Journals: Some Observations

In theory, journals are supposed to be published in a regular cycle of say one or more times a year. This kind of regularity, again in theory, distinguishes journals from other one-off or occasional publications with no declared regularity. When journals are regularly published over the course of several years, they not only become a recognized forum for academic discourse (a ‘brand’ would be the way to put it in current parlance) but they also build up a corpus of published texts that could potentially influence the trajectory of specific disciplines and the social sciences and the humanities in general. Hence the longevity and regularity of journals are very important to their success and impact. In this section I make some observations regarding the longevity and regularity of the journals produced from within Nepal. I start off by asking how many of the journals listed in Table I are no longer in print. Subsequent to that I will analyze some patterns of regularity/irregularity of Nepali journals and then discuss some factors that influence their longevity and regularity.

Dead journals

Among the 129 journals listed in Table I, we don’t know just how many are still being produced primarily because there is no single library or database (online or otherwise) where we might be able to consult their collection. Such calculation is complicated also by the fact that some journals are revived after not being produced for many years. For instance *Journal of Political Science* (initially called *The Nepalese Journal of Political Science*) published by TU’s Central Department of Political Science was revived in 2003 after not being published for many years.⁴⁴ Similarly *The Journal of Development and Administrative Studies* produced by CEDA was re-published in 2009 after not being published since the year 2000.⁴⁵ However at my current state of knowledge, I would

I/NGOs have absorbed a large portion of university graduates. I/NGO jobs demand good report writing skills, and a list of publication on a job-seeker’s CV definitely helps. So it is possible that students (and junior faculty members) devoted themselves to journal publication so that their CVs could look impressive in the eyes of I/NGOs and other agencies that employed consultants.” Personal email communication.

⁴⁴ The credit for reviving this journal goes to S.M. Habibullah who was the head of the Central Department of Political Science of TU in 2003.

⁴⁵ The credit for reviving this journal goes to Bharat Pokhrel, the newly appointed executive director of CEDA.

say about nineteen percent of the journals listed in Table I are definitely dead.

For the purpose of listing in the table of dead journals (Table IV), I have used two criteria to identify ‘dead’ journals: a) private or public acknowledgement from the journal editors or publishers that the concerned journal is no longer in print; or (b) when there is no such acknowledgement, if an issue of the journal has not been seen in print since the year 2003, it is a ‘dead’ one as far as my analysis is concerned.⁴⁶ As shown in Table IV, these dead journals include some that played important innings in their time: *Education Quarterly*, *Regmi Research Series*, *Kailash*, *Population and Development in Nepal*, and *Nepali Political Science and Politics*.

Among the dead journals, there are some that were in regular publication but went out of print all of a sudden. Examples of this kind would include *Regmi Research Series* and *Nepali Political Science and Politics*. There are others which went through an ‘irregular phase’ before finally becoming defunct. An example of this is the journal *Kailash* which was published very regularly between 1973 and 1990 but was not published during 1991–1994. Four separate issues were published in 1995 and 1996 and the last issue was published in 2000. It has not been seen since then. There are others which became irregular almost from the beginning and then became defunct. This is evident in the way in which the periodicity of these journals changed over a very short period of time. For instance, *The Geographer’s Point* was established in 1992 as a biannual journal (i.e., published two times a year). During its third and fourth years (1994 and 1995), only one combined issue each was published. Only one combined issue was published during its fifth and sixth years (1996/97) and the same happened in its seventh and eight years (1998/99). After that one issue of the journal, a combined volume 10–14 was published and then no further issues have been seen. As shown in Table IV, there are at least 10 journals whose lives lasted from a single issue to less than five years. As far as these journals were concerned, it could be said that they were founded by editors and publishers who did not have the commitment to nurture them over a number of years. Without such commitment, “journals cannot be established and gain recognition or durability” (Altbach 1987: 138).

⁴⁶ It goes without saying that if such journals are revived in the future, the data presented here will have to be revised accordingly.

