

NEPAL

Limbus

Activity: 1986-2020

General notes

- Note: both the Rais and the Limbus are indigenous groups, and hence so-called ‘Adivasi/Janajatis’. There is also a broader movement for indigenous autonomy, but the Rais and the Limbus stand out in terms of both organizational capacity and support for autonomy (International Crisis Group 2011: 13; Lawoti 2013: 201). Hence, we code Rais and Limbus separately, and an umbrella movement of ‘other’ Adivasi/Janajati groups.

Movement start and end dates

- The Limbus, an indigenous (Adivasi/Janajati) group, are located in Nepal’s Eastern hills. Limbu activists claim a Limbuwan state covering nine of Nepal’s Eastern regions, vested with extensive powers. According to a 2011 International Crisis Group report: “The most active Limbuwan groups are the three factions of the Federal Limbuwan State Councils (FLSC). The FLSC was established in December 2005, with Sanjuhang Palungwa as its first president.”
- In 2006, the FLSC split into two sub-groups: FLSC (K) and FLSC (SH) (Chemjong 2017: 53). As of November 2013, FLSC had split into two further sub-groups (Palungwa and Lingden Groups) (Chemjong 2017: 198). Other sources report three factions of the FLSC operating in the districts of Dhankuta, Tehrathum, Sankuwasabha, Sunsari, Panchthar, and Taplejung – all calling “for an autonomous Limbuwan state” (NAVA 2013: 9). Wikipedia describes the group as currently ‘active’, but the latest article it cites regarding the group is from 2016.
- Another Limbu organization advocating Limbu autonomy, the Limbuwan Front, was founded already in 1986. Therefore, we peg the start date to 1986, the year the Limbuwan Front was established.
- The movement is ongoing as of 2020 (Pradhan 2015; Kamat 2022). [start date: 1986; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- There have been calls for independence (Dixit 2009), but the core demand of the Limbu movement is for autonomy (International Crisis Group 2011; Lawoti 2013: 200; Pradhan 2015). Note: in 2015, Nepal adopted federalism. According to the (limited) sources we could find, the Limbus’ claim is for a greater degree of autonomy within the province and not for a separate province for themselves. Therefore, we continue to code an autonomy claim after 2015 and not a sub-state secession claim. [1986-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

- From around 2008, secessionist rhetoric increased in frequency, including in local radio broadcasts such as Sumhatlung FM. Several groups made claims for secession. For example, the Kirat Janabadi Workers Party – established in 2008 – strives for the creation of a Kirat state in eastern Nepal and to this effect engaged in a terrorist campaign including bombings (NAVA 2013: 10).
- Another relevant organization is Pallo Kirat, which is led by “ex-RPP Dambar Lawoti” (Dixit 2009). Pallo Kirat takes its name from the autonomous Pallo Kirat region (the previous name of

Limbuwan), whose leaders were the “Ten Limbus” (Gautam 2010: 21, 26, 30; Chemjong 2017: 11). The Pallo Kirat group “declared Limbuwan as an independent state on March 23, 2008 arguing that with the end of monarchy, the treaty the Limbus had with King Prithvi Narayan Shah to remain as part of the House of Gorkha became void” (Lawoti 2013: 197). We could not establish the group’s date of formation.

- It appears that secessionist rhetoric died down at some point in the 2010s. However, we were unable to find clear evidence, and therefore code the independence claim as ongoing as of 2020.
- The most important group associated with this movement is the Federal Limbuwan State Council (FLSC – see above). The FLSC has claimed that “they will wage a separatist war for a free Limbuwan state if their demands for self-determination are not met” (Dixit 2009). We interpret this as a threat that the group may make secession claims in the future, but not as a current claim for secession. [start date: 2008; end date: ongoing]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Limbus is composed of nine districts in eastern Nepal, also called “Limbuwan”. The nine districts are Taplejung, Panchthar, Ilam, Jhapa, Terhathum, Sankhuwasabha, Dhankuta, Sunsari and Morang (Limbuwan Kingdom 2019). We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database.

