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Analysing representation and frames of people's multiparty democracy in Nepali newspapers during the post-1990 general elections

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Abstract

People's Multiparty Democracy (PMPD) propounded by Madan Bhandari in early 1990s is one of the prominent and significant innovations in the ideology of the present Nepali politics. It sought to blend Marxist-Leninist ideology and multiparty opposition, constitutionalism, civil liberty and peaceful democratic change. This article presents an analysis how framing of PMPD was applied in newspapers, what frames the newspapers had used while representing PMPD in their news and other contents and how interpretation was made in the literatures that contained the frame analysis about PMPD as a political ideology during the parliamentary election post 1990. The framing theory of Entman and observational review of some Nepali newspapers published during the parliamentary election of Nepal 1991 and 1994, scholarly articles, academic literature, historical accounts of political communication, media studies and political write-ups and election-related documents as well as literature on Nepali media, journalism and left ideology politics have formed the basis of the article. Thematic analysis and content analysis are used to discover the predominant patterns of interpretation found in the observed newspapers and literature reviewed. The results indicate that in general, the newspapers in Nepal placed PMPD in one or more of the four frames: ideological innovation, charismatic leadership, electoral competition and democratic legitimacy. The review also mentions that the press tended to individualize PMPD in Madan Bhandari, concentrate on results of elections, and had varying degree of politization. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that the newspapers made a democratic representation of PMPD in Nepal among public sphere including people, civil society, voters, students, youths and so on, but did not have the detailed analysis of ideologies.

Keywords: democracy, media framing, Nepali newspapers, Madan Bhandari, political communication, democratic transition



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Introduction

The primary focus for the study of democratic communication is political communication that is mediated by mass media and journalism. In democracy the role of the press is not just to report the political events but to interpret them and to orient the public's attention, to provide meanings to political ideas, their leaders, institutions and movements. It is especially applicable to the role in the countries with transitional democracy like Nepal since citizens are experiencing open political party competition, ideologies and public debate. After 1990's political change Nepal was in such situation for the first time in history. It was a historic occasion when Nepal became a multi-party democracy in 1990 that is on April 8, 1990. Thirty years of the partyless Panchayat system led to the revolutionary changes, such as legalisation of political parties, increased freedom of newspapers and liberalisation of the public sphere for an ideological debate. Press freedom has been expanded, and the media has had rapid growth since the 1990 movement and the 1990 constitution were implemented.

One of the important developments was the rise of People's Multiparty Democracy (PMPD) as an ideology, in this new political situation. PMPD was most forcibly coined by then General Secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), CPN-UML, Madan Bhandari as a political doctrine to bring the teachings of Marxism-Leninism in tune with democratic and socio-economic realities of Nepal. PMPD considered multiparty system and constitutional politics, periodic elections, civil liberty and peaceful mass mobilisation as acceptable means of social change as opposed to the orthodox communist model of one-partyism and revolutionary change (Dhakal, 2023; ; Oli, 2025). The conclusion of Dhakal's study is that PMPD is a political, economic and social theory which is a combination of Marxist ideology and some of the Nepali characteristics.

PMPD is more than an issue of ideology among the parties. It was also a communicative project too. This communication project did not just have to make CPN-UML's cadres well informed. PMPD needed to be explained, defended, discussed, simplified and communicated to citizens who had yet to have democratic elections in the past decades. The most important media that enabled this process to take place were the weekly and daily newspapers. . They discussed about the emergence of CPN-UML, political emergence of Madan Bhandari, tendency of change in the communist ideology and the significance of PMPD in the general elections of 1991 and 1994. In 1991 CPN-UML won 69 seats out of 205 as the second largest party and in 1994 it won 88 out of 205 seats in the House of Representatives (Pandey, 2026) and became the largest party in Nepal. The results led to the significance of PMPD beyond being a party doctrine, it became a part of the politics of the nation.

