

Article – III

Regional Liaisons and Nationalism during Transition to Democracy: Collating the Contrasts of Bhutan and Nepal

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Abstract

Democracy is under jeopardy because democratic rights and freedoms are dwindling globally. The issues that contributed to democracy's downfall need to be resolved if it is to survive. How regional issues and nationalism effect political developments is the study subject. This article explains why certain political reforms, notably ones toward democracy, perform better than others. The author examines Bhutan and Nepal since 2008 to answer this question. Why was Bhutan's democratic transition more tranquil compared to Nepal's? Regional influences, notably India's participation in both situations, may also explain the Himalayan democratic nations political developments. Most transitional differences are explained by disputed patriotism in Nepal with firm specific patriotism in Bhutan, according to the study.

Keywords: Authoritarian rule, Constitutional Monarchy, Driglam Namzha, Democracy, Gross National Happiness, Nationalism, Tsawasum, Democratic Transition

1. Introduction

Globally, freedom is challenged. According to Freedom House, worldwide freedom began to decline in 2006 (Repucci & Amy, 2021). 2020 brought a deadly pandemic, economic and physical instability, and strife. Democracy's recent failures against authoritarian opponents tipped the world's power balance towards despotism. Sixteen years of declining global freedom endanger democracy.

Nowadays, just around 20% of people live in free nations (Repucci & Amy, 2022). Scholars think a durable democratic transition requires deliberate patience, extensive conversation between opponents and the previous administration, and daring steps by statesmen and the public (Basora, 2016). Democracy is a long, hard, non-linear process (Diamond, 1999). Others have proposed a democratic transition needs. Education and affluence, Diamond believes, boost the chances of retaining democracy more than overall economic development (Diamond, 2009). Democracy is challenging, and transition is time-consuming and unpredictable.

Political scientists disagree on what “causes” democracy and how to transite smoothly. Modernization theorists like Lipset believe economic development influences democracy (Arat, 1988). Lipset believes a country's democracy will improve as it grows

economically. Huber and Stephens believe that economic advancement undermines democracy by moving class power from landlords to subservients (Munck, 1992). Huntington cites five factors to explain a “third wave” of democratic governance in the 20th century- authoritarian government’s veracity issues, growing needs particularly among the working class, liberalisation well within “Roman Catholic Church”, support for democracy from intergovernmental organisations and the demonstrative impact of democratically developing countries (Xenias, 2005).

Studies on Asian democracy emphasise elite and public mobilisation. Lee said “protests, strikes, and boycotts” are the essence of Asian democracy (Shonchay and Tsubota, 2015). Many have studied violence because it impairs democratic transitions. If the administration doesn't meet public expectations, violence might result (Ensor, 2011). A democratic administration has clear aims, such as improving the economy and infrastructure. When the government fails to do so, it leads to political violence (Keen, 2012).

Some say nationalism, factionalism, and scapegoating cause violence (Mansfield & Synder, 2009). They say expanding political participation in a democracy with weak institutions fosters ethnic minority nationalism. Dominant groups may embrace ethnic or state nationalism to regain power (Mansfield & Synder, 2002).

Nationalism and regionalism influence transitions. Democracy is considered as an internal process, argues Pevehouse. Pevehouse contends that NATO, the EU, and other democracies and IGOs have made democracy promotion a foreign policy priority (Pevehouse, 2002). Social elites and their involvement in transitions are two possible external guarantors or risks. Diplomatic and commercial pressure from abroad is another. Nepal or Bhutan’s democratic revolutions may have been driven by India and China using similar techniques.

2. Bhutan: An Unusual Path to Democracy

Bhutan has a 1400-year history. The “Dual System” was created by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel in the early 1600s, according to which the Zhabdrung oversaw the kingdom’s religious and spiritual affairs (Hutt, 2005), while the Desi was in charge of its political affairs (Phuntsho, 2008). Bhutan was united by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, who also gave it its “identity” (Mathou, 1999). The Desi chose the provincial governors (Penlops), who proposed the Dzongpoens as sub-district representatives (Mathou, 2000). Desi and Penlops clashed for territory or power.