Table IV: List of Dead Journals

No.	Title of the Journal	Year Established	Year Last Issue Published
1	Nepāl Saṁskritik Pariṣad Patrikā	1952	1957
2	Education Quarterly	1957	1983? [TUCL]
3	Regmi Research Series	1969	1989
4	Pañcāyat Darpaṅ	2027 v.s. =1970/71	2045 v.s. = 1988/89? [TUCL]
5	Kailash	1973	2000
6	Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus Journal	1979	Just one issue published?
7	Strategic Studies Series	1984	1986
8	Nepalese Development Studies	1985	1988? [LOC]
9	Praveśdwār	2043 v.s.	Just one issue published
10	The Economic Times	1991	1991?; Just two issues published? [MCL]
11	Mountain Environment and Development	1991	1992? [MCL]
12	Strategic Studies	1991	1998? [MCL]
13	The Geographer's Point	1992	2003
14	Population and Development in Nepal	1992	2002
15	Nepali Political Science and Politics	1992	1998
16	Nepalese Psychologists	1992	Just one issue published
17	Nepali Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Exercises	1993	Just one issue published
18	Nepalese Economic Journal	1993	1998? [MCL]
19	Nepali Aarthik Jagat	1995	Just one issue published? [MCL]
20	Gipan	1999	2002
21	The Inner Space	2000	Just one issue published
22	Culture and Preservation	2001	Just one issue published
23	Mechi Campus Journal	2058 v.s.	Just one issue published
24	Bahā: Journal	2005	2006

Note: Further research on the case of journals where '?' is given might reveal a different final year of publication; TUCL = the last year according to the holdings of TU Central Library; LOC = the last year of holdings in the US Library of Congress according to its online catalogue; MCL = the last year of holdings at Martin Chautari Library.

Longevity and regularity: some patterns

Apart from the ones identified in Table IV, the other journals are alive and some of them have had a relatively long life. The journal *Nepali* has completed 50 years of publication and holds the record for the oldest continuously published journal from Nepal. Journals such as *Pūrṇimā*, *Tribhuvan University Journal*, *Ancient Nepal*, *The Himalayan Review* and *Prajñā* have been around for over 40 years now. Others such as *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, *Voice of History*, *Education and Development*, *Vikas*, *Prashasan*, *The Economic Journal of Nepal*, *The Journal of Development and Administrative Studies*, *Geographical Journal of Nepal*, *Journal of Political Science* (Kathmandu), and *Nepalese Linguistics* have been around for at least 30 years. As indicated earlier, several current journals published from outside of the Kathmandu Valley have been around for up to 15 years counting from the time *Historia* was founded in 1995.

However, longevity and regularity are two different things when it comes to Nepali journals. Not all journals that are alive have been published regularly. The data presented here will suggest that there are several patterns of regularity or lack thereof when it comes to Nepali journals. First is the pattern exemplified by *Kailash* mentioned above in which after passing through a very regular phase of publication (say for a period of 10 to 15 years), the journal went into an irregular phase before becoming defunct. Second is the pattern of several journals which, after passing through a regular phase of publication for some years, went through a period of no publication or irregular publication (or both) before becoming regular again. There are several examples of journals whose publication trajectories fall in this category. For instance, *The Himalayan Review*, established in 1968, was published annually through 1985 with only three combined issues in between for the years 1969–70, 1973–74 and 1983–84. However in the eleven years between 1986 and 1997, only three separate issues of the journal were published.⁴⁷ Since that irregular phase was passed, this journal has been published every year with just one combined issue for the years 2004–05. The *Journal of Political Science*, published by the Central Department of Political Science of TU, has a similar history. Founded in 1979, four issues were

⁴⁷ With reference to this fact, Subedi and Paudel (2002: 2-3) write, “Late 1980s and 1990s appear to be the low point in the history of this journal. This is because between 1986 and 1997 i.e., over a period of 11 years only three issues of this ‘annual’ publication have reached its readers.”

published by 1985 but between 1986 and 2002, only two issues of this journal were published. However after being revived in the year 2003, it has been published annually except for the year 2004.

Third is the pattern of some journals which go through regular and irregular phases of publication more than once, but survive for a long run. For example, *Voice of History* was established in 1975 and was regularly published through 1982 with one combined volume for the years 1978–80. Between 1983 and 1996, only one volume of this journal was published (combined volume 9–11 published in 1986). Regular annual issues were published in 1997 and 1998 and between 1999 and 2001, two issues of this journal were published each year. However since 2002, only one issue of this journal (combined volume 17–20 published in 2005) has been seen in print.