Although, PMPD is an essential ideology in the study of Nepal's political history, there is huge research gap in the study of this particular issue. There are some studies concerned to PMPD in some extent but research and review related to the media framing of the ideology still lacks. Fundmentally, there has been lack of in-depth study on how PMPD is represented and framed in Nepali media. Representation of PMPD media in the early democratic period is yet to be studied well Thanks to the current scholarship, a better understanding has been developed regarding the ideology of PMPD, the link between PMPD and Marxism and democracy, PMPD's patriotism and nationalism, and PMPD's role in the formation of left movement in

Nepal (Dhakal, 2023; Karki, 2025; Oli, 2025; Pokhrel, 2023). Similarly, there is a considerable amount of research on media freedom, political parallelism, autonomy of the media, professionalism of the journalists and election news coverage in Nepal (Acharya, 2016; Dahal, 2013, 2019; KC, 2019; Media Action Nepal, 2022; Rijal, 2014). But the cross-over between the two fields, PMPD and media framing is not well developed. Political ideologies are not brought to citizens in a theoretical fashion by media. They are featured in speeches, party literature, editorials, headlines, news reports, interviews and public comment. This article aims contributing to the scholarship of the relationship between media and political theories examining the representation of PMPD as a political ideology from the perspectives of framing theory. Framing theory posits that the media choose to highlight certain parts of reality, and therefore shape a reader's perception of the issue, its causal factors, moral assessments and possible solutions (Entman, 1993; 2007). As daily and weekly newspapers were the major sources of political communication and people had known about the political ideologies of the parties. The doctrine of political parties and ideologies they follow were made familiar among the publics mainly by newspapers with details. Therefore, it is needed to know the media frames of PMPD by which the meaning of a democratic communist can be understood, the legitimacy of elections and adapting the ideology of newspapers can be achieved.

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of this article is four-fold. It first reviews the newspaper contents of dailies and weeklies published around the two parliamentary elections after 1990. It also reviews the literature related to PMPD and the frame of media and politics in Nepal. Secondly, it illustrates the dominant frames which were used by Nepali media like weeklies and dailies to represent PMPD in the era of post restoration of democracy that is 1990 onwards in Nepal. Thirdly, it analyzes the frames of Nepali newspapers by the light of the structural and professional type of Nepali journalism since 1990. Fourthly, it suggests the impact of PMPD framing in terms of consolidation of democracy, ideology communication and further research in Nepali political communication. By analysing the media frames this article aims to give a clear picture on how information about PMPD was presented by newspapers which is not much analysed in any other scholarships on this particular issue. After the 30 years of Panchayat restriction, political journalism with comprehensive details in newspapers and political communication among the parties, leaders, cadres, voters, well-wishers and citizens was in rapid a rapid growth after the change in 1990. PMPD had emerged as a prominent political thought since the period. So, the post 1990 scenario of framing and representation of PMPD is significant to be analysed.

Review of Literature

Political Communication and Framing One of the most salient conceptual instruments to analyse the representation of political ideology is framing theory. Goffman (1974) introduced frames as interpretive schemata which help individuals to organize experience and to make sense of social reality. Media studies scholar Entman (1993) developed the concept which he said functions via selection and salience. A news report does not report all the information about an issue, it highlights some and minimises others. This is a process that helps develop an audience's awareness of the problem, who is responsible, which values are at stake, and what is to be done.

Entman's model is particularly applicable for the examination of the PMPD as it was no ordinary election promise. A mixture of ideology, Marxism, Democracy, nationalism, class analysis, constitutional and peaceful political contestation. It can be considered an innovation in the democratic method of politics, an adaptation by the communists, a personal belief of Madan Bhandari, a challenge to the liberal democratic form of government and a strategy to win votes. Each one of the frames would convey a different message.