Beginning in 1907, the Wangchuck Dynasty governed Bhutan. Before 1907, Bhutan's political system was plagued by internal strife. The kingdom of Bhutan saw multiple democratic eras. The National Assembly was established by Jigme Dorji Wangchuck in 1953 as a legislative and deliberative body (Mathou, 1999). Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, Bhutan's third monarch, granted to the “National Assembly” the power to overthrow the crown prince by a “vote of no confidence” in 1968 (Bogle 2019). The DDC and BDC were founded in 1981 and 1991, respectively, as a continuation of decentralisation (Chhoden, 2009). District Development Committees (DDCs) and Block

Development Committees (BDCs) were set up so that the federal government would no longer be solely responsible for organising, funding, and controlling public affairs. A significant step toward democracy was made on September 4, 2001, when the King authorised the drafting of a constitution (Turner & Tshering, 2014).

Before formal democracy, there was primitive power sharing in Bhutan. Democracy may have occurred in Bhutan even when it was an absolute monarchy. The third monarch also left behind a legislative system and the power for the assembly to depose the king if necessary, as well as the 1998 ministerial election. To begin with, it is impossible to dispute that the king's choice to consciously cede much of his authority to his people—as a “royal gift” that converts the nation from an “absolute monarchy” to a “parliamentary democracy”—is a unique phenomenon in the globe. The justification for such a procedure is often twofold. The formation of democracy is a top-down, elite-driven process; in other words, “democracy from above”. As such, it is the result of no sociopolitical movement or revolutionary deed. Furthermore, it could be argued that the monarch made the decision to transfer power freely before being compelled to do it. However, over the span of 18 years, Bhutan made a dramatic and generally peaceful transition from absolute royal authority to a constitutional monarchy.

2.1 Bhutan's Political Changes:

In 1907, Ugyen Wangchuck was crowned king of Bhutan, and the country formally adopted an authoritarian political system. As a monarch, he is remembered for his role in transforming Bhutan into what it is now. Bhutan's relationships with its neighbour India were strengthened in 1949 when Bhutan and the newly independent India signed an agreement guaranteeing each other's non-interference in the other's domestic issues in exchange for India's advice on international matters (Kumar, 2007).

In 1952, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, often referred to as the “Father of Modern Bhutan”, ascended to the throne. The positive changes he brought about during his reign were regarded as reforming monarchs. In 1953, he set up Bhutan's legislature, the National Assembly. In 1961, he also made a plan for economic growth and created the Royal Bhutan Army (Paul, 2017).

Jigme Singye Wangchuck became king following the passing of King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck in 1972, and carried on his father's careful modernisation agenda (Wolf, 2016). As foreign visitors were first permitted to enter the nation in 1974 (Chester, 1981), the government passed a new rule (in 1985) under which citizenship was awarded based on duration of residency in Bhutan (Nab.gov., 1985). King Jigme Singye Wangchuck instituted a decentralisation agenda in 1998 and handed control of the government to the National Assembly.

In March 2005, the government submitted a constitution for parliamentary democracy in Bhutan. A referendum was held. Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck became Bhutan's fifth king in November 2008 after Jigme Singye Wangchuck abdicated in 2003. The sole instances of violence during Bhutan's democratic transition were a series of bomb explosions in January and February 2008, including at least one that occurred in the

nation's capital of Thimphu and resulted in injury of one person (Reuters, 2008). Exiled Nepalese organisations are linked to attacks. Bhutan has had three elections since 2008, although vote-buying and electoral violence are rare (Turner, 2015).

Even without violence, Bhutan's transition was arduous. Bhutan's voter turnout dropped from 53.05 percent in 2008 to 45.15 percent in 2013. This is the first unfavourable development that has occurred (Dema, 2018). If these declines persist, Bhutanese support for democracy may be called into question. Additionally, the representation of women is also declining (Turner, 2015).

After a dip in voter turnout (between 2008 and 2013), Bhutan's Election Commission reforms increased turnout in 2018 (54.3 percent). Four women were elected to the inaugural Council in 2008, but none were elected in 2013. Six women ran for office in the 2018 elections, and two of them won (Dema, 2018); restoring female National Council members was another good sign of the maturing democracy in Bhutan.

2.2 Bhutan's Nationalism:

Bhutan's government is based on things like cultural identity, political sovereignty, and the ability to combine ideas (Mathou, 2008). In terms of cultural identity, the central focus of Bhutan's political development has been building "unity out of diversity" (Mathou, 2008). When Tibet attacked Bhutan from the outside and there was fighting inside Bhutan in the seventeenth century, the monarchy of Bhutan decided that a "nation-state" was necessary for the survival of the country (Mathou, 2008).

Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, who developed Bhutanese customs, rituals, and ceremonies in the 16th century, is often credited as the one who first introduced the concept of Bhutanese nationality (Mathou, 1999). Bhutan's activities in the 1980s were built on this idea. The Marriage Act was established by the government in 1980, limiting marriages between non-Bhutanese people (Hutt, 1996). For instance, the government limited marriages with non-Bhutanese people by introducing the Marriage Act in 1980. (Hutt, 1996). Driglam Namzha's which was designated as the "Bhutanization" of the people (Wolf, 2016), was presented in Bhutan's Sixth Five Year Plan. It required traditional Bhutanese dress and rituals as well as the slogan "one nation, one people" (Whitecross, 2002). Still, it should be seen as a continuation of the "ideological engineering" that began in 1963 when the king changed his title to Druk Gyalpo in an attempt to give Bhutan a unique identity.

Bhutan was never colonised, despite its strategic location. Independent local administration, a sense of national dignity, and a "culture of isolationism" all contributed to Bhutan's political sovereignty. until the 1960s (Mathou, 2008). Bhutan did not embrace democracy the way other nations have. Instead, Bhutan adapted it to fit its taste and lifestyle. In Bhutan, democracy isn't simply about elections and political rivalries; all parties must support "Gross National Happiness". Gross National Happiness (GNH) is a notion often ascribed to Bhutan; it proposes gauging economic advancement on the basis of the happiness of its people (Kumar and Kanaujia, 2020). As a result, democracy is given a Bhutanese twist, thus building national identity.

Bhutanese nationalism has its roots in Driglam Namzha and Tsawasum, two of the country's guiding principles. Therefore, Driglam Namzha is considered Bhutan's rule of ethics because Drig means "order, norm, and conformity"; Lam means a way of establishing command; and Namzha means an idea or a concept. Tsawasum is yet another significant component of Bhutan's nationalism, much like Driglam Namzha. Tsawasum refers to the kingdom, its king, and its administration (Phuntsho, 2004).

Bhutanese nationalism also values language. It's so vital that it's a cornerstone of Bhutanese culture and national identity. Dzongkha is the official language of Bhutan; the country's other 19 tongues are dialects (Ura et al. 2012).

Culture has a crucial role in maintaining national independence and providing individuals with a sense of belonging. Bhutan's distinct culture is vital to the country's existence. In a rapidly changing and increasingly homogeneous world, it gives Bhutanese people a sense of community and shared ideals (Ura et al., 2012).

2.3 Bhutan: Not Just India's Minnow?

Bhutan's original northward concentration has shifted southward in the last 150 years for political gain. Isolationism in the first half of the twentieth century was progressively abandoned with Indian Prime Minister Nehru's 1958 trip to Bhutan (Kumar, 2007).

The Chinese invasion of Tibet (1951) and the China/India conflict (1962) may have inspired the third monarch, Jigme Dorji, to consider democratisation, shifting the kingdom towards the Indian rather than the Chinese model (Bogle, 2019). Bhutan may have sought a bigger international network that expressly acknowledged it as a sovereign state out of uneasiness of India's ambitions, particularly after its 1975 acquisition of Sikkim (Ahmad, 2013). Bhutan joined the Colombo Plan (1962), the IPU (1969), and the UN (1971).

Bhutan and India revised their 1949 treaty in February 2007. In return, Bhutan gained increased regional and international control over its foreign and defence affairs (Kumar, 2007). This moved Bhutan out of "Delhi's shadow" (BBC, 2007), yet in certain quarters, Bhutan is still viewed as India's protectorate (Zongyi, 2013). Bhutan is one of India's "minnows" (Bogle, 2019).

India and other states haven't overtly pressured Bhutan to become more democratic. Bothe (2015) says researchers have ignored India's "invisible" effect. She views India's 50% assistance increase "at the start of the constitutional process" and the 2007 treaty revision as a reward for democratisation. India backed the constitution's formulation and offered an advisor to the committee, which gave it considerable influence on the politics.