Sovereignty declarations

- A Limbu group declared independence in 2008 (Lawoti 2013: 193). [2008: independence declaration]

Separatist armed conflict

- Avidasis/Janajatis were involved in the Maoist insurgency (1996-2006), but this is not coded as separatist violence since the insurgency’s aim was the toppling of the government. The movement is coded as NVIOLSD. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The Limbus are located in Nepal’s eastern-most regions. Back in 1774, the early Nepali state granted the Limbus far-reaching autonomy (control over land, tax collection, dispensing justice, and maintenance of militias; see International Crisis Group 2011: 3). However, this autonomy slowly eroded, and was defunct (at least) since the mid-1950s. Nepal has a long history of discrimination against non-Brahmins, non-Nepali speakers and non-Hindi (including the Limbus; International Crisis Group 2011). Ever since Nepal was created, it has been controlled by Brahmins and Chhetris, which form about 30% of the national population (The Economist 2012). Nepali is the only official language of Nepal, and Nepali is the only medium of education (Hachhethu 2007: 9). Nepal is a Hindu state. There is a long-standing policy of Nepalization. Overall, the Limbus are severely discriminated against, do not enjoy cultural rights (language and religion), and do not have autonomy, even if discrimination against Limbus is somewhat weaker in practice compared to discrimination against the Madhesis (International Crisis Group 2011: 3).

Concessions and restrictions

- The 1990 constitution, adopted in the context of democratization, embraced multilingualism and multiculturalism, but these changes were cosmetic and did not lead to actual policy changes, in particular not to the recognition of languages other than Nepali (Kantha 2010: 159). For example, the Supreme Court voided a decision to experiment with the introduction of Maithali as official language in a Terai district in 1990. Nepal remained a unitary state with Nepali as the sole official language (International Crisis Group 2011: 5). This was reaffirmed in 1999, when the Supreme Court declared illegal the use of any language other than Nepali in local government bodies (International Crisis Group 2011: 5). Hence, we do not code the 1990 constitution as a concession.
- In 2002, the Nepal Federation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) Act was passed, which recognizes indigenous nationalities (adivasi janajati) as a legal category, establishes the criteria a group has to fulfill and lists 59 officially recognized janajati groups, including the Limbus. Among other things, the NFDIN aims for the cultural development of Nepal's indigenous nationalities. Moreover, in 2002 the state-sponsored National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities was founded (Lawoti 2013: 199; Hangen 2007: 40-41). [2002: cultural rights concession]
- In May 2006, Nepal's House of Representatives declared Nepal a secular state, along with suspending the political powers of the king, and thereby ending the two-centuries old Hindu kingdom (Letizia 2012: 66). The 2007 interim constitution reiterated secularism (International Crisis Group 2011: 23). The introduction of secularism is considered a concession on cultural rights since the Limbus are not Hindu. Note, however, that Nepali remained the only official language. [2006: cultural rights concession]
- The Madhesi uprisings in 2007 and 2008 led to two peace agreements and to changes to the interim constitution (which, despite lobbying by various ethnic group leaders, had not made mention of federalism). In particular, a commitment to federalism was included (Miklian 2012; International Crisis Group 2011). It is doubtful, however, whether the agreements can really be interpreted as a true autonomy offer. There appears to be significant opposition against federalization. The constituent assembly, tasked with the drafting of a new constitution, has been unable to adopt a constitution within four years, and was dissolved in 2012. Thus, Nepal remains federalist on paper only (The Economist 2012; International Crisis Group 2011). We do not code a concession because the autonomy offer is too vague and because there was no implementation.
- In 2015, Nepal adopted a new constitution which created a federal state consisting of a federal government, autonomous provinces, and local governments. Furthermore, one or more national languages that are spoken by most people in a state will attain official status at the province level in addition to Nepali (Nepal's Constitution 2015). Overall, 7 provinces were created. Critically, states are geography-based and not identity-based (GIGA 2016). The Limbus are located mainly in Province No. 1, which is ethnically diverse. The Limbus make up just a small minority in the province (ca. 8%) (Thapa 2017). Therefore, we do not code an autonomy concession.
- On September 6, 2021, the Language Commission recommended that 11 different languages including Limbu be used as official languages in addition to Nepali (Sunuwar 2022). According to Wikipedia, this has been implemented (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_No._1). Because we cover the movement up to 2020, we do not code a concession. Note: Limbu appears to have attained official status in some districts prior to this; we decided not to code these smaller, local developments (My Republica 2018).