Subsequent framing researchers went on to develop the theory in a few ways. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) suggested that meaning construction is through two parallel meaning-constructive systems: the media discourse and the public opinion. How media frames and represents any reality creates a discourse in society and media portrayal creates and constructs reality, faith and trust into something or someone that media wants to. Media discourse creates public discourse and thus public opinion is shaped according to Gamson and Modigliani. Scheufele (1999) made a distinction between frame-building, frame-setting, individual-level effects and feedback processes. What Scheufele wants to mention is media creates an angle and builds frames of any issue to what is publishes. The built frame is set and presented in media contents. That framing make impact in the opinion of the audience in an individual level and as the number of audience exposed to the set frame grows and gradually becomes an effect to how people make opinion, react and give feedback. The feedback of the audiences again may influence how media frames any issue or subject matter. The news frames that were reported by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) are considered generic and include: conflict, responsibility, economic consequences, human interest and morality. De Vreese (2005) also made a distinction between issue-specific and generic frames and suggested that framing research needs to take both into account– the production as well as the reception of news. These contributions are important for this study for several reasons: First, PMPD coverage probably mixed the typical frames of generic election issues, conflict, leadership and strategic competition with issue-specific ideological frames.

Adaptation and Presentation of PMPD Ideology The literature on PMPD, overall, has been portraying it as an ideological shift to the unusual historical context in Nepal. Dhakal (2023) has summarized PMPD as a combination of Marxism and the rapidly changing socio-political scene in Nepal and thus that PMPD is a theoretic response to the changes in the context of the whole world and Nepal. The failure of Soviet type of socialism and the democratic revolution in Nepal required CPN-UML to have an ideology that could uphold socialist orientation and at the same time embrace competition in the democratic arena. This was done by PMPD which proved multiparty democracy is a political tool and not a improvised temporary thought.

The ascent of PMPD is from a democratisation point of view of the Nepalese left movement (Oli, 2025). Looking at it this way, PMPD helped bring about the transition from revolutionary orthodoxy to constitutional, electoral, and pluralistic politics. However, Pokhrel (2023) emphasizes the patriotic character of PMPD and the ideas of national independence and popular sovereignty, as well as social changes, were intertwined with Bhandari's thinking. The semantic network analysis reveals that the clusters, party, revolution, leadership, democracy, multiparty system, people, principle, ideology and unity exist in Bhandari's political discourse,

according to Karki (2025). Based on these studies it has been recommended that the PMPD was a plank in a campaign, rather than an ideology with multiple layers.

However, there are several limitations in the literature as well. PMPD's work thus far has been essentially restricted or proximate particularly to CPN-UML. Almost all of the available literatures on PMPD are written by the leaders and cadres of the CPN-UML party. Such scholarships are valuable in comprehending the intimations of concepts, but there is space to do critical, comparative and media analysis. Very little, written study has been done on the citizen's experience of PMPD in the media, newspapers, radio or speeches and campaign reporting. Aryal (2023) has analysed normative theories of media through the perspective of PMPD. He has discussed that though Bhandari through PMPD has not directly and extensively elaborated how media should function in the society, however, Bhandari was always for the establishment of a society based on freedom of expression. And, as media would provide the platform for fair information and freedom of expression then democracy would foster. The aim of this article is to redress this misbalancing imbalance here by moving the discussion away from PMPD as doctrine to PMPD as mediated political discourse not only addressing the need of political change but also transformation in every sector of the society, such as, sociocultural, socioeconomic, education, media and communication.

Nepali Media Post 1990

The restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990 shook up the Nepal media scene. The period of panchayats saw stifling of free media, political and party communication. It has developed since 1990 in terms of constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression and press activity, as amended by the law. There was a rise in the number of newspapers, expansion of private media and journalism became an important part of the public political lives (Acharya, 2016; Dahal, 2013; Rijal, 2014). But media freedom didn't necessarily lead to a more autonomous professional media.

Political parallelism is one of the salient features which have been identified in the study of Nepali media. In Nepal, the media can be described as polarized pluralist model (Hallin&Mancini, 2004), which is characterised as interdependence between the media and political parties, absence of professional autonomy and ideologization of media (KC, 2019). The newspaper system cannot be ignored in this regard and political parallelism can also be observed in the media system in Nepal that has been discussed in the context of media landscapes. Dahal (2019) also points out that although Nepali media try to maintain a balance politically, they do so in the background of the existing political parallelism. Many of the party mouth pieces or party organs can be seen as example and evidence to this claim. Even it is a fact that the so-called mainstream media also seem to be serving a particular political party, ideology, leader or a camp.