Fourth is the pattern of a few journals which have been around for a while but very few issues of them have been published in total. *Geographical Journal of Nepal* published by TU's Central Department of Geography exemplifies this pattern. It was founded in 1978 and four volumes were published by 1981 with a combined volume 3–4 published for the years 1980–81. No issues of this journal were published during 1982–1995. Volume 5 was published in 1996 and no further volumes were published during the next decade. Volume 6 and 7 were published in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

Fifth, there are several 30-year plus old journals which have been published regularly but which have not kept up with their claimed periodicity. What that means is that although the journals have been kept alive all these years, the average number of issues published each year has not matched their claimed regularity. Examples of this genre include *Pūrṇimā* and *Prajñā*. Founded in 1964 as a quarterly, more than 180 issues of the former should have been published by 2010. However in actuality only 133 issues had been published by September 2010. There are relatively younger journals which fit this pattern in which over a period of ten years, only five to eight issues of an annual journal have been published. Take for instance the case of the annual journal *Anveshan: A Research Journal of History and Culture* founded in 2001. Nine separate issues of this journal have been published by the end of 2010. There were two issues published in 2002 and no issues published in 2007 and 2009.

Sixth, there are several journals that have kept up with their claimed periodicity over the years although some individual issues have appeared several months late compared to the printed date. For instance, the

January 2008 issue of such journals would have appeared in late 2008 or even early 2009. Among the older journals, *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* has maintained its periodicity regularly with only a handful of combined issues in its 37 years of existence but each issue is late by a few months. Among the journals which have been in existence for at least five years, *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, *Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies*, and *Nepalese Journal of Development and Rural Studies* have maintained their full periodicity but are also late by a few months.⁴⁸

What the above discussion suggests is that in the case of Nepali journals, regularity cannot be their outstanding definitional character. If we were to insist on defining only those periodicals which were in fact 'regular' – meaning their publication regularity matched their claimed periodicity – as journals, only a few publications would qualify as journals. What this means is that a journal in Nepal, more often than not, refers to a serial publication whose periodic appearance cannot be predicted a priori. One could even say that irregularity is an integral aspect of journal ecology in Nepal.⁴⁹

Factors that influence longevity and regularity

In trying to account for the fact that only three issues of *The Himalayan Review* were published between 1986 and 1997, Subedi and Paudel (2002) write, "The only plausible interpretation for this sluggishness could be that these years reflect [a] critical period in the political history of Nepal that resulted into [the] restoration of multi-party democracy and the chaos associated with its early years." Their indirect reference to the series of processes that ended autocratic Panchayat rule and re-started the era of multi-party politics can be understood broadly to mean that the political upheaval distracted those geographers who were responsible or potentially responsible for producing the *Review* and hence the journal did not appear annually as it was supposed to. If Subedi and Paudel mean to suggest that there was something inherently debilitating about those years with respect to journal production in Nepal, I would have to disagree with

⁴⁸ A delay of three-six months seems quite normal even for journals published by well-established commercial publishing houses in South Asia.

⁴⁹ This is not to suggest that irregularity is somehow only a Nepal-specific feature of journal publication. I suspect that it is also a feature shared by many journals published from other countries in the South. Deeper comparative notes are beyond the domain of this article but they would make for an interesting read.

them. As demonstrated in Table I, about 20 new journals were started during those years and many of the journals that had been founded in the previous years, kept being published during that same decade.

However there is no denying that *politics, broadly understood, has been a factor that has influenced the social lives of Nepali journals in ways that are more indirect than direct.* As discussed above, the intellectual openness of the post-1990 era, the guarantees of civil liberties that gave rise to journal-producing solidarities and the rise of identity-based politics have provided the foundational environment for the establishment of many new journals and their continued publication in the past two decades. At a more micro-level, internal political dynamics within professional bodies of academics have also determined what those bodies have been able to do as organizational entities and that includes the commitment to publish academic journals. Internal squabbles debilitated POLSAN within a few years of its founding in 1990 and its journal *Nepali Political Science and Politics* became defunct after a combined issue number six/seven was published in 1998.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the Nepal Geographical Society (NGS), established in 1961, is still active and has been publishing its journal *The Himalayan Review* for over 40 years now.