Regional autonomy

- Nepal federalized in 2015, but the Limbus make up but a small minority in one state (see above). Hence, we do not code autonomy. [no autonomy]

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Limbus
<i>Scenario</i>	n:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Adibasi Janajati
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	79002000

Power access

- The Limbus are one of Nepal's many indigenous (Adivasi/Janajati) groups. EPR does not code the Limbus, but an umbrella group of Adivasi/Janajati (the only indigenous group that is coded separately is the Hindu Newars, which contrary to the other indigenous groups have been included in the national executive ever since the early 1990s, see Hangen 2007: 10). In EPR, the Adivasis are coded as powerless throughout, except for 2003-2006, an ethnically inclusive interlude during which the Adivasis are coded as junior partners since all major groups seem to have been included in the national executive. In 2007-2012, the Adivasis are again considered powerless since the cabinet became significantly less inclusive. However, the Limbus seem to have managed to retain their status; they are even over-represented in the cabinet (Lawoti 2013: 201). Chemjong (2017) suggests that Limbu representation was retained in more recent years. Based on this, we code the Limbus as powerless until 2003, and as junior partner from 2003 onwards. [1986-2002: powerless; 2003-2020: junior partner]

Group size

- According to a 2011 report by the International Crisis Group (2011: 2), the Limbus make up 1.58 per cent of Nepal's population. [0.0158]

Regional concentration

- Since we could not find more accessible data, we browsed district level data from the 2011 census (data can be downloaded here: <https://data.hdx.rwlab.org/dataset/nepal-census-2011-district-profiles-demography>). The total number of Limbus in the 2011 census is 387,000, or 1.46% of Nepal's population. We found larger concentrations in the following seven eastern districts. The Limbus do not form a majority in any of the districts. While we lack more fine-grained data, this makes it rather unlikely (if not impossible) that there exists a Limbu homeland that would cross the threshold. [not concentrated]
 - o Taplejung: 53,000/127,461
 - o Tehrathum: 36,000/102,000
 - o Panchthar: 80,000/192,000
 - o Illam: 46,000/290,000
 - o Jhapa: 54,000/185,000
 - o Morang: 41,000/965,000

- Dhankuta: 21,000/163,000

Kin

- There are Limbus also in India, who form part of a larger group, the Sikkimese (they number approx. 190,000; see the respective entry and Minahan 2002: 1727) [kin in neighboring country]

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Madhesi

Activity: 1951-1959; 1985-2020

General notes

- The term Madhesi refers to people living in the Terai; languages spoken by Madhesi include Hindi and Urdu (Kantha 2010: 157).

Movement start and end dates

- In 1951, the Nepali Terai Congress was formed, claiming an autonomous Terai region, recognition of Hindi as a national language, and inclusion of Madhesi in the civil service (Hachhethu 2007: 10; International Crisis Group 2011: 4). Hence, we code movement activity as of 1951. In 1959 the party lost all seats in the parliamentary elections, and subsequently disappeared (Hachhethu 2007: 10). Thus, we code an end to the first phase of the movement in 1959. [start date 1: 1951; end date 1: 1959]
- The Madhesi movement resurfaced in the mid-1980s under the banner of Nepal Sadbhavana Parisad (which turned into the Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) after the restoration of multi-party elections in 1990). Somewhat arbitrarily, we code the beginning of the second phase in 1985. Again, federalism was among the core demands.
- The movement became virulent after the civil war came to an end in 2006. In 2006, the Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum was formed, an organization advocating ethnic federalism, and soon others followed. In 2007 the United Democratic Madhesi Front was created, a common platform of three Madhes parties.
- Lawoti (2013: 22) reports that there are armed groups including the Madhesi Mukti Tigers/Madhesi Liberation Tigers (MLT) and the Madhesi Virus Killers (MVK). According to our findings, both MLT and MVK sought an autonomous Terai region and not an independent state. MVK suspended its armed activities in late 2008 (Government of Nepal 2008); the same appears to apply to MLT.
- Another armed group is Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM), which was formed in 2004 after it split from the Maoist CPN-M. The group sought to seize Terai lands from non-Madhesi people and has been involved in activities including assassinations, abductions, and extortion. JTMM has formed a parallel government in certain Madhesi-populated areas of the Terai region. The JTMM has made claims for independence. In December 2018, the group reportedly surrendered its weapons to the government talks team (Paudel 2018).
- Another organization called the Tarai People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is also reported to have made secession claims (Lawoti 2013: 197). The TPLF was established in 2004 (Lawoti 2013: 22).
- Another source mentions the Madhesi Rastriya Mukti Morcha (MRMM) and its break-away groups. The MRMM appears to have started operating in 2004 and continued to operate until at least 2008. It is unclear whether the group made self-determination claims, however. The MRMM is described as armed but likely "motivated by monetary gain" (NAVA 2013: 9).
- In 2015, there were violent protests against plans to federalize where Madhesi played a major role, resulting in 57 casualties, as Madhesi parties and protestors deem the proposed plan does not adequately address their grievances. Directly relevant in this context, the Madhesi protestors were demanding a bigger province including parts of Province 6. Furthermore, the protestors made demands regarding citizenship rights, proportional representation, as well as the very identity of the Nepali State and its ideological direction (Bharti 2019: 290; Goodhand et.al. 2021; International Crisis Group 2011, 2015; Lexis Nexis; Miklian 2012). [start date 2: 1985; end date 2: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- The dominant self-determination claim of the Madhesis (they have other claims, such as inclusion in the central government, eviction of non-Madhesis from the Terai region, and also outright independence) is the federalization of Nepal. This is true for both the early phase of contention in the 1950s and the later phase starting in the 1980s (Hachhethu 2007; Miklian 2012). Writing on the recent developments in 2007 and onwards, Miklian (2012) notes that: “The UDMF’s [United Democratic Madhesi Front’s] goal is to rectify generations of discrimination through the creation of an autonomous state of Madhes that is free of direct rule by the traditional power elites in the capital of Kathmandu” as well as “[t]he principal demand calls for the ‘liberation’ of the entire Terai by redrawing the region into a single autonomous unit called Madhes that will have the right to self-determination under Nepal’s yet to be finalized federal system. This demand is known in common parlance as ‘One Madhes’ in Nepal.”
- Nepal federalized in 2015 and the Madhes became an autonomous province. Madhesi people are claiming a bigger province including parts of Province 6 (Goodhand et.al. 2021). In very recent times, there is also some talk about secession, but at least for the time being, this appears a minority view (Miklian 2012). We reflect this change to a sub-state secession claim already in 2015, in contravention of the January 1 rule, because the protests making this demand led to violence. [1951-1959, 1985-2014: autonomy claim; 2015-2020: sub-state secession claim]