This context is crucial for analysing PMPD coverage. However, if the closeness to government, party ownership, party sentiment or ideology had a significant impact on the content of the paper, then there would not be level coverage of PMPD. A progressive innovation, perhaps in the eyes of left leaning newspapers, maybe a democratic test of the communist movement, maybe in the middle of the road to liberal ones, and maybe a suspicion, in the conservative ones. In the countries with democratic transition like Nepal, it is not

surprising that media emerge not as some independent entity, but with the arms of political parties. And the context of post 1990 Nepal was not different.

Simplification of Ideas in Ideology and Election Reporting

News coverage of elections often boils down to political concepts. Journalists are more apt to describe candidates and rallies, conflict, slogans, opinion, and potential outcomes during campaigns. The conflict frame and the strategic framing approach of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and de Vreese (2005) can be useful in understanding this tendency, as will be explained. Nepalese election of 1991 and 1994 was a momentous and emotional affair. The first parliamentary election after the restoration of multiparty democracy was in 1991 and the mid-term election of 1994 led to the first communist-led government.

Practically speaking, PMPD was more a sort of sticker on the ballot of CPN-UML's democratic credentials than a theoretical document. There was a shortage of space and opinion and newspapers had a vested interest in displaying the personalities and results. Madan Bhandari's public charisma, his victory from two constituencies, Kathmandu-1 and 5, defeat of veteran leader of Nepali Congress Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, the seating prime minister of the then interim government in 1991 and his sudden demise in 1993 added the element of personalization to PMPD. This ended up leading Bhandari's picture and oratory to be equated to the doctrine.

Gap Identification

Literature search indicated there are three gaps. PMPD scholarship has long had an ideologically rather than a mediatively oriented emphasis. It provides an explanation of PMPD, but rarely delves into newspapers or other media representations of PMPD. Secondly, there is a lack of analysis on autonomy, professionalism, freedom of press and political parallelism in the study of Nepali media but the analysis of some particular ideology like PMPD is missing. Third, archives have not been analysed in terms of content in early 1990s Nepali newspapers. In the absence of this analysis, there are some conclusions to be made about PMPD framing.

In order to fill this gap, this article gathers the studies of PMPD, theory and Nepali media scholarship. It is in no way meant to replace the primary archival research, but rather provides a conceptual and thematic foundation for additional empirical research to come.

Methodology

This article presents the result of an observational review of some of the daily and weekly newspapers published around the 1991 and 1994 parliament election periods. Previously published literature written about how Nepali media, basically newspapers had been framing and representing Madan Bhandari's political ideology, PMPD are reviewed and analysed. This article is based on the observational review and analysis of newspaper contents, basically the weeklies like *Deshantar*, *Budhabar* and *Drishti* and two dailies, *Gorakhatra* and *Kantipur* chosen purposively as per their availability. However, it does not present the result of systematic coding of the texts from newspapers. Literatures such as journal papers, books, historical sources, political documents, media reports and institutional publications were purposively chosen, reviewed and analysed to draw the findings.

Newspapers for observation were collected mainly from the database of Press Council Nepal and few from the TU Central Library. Literature search was performed by using the various academic and public databases, such as Google Scholar, NepJOL, ResearchGate, websites of different institutions and selected media archives. The concepts which have been used in the search process are People's Multiparty Democracy (PMPD), Madan Bhandari (CPN-UML ideology), Nepali newspapers, Media framing in Nepal, Political communication in Nepal, Nepal election 1991, Nepal election 1994, Press freedom in Nepal, Political parallelism in Nepal, Framing theory, Content analysis. When available, information on DOI and/or URL for relevant articles was checked, especially peer-reviewed articles related to PMPD and framing theory were selected for review.