After politics, the second factor that has an influence on the longevity and regularity of Nepali journals is *the lack of a sustainable business plan to keep journals alive in the long run.* In particular the unavailability of money to cover the publication costs of a journal is often described as a factor that has delayed the publication of some journal issues by months or even years. This has come out mostly in private and public conversations but there are some published writings that also refer to this. For instance, writing in the ‘editorial note’ of a much delayed issue of the journal *Voice of History*, its then executive editor Shanker Thapa said:

We are very happy to offer *Voice of History* Volume XVII – XX, No. 1 to our readers. We all know that publication of a journal like this is not an easy job. There are too many problems that delay publication. Among others, financial problem is the major one. However, we are now able to publish it with moral support of our readers. Due to financial problem, we could not publish it on time. We apologize for this (2005).

⁵⁰ Some details of the early squabbles within POLSAN can be found in the ‘progress report’ published in the premier issue of its journal (POLSAN 1992)

Thapa is clearly alluding to the fact that the Central Department of History of TU, the publisher of the *Voice of History*, does not have earmarked money to cover the costs of its publication.

This is the case for the other central departments of TU as well. *Nepalese Culture* had not been published for many years until the newly appointed head of its editorial home, the Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology at TU, Dr Beena Poudel, revived it in 2010. Although her department did not have a separate budget, the cost for this issue was partially covered from personal donations.⁵¹ Personal donations from concerned faculty members have been collected to partially cover the costs of printing other journals as well. For instance, the names of individual contributors and the amounts they gave to support the publication of two issues of the journal *Voice of Culture* (2007, 2009) have been published in the issues themselves. External funding has supported the publication of journals from some TU central departments. For instance, the journal *Population and Development in Nepal* was published from the Central Department of Population Studies with funding assistance from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). Ten volumes of this were published in regular intervals between 1992 and 2002. When the funding dried up, the journal was discontinued.⁵²

The situation in other campuses of TU is not much different. In most cases there is no separate budget to cover the printing costs of journals. These costs are mostly not recovered from the sales of journal issues to individuals and institutions. In other countries, institutional subscriptions by university and college libraries go a long way in covering the financial costs of keeping journals alive. In Nepal, libraries are more often than not under-funded and expect gift copies of journals instead of paying institutional subscriptions for them.

There are a few exceptions. CNAS has earmarked separate money in its annual budget to not only cover the costs of the two issues of the journal *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* it publishes each year but also to pay a small honorarium to Nepali contributors.⁵³ Perhaps that explains why this journal is one of the most regular journals published from Nepal.

⁵¹ Personal communication with Poudel.

⁵² Personal communication with Dr Bal Kumar KC who edited this journal.

⁵³ Personal communication with Nirmal M. Tuladhar, a former executive director of CNAS who was also the managing editor of this journal for over 25 years.

Journals published by bodies within the Nepal Government – *Ancient Nepal*, *Vikas*, *Prashasan* – have also had relatively long lives in part because the costs involved in printing and editing them have been covered from budget headings in related offices. Donor grants have also been used to pay for journals published by academic NGOs. For instance, the Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies publishes its journal *Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies* under its grant from the Ford Foundation and also pays its contributors a small honorarium from the same source. Martin Chautari pays for the editing time of most of the editors of its journal *Miḍiyā Adhyayan*, honoraria to its contributors and its printing costs from a basket of funds put together from grants from various donors.