The EU has helped Bhutan's democratisation by sending an independent monitoring team during the 2008 election (EU, 2008). The EU increased financing to Bhutan from 2014 to 2020 in recognition of its efforts "to reduce poverty and seek constitutional

reforms” (EC 2014). But again, this support came after Bhutan's ruler decided to democratise, not before.

Many analysts and pundits think India tried to influence Bhutan's 2013 election due to Thinley's cautious openness to China. As Bhutan is a critical buffer state for India's security, hence the Bhutan-China relationship is sensitive. Bhutan has resisted establishing official diplomatic ties with any permanent “UN Security Council member”, avoiding singling out China. Bhutan and China have “unresolved border concerns” (Phuntsho, 2013). Regarding the border issues, they have had almost 24 rounds of high-level negotiations and 10 expert group sessions (Kumar, 2021) till date.

Despite Bhutan's theoretically democratic neighbourhood and close relationship with the world's greatest democracy, the region did not support its democratisation. The Monarchs steered the kingdom toward democracy despite their people's reservations. Bhutan's pragmatic choice of India over China years ago meant that when the monarchy decided to democratise, the Indian model was available as a guide. If the Chinese connection had been favoured over the Indian, this wouldn't have occurred.

3. Nepal: Outline of the Past

Before the 18th century, Nepal was made up of numerous small monarchies (Parajulee, 2000). The Kathmandu Valley, the current capital, had three kingdoms. Prithvi Narayan Shah of Gorkha “unified” Nepal in 1769 by capturing Kathmandu and later neighbouring areas (Osmani and Bajracharya, 2007). The Shah Empire encompassed a third of Nepal. During the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814–15), Britain resisted territorial expansion. The Nepalese agreed to give a third of their territory and let a British “Resident” dwell in Kathmandu by signing the Agreement of Sagauli in 1816 (Kumari and Kushwaha, 2019).

After palace killings and intrigues, the Rana dynasty began arresting kings in 1846. After India's independence, the Rana regime was overthrown. This early cry for democracy came from a few educated commoners, not mass mobilisation. The Nepali Congress was founded by these men (Malagodi, 2013).

Nepal's route to democracy was bottom-up and had four stages, unlike Bhutan's. The first shift in Nepal occurred when King Tribhuvan fled to India in 1950-1959 because the Ranas posed a threat to him. Mahendra succeeded King Tribhuvan in 1955. Even though Nepal had its first general election in 1959, the king arrested the cabinet and took power in late 1960 (Thapa, 1999; Parajulee, 2000; Malagodi, 2011).

The second changeover occurred when King Birendra faced growing resistance after he centralised the system and alienated the opposition. King Birendra called a referendum on May 24, 1979. The referendum inquired whether Nepalese people wanted multi-party or party-less Panchayats (Osmani and Bajracharya, 2007). 55% voted for the king's no-party system (Kantha, 2010). The Nepali Congress advocated for democracy in 1990–1999, which was the third transition (Kantha, 2010). Nepal tried to attain democracy numerous times before 2008, this was the fourth transition, but rifts between King Gyanendra and legislative parties prevented it (Parajulee, 2000).

Nepal's constitutional process took a lengthy time. Nepal operated under the 2007 interim constitution until 2012 (Kantha, 2013). Nepal's Constituent Assembly was dismissed on May 27, 2012, leaving it without a parliament (Kantha, 2013). People were split, while Nepal's federal system was being explored. In an ethnic federal system, the Madhesi wanted a separate Madhesi region, but the Nepali Congress and CPN-M wanted weak federalism (Parajulee, 2000).

3.1 Nepal's Political Changes:

The first general elections in 1959 began Nepal's political democracy, which went through numerous ups and downs until 1990.

In 1990, King Birendra of Nepal instituted direct democracy and abolished the Panchayat System. While the king retained his constitutional status and title, this agreement stripped him of many of his direct powers (Savada, 1993). The Nepali Congress Party chose G. P. Koirala to be prime minister in 1991.

The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) launched a "people's war" in 1996. Dipendra shot himself after killing King Birendra in 2001 (John, 2007). The crown was then passed on to King Birendra's brother, Gyanendra. King Gyanendra sacked Sher Bahadur Deuba and dissolved the assembly in 2002. Deuba was blamed for not holding elections (Shukla, 2005). After that, the King personally chose Prime Ministers for each government.