While searching the literatures for reviewing, the following inclusion criteria were taken into consideration: These had to be directly related to PMPD, Madan Bhandari, democratic transition in Nepal, framing of media, political communication, newspaper coverage and studies on election and press history in Nepal. Articles from journals, books, book chapters and institutional reports and public documents of historical interest were preferred. Studies were also selected if they offer a theoretical framework for the framing analysis, content analysis, discourse analysis or the ties between media and politics. The sources were disregarded if they had no academic credibility or they reported on the issue without analysis, they were wholly not related to Nepali media and politics or they were purely partisan without any interpretation.

The representation and portrayal of PMPD was superficially observed in selected newspapers for observational review and content analysis. The qualitative constructivist analysis was used to analyse the selected sources. Thematic analysis was used to find common themes that emerged in the literature such as ideology of novelty, charismatic leadership, democratic legitimation, electoral competition, nationalism, party identity and partisanship of the media. Previous studies, reports and historical articles utilized a more traditional approach to content analysis to classify the nature of the discussion of PMPD and media coverage. This is based on the assumption that content analysis is valid for inferences of texts in a systematic and replicable way (Krippendorff, 1980; 2018) and theme analysis is valid to organise the qualitative content into meaningful patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The framing theory of Entman was used as a guideline for the review. Framing as selection and making salient of aspects of perceived reality in communication (Entman, 1993) suggests that framing can be considered an active process. Entman's four framing functions, problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation, are used as the focus of this article. Several larger frames have been developed and are part of the literature on frames including the conceptualization of the sociology of frames by Goffman (1974), the constructionist approach to frames by Gamson and Modigliani (1989), an approach to process frames by Scheufele (1999), generic frames by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), and the typology of generic and issue-specific frames by de Vreese (2005).

The limitation of this paper is that it doesn't do systematic and primary quantitative content analysis of the all the issues of the Nepali newspapers in 1991 and 1994 election periods. Findings should be thus interpreted as the results of the purposively selected and superficially observed review and content analysis, not as a measurement of all the frames in scientifically structured sample of the newspapers. In the future, there should be researches

which could scientifically code the newspaper texts of systematically structured sampling and content analysis of newspapers related to the topic.

Results and Discussion

While analysing the framing and representation of PMPD, several frames come to the surface that Nepali media basically had adopted. Some of the frames that were considered as major frames are discussed below.

The Ideological Innovation Frame

First, the ideological innovation frame is a literature frame that is established in the literature. In this context, it was a new ideology, a blend of Marxism and democratic pluralism, which was PMPD. In this frame Bhandari's efforts to change the political strategy of communists according to the historical situation in Nepal and the change of ideology in the world was highlighted. The failure of orthodox communist models in democratic Nepal was the failure of Soviet-type socialism; the failure of the Panchayat system was the end of the Panchayat system, multiparty competition was the causal interpretation, and the necessity of accepting multiparty competition as a means for achieving social transformation was the treatment recommendation.

The validity of this frame has been subsequently confirmed through scholarship. Dhakal (2023) highlights that PMPD is an idea that is of a hybrid nature, a blend of Marxism and Nepal Reality. For Oli (2025), it is a means of left movement democratisation. It is associated with patriotism, national sovereignty as pointed out by Pokhrel 2023. Karki (2025) argues that Bhandari's discourse was able to connect the concept of leadership, revolution, multiparty democracy, people, principle and unity. In all these studies, it is revealed that the content of PMPD was and is more intellectual than the normal election slogans.

But apparently there was not a uniform ideological complexity in the press treatment. The novelty of PMPD may have been apparent in some newspapers but often election reporting was an ideology novel being packaged up as more digestible tales: 'communists accepting elections', 'UML becoming democratic' or 'Bhandari's new line'. Such simplicity led to a low level of understanding of PMPD among the public, while being high in theory. This is a paradox of political communication, it means an ideology can be popularized in the media, but have little meaning. How PMPD was framed by the news outlets at that time can be evaluated as partially meaningful and insufficient. Coverage of PMPD was unable to make the proper overall meaning of the ideology. Although some weeklies had tried to give comprehensive idea about PMPD any many opinion writers had written in some daily and weekly newspapers. The Charismatic Leadership Frame