Collaborations between editorial groups and commercial publishers in Nepal have effectively worked for significant durations.⁵⁴ In particular editorial promoters of three journals have worked with commercial publishers to demonstrate that once ways to produce the print-ready copies are found by the respective editors, such publishers are willing to do the rest, namely, invest in the printing of the journals and take the risk of marketing and selling them through subscriptions and retail shops. As mentioned earlier, this model was pioneered by the editors of the journal *Kailash* in 1973 when it was published by Nepal's foremost commercial publisher, Ratna Pustak Bhandar. This relationship worked very well throughout the regular phase of the publication of *Kailash* (1973–1990). If any group of academics were to revive the journal editorially Ratna Pustak's owners are still interested in publishing it.⁵⁵ More recently, *Studies in Nepali History and Society* (SINHAS) has been editorially prepared by a team of academics who volunteer their labour to prepare its print-ready copy and then its printing and sales have been handled by its publisher Mandala Book Point since the journal's establishment in 1996. The literary journal *Bhrikuti* has been published from Bhrikuti Academic

⁵⁴ It is important to note that journals are also “bundles of resources, mobilizable in the rapid commodification of information.... The bundle consists of a site, upon which the creation of information takes place and from which it is disseminated: an audience, the core of which manifests a deep commitment to remaining attentive; a subscriber list; a backset; a reputation; and a trade mark” (Tomlins 1998: 4). Journals as resource bundles vary within the Nepali publishing landscape. For a discussion of what traditional publishers in the West do to add value to the journals during the publication process, see Fisher (1996).

⁵⁵ Personal communication with Govinda Shrestha who heads Ratna Pustak Bhandar.

Publications since 2008 under a similar arrangement with a slight twist wherein the Publications' owner is also a member of the editorial board of the journal. When these three examples are put together, we can conclude that this model has worked for over three decades and hence is feasible in Nepal. In recent years, several commercial publishers have privately shown an interest in publishing journals if an editorial team would take care of the process of preparing their contents. Hence the argument that *there is no money to publish journals in Nepal cannot be supported* under all circumstances. Those entities that do not have a separate budget for journal publication, TU's central departments in particular, should explore ways to link with commercial publishers to publish journals.

If lack of money to cover printing costs is a major obstacle that influences the regularity of Nepali journals, some times struggle over the control of available funding between faculty and student bodies result in unexpected appearance or disappearance of certain journals. One informant (who shall remain anonymous) has told me that distributing commissions from printing presses are partly what these struggles are about and he has also added that even when no journal (or similar publication) has been published, budget earmarked for such items have been expended.

When one looks at the landscape of Nepali journals, the third factor that seems to influence the longevity and regularity of journals is their institutional editorial homes. Journals started by institutions, more often than not, have survived for longer periods when compared to those started by individuals and have also been revived after being defunct for significant number of years. This suggests that institutions do matter but that is not to say that institutional-journals necessarily have had a long life.⁵⁶ In other words, *with respect to keeping journals alive and regular, institutions do seem to matter but no institutional model seems to have a distinct a priori advantage*. This conclusion can be reached by taking into consideration the following facts: (i) Among the journals published by TU research centres, the one published by CEDA (*The Journal of Development and Administrative Studies*) was almost defunct until it was revived in 2009 but the one published by CNAS (*Contributions to Nepalese Studies*) has been regularly published since 1973; (ii) Among the journals published by TU's central departments, many are irregular but some like *The Economic Journal of Nepal* and *Nepalese Journal of*

⁵⁶ Institutional journals also seem more likely to be revived after being defunct for a number of years.

Development and Rural Studies are quite regular; (iii) Among the journals published by professional associations of academics, *Nepali Political Science and Politics* (published by POLSAN) is defunct but *The Himalayan Review* (published by NGS) is still being published some 40 years after it was established; (iv) Among the journals published by government bodies, *Janajati* (published by the National Committee for Development of Nationalities) was defunct for ten years until its recent revival by NFDIN but *Ancient Nepal* (published by the Department of Archaeology) is still being published regularly some four decades after it was established; and (v) Among the journals published by government-funded semi-governmental bodies, some have had a long life (e.g., *Prajñā* of Nepal Academy published since 1970) but others have been irregular (e.g., *Journal of Nepalese Studies*, published by the same Academy, was established in 1996 but fewer than 10 issues have been published thus far and its name has also been changed to *Journal of Nepalese Literature, Art and Culture*).