Independence claims

- Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM) was formed in 2004 and has made claims for independence (Paudel 2018). Another organization called the Tarai People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) is also reported to have made secession claims. The TPLF was formed in 2004 (Lawoti 2013: 22, 197). [start date: 2004; end date: ongoing]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Madhesi consists of a lowland territory stretch bordering India, as indicated in Roth (2015: 31). We code the claim based on the map in Roth.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- There has been separatist violence involving groups such as MLT, MVK, and JTMM (see above), but our sources do not suggest that the 25-deaths threshold was met.
- According to International Crisis Group (2015), there were major protests in 2015 which resulted in 57 deaths. Madhesis constituted a major force in the violence, and the violence was reciprocated. According to HRW (2019), there were 10 policemen among the dead. The protests occurred in the context of the 2015 constitution, which enshrined federalism. The protestors demanded that additional territories are added to their province. Furthermore, the protestors made demands regarding citizenship rights, proportional representation, as well as the very identity of the Nepali State and its ideological direction (Bharti 2019: 290; Goodhand et.al. 2021). We code

LVIOLSD in 2015 based on this, but code it as ambiguous due to mixed/partly center-seeking motives. [1951-1959, 1985-2014: NVIOLSD; 2015: LVIOLSD; 2016-2020: NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- 1st phase:
 - o Discrimination against Madhesi, as well as against other non-Brahmins, has a long history in Nepal (Hachhethu 2007: 9; International Crisis Group 2011). Ever since Nepal was created, it has been controlled by Brahmins and Chhetris, which form about 30% of the national population (The Economist 2012). The Madhesi did not enjoy territorial autonomy prior to 1951 (or at any point later), and their cultural rights were severely restricted. Nepali was (and remains) the only official language of Nepal, and the Madhesi have suffered from the imposition of Nepali as the only official language and medium of education (Hachhethu 2007: 9). There is a long-standing policy of denial and Nepalization, and until 1958 Terai people “were required to stop at the border town of Birganj to obtain [a] passport before proceeding to Kathmandu” (Yavad 2005: 1). Nepali-speakers did not need a passport to proceed to Kathmandu. The Madhesi belong to the three groups which have been marginalized by the state (the other two being the Janjati and the Dalit). Overall, Madhesis are severely discriminated against (Kanthar 2010: 159). Hence, for the first phase we code a prior restriction due to the long-term discrimination against Madhesis, but without having identified a restriction in the ten years before the first start date.
- 2nd phase:
 - o Between 1960 and 1990, the Nepalese state attempted to assimilate the 100-plus ethnicities of Nepal into a pan-Nepali identity through language, schooling, and legal directives. “These policies codified the cultures of upper caste Pahadis, legalizing systematic discrimination and under-representation in the government of any in Nepal who did not have this lineage. This policy was enforced rigorously; discussion of ethnic difference or inequality was a jailable offence until 1991. Overall, this suggests that the high degree of discrimination against Madhesis present already in the 1950s has yet increased.
 - o Two further policies are worth mentioning, which are not, however, coded (in accordance with the codebook).
 - First, the citizenship legislation of the 1960s discriminated against non-Nepali speakers (including the Madhesi) since command of Nepali was inserted as a prerequisite for obtaining citizenship. This resulted in many Madhesi being denied citizenship, and obtaining citizenship is a core demand of the Madhesi movement. Citizenship is required for acquiring land, which is important for Madhesis, most of which are farmers (Yadav 2005: 8). Since the denial of citizenship relates more to access to the polity than autonomy or cultural rights, we do not code a restriction.
 - Second, there was a government-sponsored resettlement program in the mid-1980s, which financed migration of Pahadis to the Terai in an attempt to solidify control over the valuable agricultural and industrial region. Architects of the program viewed Terai citizens as ‘conquered people’ or illegal Indian migrants with no land rights” (Miklian 2012). Regarding the relocation policy, Yadav (2005: 7) and Hachhethu (2007: 8) note that the Nepali government seeks to weaken the Madhesis by relocation of Hill peoples to the Terai plains. Hachhethu (2007: 8) argues: “[...] migration from the hills has been propagated as the state’s concerted plan to assimilate the Madheshis into the fold of hill culture and to establish hill political dominance in the Tarai. Certainly the Nepali state encouraged migration from south of the border in the past and from hill to the Madhesh since the 1950s which served the interest of small hill elites. Land and forest are the two major resources of the Madhesh that have been distributed disproportionately in favour of the hill people. One cannot deny the fact that hill