The second frame that was prevalent was the charismatic leadership (Tucker,1968) frame. The charismatic leadership frame is used to understand PMPD's achievement of charismatic leadership. Madan Bhandari was considered as a charismatic leader having the capacity as one of the most prominent and influencing leaders for social movement and change. The name of PMPD was synonymous with Madan Bhandari's personality, style of speech, electoral success and image. Bhandari, however, was the chief ideologue of PMPD and the most outstanding political leader during the early 1990s. In Kathmandu, he beat one of the

senior leaders of Nepali Congress, providing newspapers with a dramatic political news. He was a speaker, a man of confidence and was an attractive figure to media, due to his speeches.

The Leadership Personalization Frame

The leadership frame ideologized personalizing a framing perspective. It is possible that the newspapers may be the medium through which PMPD can be transformed from a systematic doctrine to Bhandari's vision. This type of personalization is typical for political journalism, in which personalities are easier to tell a story about than abstract theories. However, there are implications. It can strengthen or support popular attitudes to a concept, idea or ideology propounded by a person having leadership capability to the extent that it can be connected to a familiar figure. However, at the same time this frame can put the ideology at the risk of being biographically reduced. And, while newspapers and other media were covering the issues of PMPD, personality of Bhandari as a great leader was focused rather than his ideology of PMPD was discussed in a detailed manner

Symbolic Memory Frame

This frame was further reinforced with Bhandari passing away in 1993. PMPD was no longer just a living political discussion after his death, but also became a part of his memory, martyrdom, loyalty, and his party identity. This was the emotional atmosphere in which the election of 1994 was held. The newspapers might be able to show something in ideological terms as well as continuity of Bhandari's legacy in the case of CPN-UML. This strengthened the PMPD's symbolic force, as well as the potential for an ideological shift to a memorial shift.

Thus, the leadership frame was a mixture. The positive side is it did bring PMPD to the fore and helped to put the feeling on the brand. On the flip side, it curtailed the public debate regarding PMPD's internal conflicts, the effects of the policies, and the theory behind them. It seemed that, there was a tendency that ideology was lurked in the discussion of democratic communication in the so-called leadership frame, and it should be assessed in a reasoned debate.

Electoral Contest Frame

A third big frame was the electoral contest frame. PMPD was mostly known in the context of CPN-UML's performance in the elections. The party started to challenge the opposition in the year of 1991. It emerged as the biggest party in 1994 and established a Manmohan Adhikari-led minority government. The results of these outcomes led newspapers to consider PMPD as a successful electoral strategy. The results of the 1991 and 1994 elections reveal that CPN-UML has been gaining in strength; from 69 seats in 1991 to 88 seats in 1994 (Pandey, 2026).

This was a logical situation for a mindset as elections soon after the 1990s were the most imminent danger to political legitimacy in Nepal. PMPD's assertion that communists were able to live in a multiparty system appeared to be substantiated when they won the elections. That provided the newspapers with ammo to associate PMPD with winning votes, winning seats, election strategies, coalition possibilities and the formation of a government. This conceptualization of PMPD also constrained the definition, however. In times of electoral victory, nothing is more proof of ideology than victory. The reasons for victory might be because of the appeal of the leader, opposition to the incumbent, the organization's

strength, dissatisfaction from the public or the effectiveness of the campaign. Consequently, the newspapers were on the risky side of confirming ideologies by the results of elections and so their practice of covering the electoral results of PMPD was risky.

The contesting electoral frame likewise fostered the strategic reporting. The issue for newspapers on PMPD was not its meaning to democracy but its meaning to class relations, state restructuring, civil liberties and social justice and for CPN-UML to defeat Nepali Congress. Ideology was being used as campaign tools while framing PMPD. This is a symptom of a larger issue with election coverage, ‘who’s up?’ versus ‘what is their plan?’.