As a derivative factor related to institutions, it must be said that some form of what can be described as institutional discipline does have an impact on the longevity of journals in Nepal. This is best seen in the case of some journals published by government/semi-government bodies that have managed to survive for over three decades (while others from the same types of entities have died). That suggests that *there is some form of partially effective institutional discipline with respect to research communication within government and semi-government bodies* otherwise not known to be very efficient in the execution of their remit. We can reach this conclusion by remembering that *Ancient Nepal* (est. 1967), *Prajñā* (1970), *Vikas* (1975) and *Prashasan* (1977) have been around for several decades.

With respect to keeping journals alive in the long run, the fourth factor that seems to matter are individuals involved in their editorial production. In other words, among the journals that have had a long life, *many have been sustained by the labor of love of certain editors or sets of editors*. One needs to think here, for instance, of the work done by Kamal Dixit to keep *Nepālī* going for 50 years, Nirmal M. Tuladhar of CNAS to keep *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* alive as its managing editor for over 25 years, the work done by late Fr. John K. Locke to edit the journal *Kailash* for most of the 1980s, the work of Dr Bal Kumar KC in editing *Population and Development of Nepal* for 10 years, and the work of the Pant brothers – Mahesh Raj and Dinesh Raj – who have edited *Pūrṇimā* for a long time. That said I must also add that *the role of the same*

individual seems to be variously effective depending upon his/her institutional location. I have reached this conclusion based on the following fact: Lok Raj Baral was associated with the Central Department of Political Science of TU for many years, some in the capacity as its head. Yet in that capacity, he could not keep the department's *Journal of Political Science* regular, but he has been regularly editing the *Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies*, published from the Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies since 2001. In the latter organization, he is not only the editor of the journal but also its executive head and hence can pretty much run the journal in the manner he deems suitable. That was not the case with the former journal where he had to entertain the views of many other colleagues then working for the Central Department of Political Science of TU. Some individuals have been associated with various journals in different phases of their academic careers. While their contribution to keeping any one journal alive might be modest, their cumulative contribution is significant. For example, Kamal P Malla edited *Tribhuvan University Journal* in the 1960s, *Occasional Papers in the Humanities and Social Sciences* in the late 1970s, *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* in the 1980s and *Kailash* in the 1990s.

As an ancillary factor related to individuals who have editorially promoted journals, we can conclude that on many occasions *the ambitions of those who have established journals have far surpassed their managerial capacities and intellectual commitments to keep those journals going.* This is most obvious from the fact that many journals have not survived beyond the first issue or have died within five years of their establishment, and/or have been very irregular from the time they were founded. When one looks at the mortality and morbidity features of Nepali academic journals, we must conclude that many were founded by individuals who had motives other than promoting the interests of a specific discipline or social science and humanities research in Nepal in general. These motives include wanting to be identified as an editor of a journal (even if only one issue is ever published) to score points in the prestige economy and editing a few issues of a journal in which one's work is published so that marks to get promoted in the professorial hierarchic system are secured.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ The latter motive was alluded to by Dr Bhim P. Subedi in his presentation at a seminar on 'Social Science Journals in Nepal: Content and Continuity' organized by MC in Kathmandu on 26 December 2010. Some aspects of the

With respect to the longevity and regularity of journals, the fifth factor that seems to matter is *the general shortage of good articles to publish in any particular issue of a given journal*. I have yet to meet an editor of a Nepali journal who says that s/he gets more good articles than can be published in the journal that s/he edits. In Nepal, no journal editor is fortunate to receive hundreds of good article submissions each year, as is the case with some leading journals published from other countries.⁵⁸ Editors of Nepali journals clearly work in an environment of scarcity when it comes to academic articles. Since they do not get enough submissions, they have to solicit articles as well. Apart from the objective of filling up the pages of a particular issue of their journal(s), some editors also want to encourage scholarship on topics that have not received adequate attention. The editorial collectives of both *SINHAS* and *Miḍiyā Adhyayan* have solicited articles with both of these objectives in mind. This situation clearly is related to the larger lack of incentives for doing research and publishing its outcome in the form of journal articles in Nepal. It would require an overall re-structuring of the incentive structures for doing research in Nepal to redress this situation in the long term.