migration was used as one of the instrument for homogeneous model of Nepalization which has adverse impact in the Madhesh so far its cultural uniqueness, economic interest and political power structure are concerned. Four major factors – end of malaria, land reform act of 1964, launching of several resettlement projects in the Madhesh, and construction of the East-West highway – led to flow of hill dwellers into the Madhesh.” However, in accordance with the codebook, relocation policies are not coded.

Concessions and restrictions

- Democratization began in 1990 and opened some room for the Madhesis to articulate their demands. The 1990 constitution embraced multilingualism and multiculturalism, and granted recognition to several languages, including Tarai languages. However, these changes were cosmetic and did not lead to actual policy changes, in particular not to the recognition of languages other than Nepali (Kantha 2010: 159). For example, the Supreme Court voided a decision to experiment with the introduction of Maithali as official language in a Terai district in 1990. After all, Nepal remained a unitary state with Nepali as the sole official language (International Crisis Group 2011: 5). This was reaffirmed in 1999, when the Supreme Court declared illegal the use of any language other than Nepali in local government bodies (International Crisis Group 2011: 5). The ‘cosmetic’ embracement of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the 1990 constitution is not coded as a concession.
- The post-1990 governments did take some action on the citizenship issue (citizenship is denied to many Madhesis since the command of Nepali is a prerequisite). A few thousand passports were distributed in 1997. A more liberal Citizenship Act was passed in 1999. However, the Supreme Court declared the latter unconstitutional (Hachhethu 2007: 9). In 2007 1.5 million passports were distributed in the Terai through door-to-door visits (Hachhethu 2007: 9). Since the denial of citizenship relates more to access to the polity than autonomy or cultural rights, we do not code a concession or restriction.
- Following the 2006 Janandolan II uprising, the transitional government made some concessions to the Dalit, women, and the Janjatis, but the Madhesis were left out (in particular, the introduction of secularism in 2006 (reiterated in the 2007 interim constitution, see Letizia 2012: 66) does not constitute a concession since the Madhesis are Hindus). Their primary individual rights demand – the recognition of languages other than Nepali – remains unaddressed.
- This contributed to the 2007 and 2008 Madhesi uprisings, which led to two peace agreements and to changes to the interim constitution (which, despite lobbying by various ethnic group leaders, had not made mention of federalism). In particular, a commitment to federalism was included, though there is more resistance against the demand for a single Madhes (One Madhes) region (Miklian 2012; International Crisis Group 2011). It is doubtful, however, whether the agreements can really be interpreted as a true autonomy offer. There appears to be significant opposition against federalization. The constituent assembly, tasked with the drafting of a new constitution, was unable to adopt a constitution within four years, and was dissolved in 2012. Thus, Nepal remains federalist on paper only (The Economist 2012; International Crisis Group 2011). We do not code a concession because the autonomy offer is too vague and because there was no implementation.
- In 2015, Nepal adopted a new constitution which created a federal state consisting of a federal government, autonomous provinces, and local governments. Furthermore, one or more national languages that are spoken by most people in a state will attain official status at the province level in addition to Nepali (Nepal’s Constitution 2015). Overall, 7 provinces were created. Critically, states are geography-based and not identity-based (GIGA 2016). Still, the Madesh are located mainly in Province No. 2, where they make up 73% of the local population. In 2022, Province No. 2 was renamed Madesh province. [2015: autonomy concession]
 - o We code a separatist violence onset in 2015 in relation to protests against the specific autonomy solution in the constitution (see above). The protests were in August and September while the constitution was formally promulgated on 20 September. However,