Democratic Legitimacy Frame

The fourth frame was the democratic legitimacy frame. The question which was raised on this context is, can a communist party be trusted in multiparty democracy? It was a serious question in the early 1990s. Nepal had recently made the transition to a democratic form of government and communism was being challenged internationally. There was doubt as to the democratic credentials of the leftist parties. PMPD was an opportunity for CPN-UML to showcase itself as an organization of socialism and democracy.

The newspapers were used to promote this claim to legitimacy. The press contributed to the legitimisation of the concept of a democratic communist party by covering the elections, the fact that UML accepted the possibility of parliamentary competition and adopted constitutional politics. This was significant in the establishment of democratic process. It expanded the scope of ideological acceptability of Nepali democracy and reduced the fear of authoritarianism in politics through the participation of communists.

But, the legitimacy frame was challenged. Supportive interpretations found PMPD as proof of the transference of the left movement in Nepal to democratic. This was taken as a tactical approach to gaining power. It’s not such a silly question, because there’s a conflict between revolution and liberal democratic pluralism in PMPD. It remains an academic debate if it will alleviate that tension in PMPD or not. This phenomenon was seen at the context of framing PMPD in post 1990s parliamentary elections.

The democratic legitimacy frame offers proof that it can influence the interpretation of the citizens from the media frame and lead to the interpretation of the ideological legitimacy. To highlight the democratic character of PMPD as an adaptation, and the legitimacy of CPN-UML, newspapers could be used. They might make it appear to be a tactical conundrum. However, press framing was not just a mirror of the political reality, it was a component of public meaning construction of democratic left politics.

Political Parallelism and Media Choice

The Nepali media system in the framing of PMPD is diverse. Political parallelism, lack of professional autonomy and ideological proximity influenced the interpretation given by newspapers on the political actors. According to the research on Nepali media, media has become more and more political, and is not fully independent (Dahal, 2019; KC, 2019; Rijal, 2014). This indicates that PMPD coverage had a wide range in view of the diverse newspaper ideologies, ownership, readership and political affiliation.

The innovation, democratic and national relevance of PMPD was the focus of newspapers and commentators on the left. However, liberal or centrist newspapers might have been interested in it due to the amount of democratic values that have been integrated into UML. PMPD may be viewed as an ideologically rehash of conservative or anti-communist media outlets. The difference demonstrates that frames are not without influences, but are shaped by the institutional context and by a political interest. Political parallelism also had an impact on what was omitted. In retrospect, newspapers should have more reported about people's pent-up activities, speeches, election results and less about PMPD's theory about class analysis, people's sovereignty, anti-feudal transformation, national economy and socialist orientation. Framing is a major aspect of omission. For everything which is emphasized, there is something that is not emphasized, that is also important. And, the scenario at that time also was same or even there was greater political parallelism.

Difficulties in Reporting Political Ideology

The review indicates that there were issues in reporting PMPD by Nepali newspapers. First of all, PMPD was an idea fraught with lots of concepts. It was required to be acquainted with the concept of Marxism, with the concept of democratic theory, with the class structure of Nepal, with the constitutional politics and with the world debate on socialism. In the early post-panchayat days, many of the journalists may not have been trained in ideology and policy reporting.

Secondly, newspapers were in an environment of rapid political change. Change of the press from a controlled to open – new freedoms, new pressure. The journalists had to cover multiple parties, establish new institutions, public gatherings, which included debates on the constitution, and elections. In some cases, not even news reported and analytical journalism was underrepresented.

Thirdly, political polarization had an impact on news values. Depending on how newspapers perceived UML, the image of PMPD could have been a democratic entity, a communist entity or an electoral competitor of Nepali Congress. Framing bias may work in patterns of selection, emphasis and omission, as Entman (2007) claims. This may particularly be the case in politically polarised media environments. As just mentioned, there was the political polarisation of media and fanning of PMPD, Democratic Socialism or any other political ideology also was obviously polarised.

Fourthly, emotional stress, due to charisma and demise of Madan Bhandari. The press found Bhandari as a very appealing political figure and this made it difficult to differentiate between the policy and the man. After his death, PMPD embroiled himself in legacy politics.