In February 2005, King Gyanendra seized power. He vowed to fight the Maoists. In November, Maoists and other parliamentary groups agreed to topple King Gyanendra's direct control (Rajamohan, 2006).

In April 2006, political parties and Maoists backed the "Second People's Movement" (Jana Andolan II). King Gyanendra abdicated after protests and unhappiness. Girija Prasad Koirala was elected prime minister on April 25, 2006 (Shukla, 2006). After 10 years of "People's War" which was fought between the government and Maoists, a peace agreement was reached in November 2006. In April 2007, Maoists joined Koirala's transitional government.

The Maoists abandoned the interim administration in September 2007 and sought the monarchy's overthrow and election law reforms (Upreti, 2010). Nepal became a federated, democratic republic with the first Constituent Assembly convening in May 2008. (Thapa and Sharma, 2009).

In July of 2008, Ram Baran Yadav and Paramanand Jha were chosen to serve as Nepal's first president and vice president, respectively. As of August 2008, when Prachanda first established a coalition government, the Nepali Congress transitioned into the opposition role. Kumar Madhav Nepal became PM when Yadav and Prachanda resigned in May 2009 (The Statesman's Yearbook 2013). The Maoists joined the opposition and staged protests. Madhav Nepal resigned amid a Maoist threat in June 2010, but remained PM for another seven months (Ghimire, 2010). Even though the Supreme Court said

that both additions were illegal, the Constituent Assembly failed to pass a new constitution in May of that year (Indian, 2015). Sushil Koirala, president of the Nepali Congress, became premier in February 2014.

Ethnic minorities and Terai inhabitants organised most of the protests after the 2015 constitution was enacted (BBC, 2018). They alleged the new constitution, rushed by elite-dominated parties, discriminated against them. Minority groups believed the proportional representation system in parliament, established at 58% in accordance with the prior post-war temporary constitution, would be decreased to 48% under the new constitution (Haviland, 2015). Madhesi communities barricaded the border, causing a fuel crisis. In February 2016, the embargo was removed. K. P. Prasad was the first prime minister following the 2015 constitution (BBC, 2018). In August 2016, the Maoist Party's Prachanda was re-elected prime minister. In June 2017, Sher Bahadur Deuba replaced Prachanda. At least 17 people were badly injured in November 2017 Maoist attacks. Due to the government's harsh actions, 13,000 people suffered and died in the Maoist-government conflict (Hafeez, 2008).

Nepal's post-2008 political upheavals were defined by unstable leadership and violent demonstrations.

3.2 Nepalese Nationalism:

Nepalese politics is influenced by ethnicity and caste. In 2011, Nepal's MOFA identified 126 caste/ethnic groups and 123 mother tongues. The Nepalese caste system is inclusive as well as exclusionary. It is representative of Nepal's many ethnic communities, it is inclusive (Bhandari, 2016). It's exclusive since it splits ethnic groups into different castes under the Hindu Caste System's four Varnas (Bhandari, 2016). Following the assault of Gorkhali in the 19th century, ethnic and caste-based societal discrimination began (Jones & Langford, 2011). Prithvi Narayan Shah's unification of Nepal and the Ranas' reinforcement of it were both founded on the Hindu four Varnas system, which is based on ceremonial purity and defilement (Kharel, 2010).

Since the nineteenth century, Nepal has been a Hindu kingdom. During this period, high-level state posts were handed to Bahun, Chhetri, and Thakuri (Jones & Langford, 2011). Ethnicity has affected several political events in Nepal. King Mahendra banned racial and caste affiliations in nation-building from 1960 until 1990 (Gellner, 2019). Some Newars and higher castes profited most from this arrangement. The Maoists began their "People's War" (1996–2006) to eradicate caste and ethnic discrimination in Nepal. Nepal's Communist Party used the racial card for political gain (Gellner, 2007). In 2008, the Maoists won the most seats in parliament by building strongholds in minority groups.

With its broad mandate, the Constituent Assembly aims to be the most representative body in Nepal's history. The Constituent Assembly of Nepal is made up of representatives chosen in accordance with the principles of regional congeniality, uniqueness, demographic equality, and Madhesi percentage (Upreti, 2014). But Raute, who in 2011 numbered 618, are underrepresented in the constituent assembly (Adhikari

and Gellner, 2016). Since the first Constituent Assembly of Nepal was unable to settle on a racial or ethnic basis for federalism, it was dissolved. Since ethnicity was so important in Nepal, the "High-Level State Restructuring Commission" and the "Committee for State Restructuring and Allocation of State Power" agreed that the states should be divided by ethnicity, but they disagreed on the number and size of the states (Lecours, 2014).