Given this situation, asking some questions related to why there are not enough article submissions for journals in Nepal might be useful in the short or medium term. Is it because there are more journals in existence than can be supported by the Nepal-related research community? Possibly so but answering this question more definitively would require further research on journal production in Nepal. If the number of journals is really in excess of the number of researchers who can produce good output, then is it time to think about merging separate journals on the same or related disciplines to create more robust and effective journal platforms, as has happened in the history of journal

prestige economy for the middle-class in Kathmandu are discussed in Liechty (2003).

⁵⁸ However even in the US in the late 1970s, many editors of philosophy and sociology journals cited the *poor quality* of manuscripts that were submitted to them as one of their three main editorial worries (National Enquiry into Scholarly Communication 1979: 52). The National Enquiry added, “A major complaint is that pressures to publish are largely responsible for the proliferation of manuscripts that has occurred – especially poor manuscripts written without much understanding of what makes a paper publishable and submitted without awareness of the editorial policies of different journals” (National Enquiry into Scholarly Communication 1979: 53).

publication elsewhere (Henderson 2002)?⁵⁹ Is this merger idea realistic in the present Nepali context and if so what would be the terms of reference for such mergers? I don't have answers to these latter questions but the promoters of journals in Nepal need to think about them *collectively*.

There is an aspect of this scarcity that deserves a special mention. In the last decade or so there has been an explosion in the number of masters-level theses done in Nepali universities in social science and humanities disciplines. While ready-made data on the number of such theses done on each discipline in all of Nepal's universities is not available, we can say with confidence that each year, several dozen MA theses are accepted in various disciplines. In the field of media studies alone, media researchers think that at least 30 MA theses exploring various aspects of the media in Nepal are completed in different programs and disciplines across the country.⁶⁰ Even if 30 percent of these theses were good and their authors interested in converting their work into journal articles, we should be seeing about ten such articles being published each year in the thematically most relevant journals such as *Miḍiyā Adhyayan* and *Bodhi*, if not in other publications from Nepal and abroad. The experiences of editing *Miḍiyā Adhyayan* and reading other journals including *Bodhi* suggest that this is not happening. This leads to the conclusion that the conversion rate of MA theses to journal articles is very low.

Journal editors need to think why this is the case at a time when across many disciplines, MA theses are, on average, being awarded 85 to 95 out of a full mark of 100 by their supervisors.⁶¹ While completing a thesis to

⁵⁹ Writing about the African scholarly publishing scene, Zeleza emphasizes, "Where the scholarly communities are small, cooperative ventures in regional journal publication should be encouraged. The mission, always, must be to promote the highest standards of research and scholarly exchange, to repossess the study of Africa, to define African realities, to understand and appreciate the African world with all the intensity, intelligence, and integrity it deserves" (1996: 300). The National Enquiry into Scholarly Communication in the US, held in the late 1970s, reached the same conclusion, "While large journals appear to be capable of self-sufficiency, many small journals face financial difficulty and may not survive unless they enter into some form of cooperative arrangement" (1979: 80).

⁶⁰ Personal communication with Devraj Humagain and Harsha Maharjan, both based at Martin Chautari. For more commentary on MA theses on media-related themes, see Humagain, Bhatta and Adhikari (2007).

⁶¹ This is based on my reading of dozens of MA-level transcripts which have been submitted as part of job and research applications to various programs

fulfil a mandatory requirement of an MA degree program seems appealing to students because they have now engineered a situation where thesis supervisors have to give relatively high grades for thesis research, is it the case that journal editors have not been able to create a second round of incentives for the same students (especially the genuinely good ones who do original work to complete their thesis) to convert their finished theses into articles? If so, what would this incentive-creation entail? Experience of editing *Miḍiyā Adhyayan* suggests that some remuneration for a published article is simply not enough of an incentive (Humagain forthcoming). Again I do not have answers to the questions posed here but journal editors in Nepal and the larger community of their colleagues need to think about them *collectively*.

Conclusion

This article has identified some of the basic structural characteristics of the social science and humanities journals published from Nepal. In the about 60-year history of such journals, they have been produced from a diverse set of editorial homes, both in terms of institutions and physical locations. The post-1990 period has been especially good for journal production, although some of the basic challenges facing this enterprise from its early days in terms of continuity and regularity of production still persist. These challenges need further public scrutiny and collective thinking if journal publication is to become a more effective part of the academic endeavour in Nepal.

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