Citizen involvement is linked to democratic consolidation. Democratic consolidation is related to civic engagement. This incident with PMPD was an important aspect of the consolidation of democracy in Nepal. On the other hand, the newspaper itself was a part of the propagation of a complex political doctrine and thus it became part of the public discourse. The newspapers played their part in creating awareness among the people regarding the ideological options in the new democracy and PMPD, CPN-UML and Bhandari were among them. It was a very important demonstration of democracy after a time of political speech constraints. The press did not always make ideological analyses. The theoretical and policy aspects of PMPD

were at times substituted by personality and competition and party success aspects of PMPD. This narrowed down the deliberative aspect of public sphere. In a democracy, not only do the people need free elections, but they also need to have an informed discussion about various conceptions of society.

Thus, the case of PMPD is an example about the power and limitation of the Nepalinewspapers and other media after 1990. They were good at making things more visible, discussed and political pluralistic. However, the newspapers were unable to maintain their forte in an ideology analysis. This is not a new phenomenon because Nepali modern political arena is yet to be dominated by strong political figures, party alliance and ideology which a journalist should critically analyse.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations for future research:

Secondary review of newspapers only should not be the data for future, whereas primary archival content analysis of newspapers in Nepali should be conducted for the period 1990-1995 and later. Identification of relevant newspapers and finally these newspapers should be collected during the election period, and then coded for news reports and editorials, and compared frames with respect to language, ownership and ideology. These categories could range from leader frame, ideology frame, conflict frame, democratic legitimacy frame, electoral strategy frame, nationalism frame and policy frame and so on.

Comparative research also should be performed. There could be a comparison of the two newspapers in Nepali language and English language newspapers, or between state owned and private newspapers. One way would be to compare how PMPD was framed with how the Nepali Congress's democratic socialism or the Maoist ideology was framed since 1996 by the media. This type of study may help to understand media's role in translation of political ideology in public discourse in Nepal.

Digital media also cannot be ignored. PMPD is still being used in party literature, in commentary in the Internet, in social media, and in speeches. Future studies might be done on PMPD's shift from print newspapers to digital media. This would help to grasp better the dynamics of transformation of the ideological communication pattern in Nepal.

Conclusion

This review article focused on the role of the Nepali newspapers in shaping the concept of People's Multi Party Democracy in specific time, during the initial democratic phase of the country's history when the elections of 1991 and 1994 were conducted. This article used framing theory as a lens through a system of literature search to identify four frames: ideological innovation, charismatic leadership, electoral competition, and democratic legitimacy. The frames suggest that PMPD was not consistently represented. It was understood as a theoretical adaptation of Marxism simultaneously to the vision of Madan Bhandari, as an electoral approach of CPN-UML and as a claim to democratic legitimacy.

The article concludes that newspapers contributed a lot in introducing PMPD in the democratic public sphere of Nepal. Their coverage helped to bring a large communist party in to run in multiparty competition and added to a larger discussion of democracy, socialism and

political transformation. Another segment of the media, however, dumbed down PMPD's agenda to personality and outcome of elections instead of ideology. This coincided with the journalistic structure in Nepal since 1990, which is marked by political parallelism, failure to specialize among journalists and focus on event-based reporting.

This article's contribution is to connect three research fields which are usually kept apart from each other: PMPD studies, Nepali media studies and framing theory. It shows that political ideologies can be of public significance, not only in the documents and speeches of political parties, but also in the frames that are used to select and emphasize and interpret media. The piece also highlights the need for ideological and policy journalism in Nepal.

The major constraint of this review is the use of secondary sources only. It is not a complete archival content analysis of newspapers published during and around 1991 and 1994 election periods. Therefore its conclusions should be considered as exploratory and interpretative. Future research can be done on various original newspaper archives, systematic coding, comparative analysis of newspapers, and analysis of audience reception. This work would contribute in understanding the construction of PMPD in a more accurate way and the effects of the construction on the people's understanding of the democratic left movement in Nepal.

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