More than 100 "indigenous nations" may be found in Nepal, but none of them can be regarded as the predominant population (Shrestha, 2007). The civic and ethnic forms of nationalism are clearly at odds with one another. The ruling minority has imposed its language, religion, or even culture on every other nation under the pretext of civic nationalism. Through ethnic movements, other ethnicities have attempted to defend their cultures, religions, and languages against this "caste-hill Hindu elite nationalism". But inner hierarchy and contests among the communities have resulted in discord among them (Bhandari et al., 2009).

3.3 Nepal-A Batata Amid Two Boulders

Nepal, which is landlocked and hilly, must reassess its foreign connections. India affected Nepal's route to democracy at important moments (Dahal, 2020). A 1950 "Treaty of Peace and Friendship" allows close ties and an open border. Each country feels the treaty helps the other. Nepal seeks to avoid assimilation, promote economic growth, and be involved. India's priority is security. India was instrumental in Nepal's democratisation in 1951 and 1989, but it didn't advocate for restored democracy in 1962 since its interests were elsewhere. Later, India helped restore democracy in 2005-6. (Jha, 2017).

India's plans aren't always rational. It's not steady. India's attitudes towards the monarchy and Maoists shifted in 2005-06 (Muni, 2012). The 12-Point Understanding of November 2005 was persuaded by India to exclude any reference to a republic. After the second Jan Andolan, India was cautious (Jha, 2012). It endorsed Gyanendra's initial proclamation, which didn't call for parliament's reinstatement, hurting India's democratic reputation among political parties (Muni, 2012). India changed its mind, said no to Gyanendra's request for army help, and supported the protests that were already going on (Jha, 2017).

India's 2015 blockade in support of Madhesi demonstrations against the new constitution plunged Nepal into instability. Dixit deems the blockade the "most detrimental occurrence" in Indian-Nepali ties. Dixit also said Modi's Hindu nationalism means he wants Nepal to become a Hindu state (Dixit, 2016).

The previous Nepali government sought to engage with India in response to the embargo and agreed to make constitutional changes (khobragade, 2016), but it also "played the China card", signing agreements and increasing ties with China. China's main concern in Nepal was potential political activities by Tibetan exiles. In the last few years, China's economic involvement in Nepal has grown, which is a challenge to India's previous dominance (Pandey, 2020).

International allies turned against Gyanendra after his 2005 coup. The US, UK, and India froze military assistance. Gyanendra bought munitions from China, which enraged India (Bogle, 2019). Nepal, like Bhutan, is a part of SAARC, which promotes cooperation and coordination but not democracy.

India has influenced Nepal's democratic transition, albeit not always consistently, making it hard for Nepali leaders to bank on a specific Indian strategy.

4. Conclusion

Political transitions are influenced by a variety of causes. Nepal's political transition wasn't as peaceful as Bhutan's, and this may be due to nationalism and regional influence. Bhutan's development of democracy was not driven by public demand. In actuality, democracy was established and put into practise by the previous administration. There was no nationwide call for democracy from the people. In contrast, the people of Nepal led the transition. Because the people asked for it through Jan Andolan, the country got rid of its monarchy, brought back its parliament, made a new constitution, and even started a federal republic.

Nationalistic sentiments may have two effects. As a result of a more united and less nationalistic population, political transitions in Bhutan were rather peaceful. There were many competing nationalist movements and historical grievances in Nepal, making it difficult to forge a unified national identity. Multiple nationalisms prompted a long, violent political transition. Due to the lack of competing nationalist ideologies, Bhutan was able to make a peaceful transition.

When seen from a distance, Bhutan & Nepal resemble one another remarkably. The reality is that they're both in South Asia, but whether or not there are any additional commonalities between the two is up for discussion. The primary distinction is that the democratic process in Nepal has been bottom-up, while in Bhutan it has been top-down. As a result, the study reveals that two situations or countries that appear to be extremely similar on the surface may actually be very different. While we might contrast them, we shouldn't attempt to group them in a bracket or into a conclusion.

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