the shape of the autonomy solution was clear by then, and this was the reason for the protests. Therefore, the concession preceded the violence onset.

Regional autonomy

- Nepal federalized in 2015. The provinces enjoy significant powers (Goodhand et.al. 2021). The Madesh mainly live in Province 2, which was renamed Madesh province in 2022. The Madesh make up 73% of the local population. [2016-2020: regional autonomy]

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

- See above. [2015: establishment of regional autonomy]

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Madhesi
<i>Scenario</i>	1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Madhesi
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	79005000

Power access

- We follow EPR. [1951: powerless; 1952-1959: junior partner; 1985-2002: powerless; 2003-2006: junior partner; 2007-2008: powerless; 2009-2020: junior partner]

Group size

- We follow EPR. [0.12]

Regional concentration

- The term Madhesis relates to Hindus and, depending on the interpretation, also Muslims, from Nepal's South (the plains or Terai region). According to Sijapati (2013: 159), the Madhesis have a strong geographical concentration: most live in a narrow strip of 10 districts in the central and eastern Terai (Parsa, Bara, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Dhanusha, Siraha, Saptari, Sunsari, and Morang), where they comprise more than 80% of the local population. This is the best estimate we could get by; data for earlier years could not be found, though Sijapati (2013: 166) suggests that the ethnolinguistic composition has remained relatively constant since the 1950s. [concentrated]

Kin

- According to EPR there are no kin groups. Sijapati (2013: 166), on the other hand, suggests that

there is ethnic kin across the border in India. The Madhesis are often (pejoratively) referred to as Indians in Nepal (many speak Hindi, others Urdu). [kin in neighboring country]

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Other Adivasis/Janajatis

Activity: 1990-2020

General notes

- Two of Nepal's indigenous groups, the Rais and the Limbus, are coded separately since they stand out in terms of both organizational capacity and support for autonomy (International Crisis Group 2011: 13; Lawoti 2013: 201). The movement coded relates to all indigenous groups other than Rais and Limbus (including the Tharus, Tamang, and Magar), who are separately coded, and the Hindu Newars, who do not seek self-determination (other Adivasi groups are typically not Hindu).

Movement start and end dates

- Nepal's indigenous groups, commonly called Adivasis/Janajatis, began to organize their interests in the 1990s. With the aim of protecting indigenous culture and fostering indigenous autonomy, the Nepal Federation of Nationalities (NEFEN) was formed in 1990; in 2003 it was renamed the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN). Core demands include political autonomy for indigenous groups, language rights, and representation in state bodies. Hence, we begin to code the movement in 1990.
- On March 31, 1991, the Nepal Free Students Front (NFSF) was established partly due to the new constitution that established Nepal as a Hindu state and partly because of provisions preventing Adivasi-Janajati people from being able to register a Party with the Election Commission (Chemjong, 2017: 50). The NFSF was considered a sister organization of the National People's Liberation Party (NPLP). In February 2005 the King seized complete control of the government and ruled directly, and in October 2005 the NFSF organized a press conference calling upon "politicians, intellectuals, students, youths and all common people to come together to form a common political movement for *jatiya mukti* [ethnic liberation] [...] in Nepal" (Chemjong, 2017: 51f). The NFSF subsequently established the Sanghiya Loktantrik Rastriya Manch (Federal Democratic National Forum [FDNF]) as a pro-federalist movement with links to the Federal Limbuwan State Council [FLSC] (see above in Limbus profile for information).
- Despite the continual ban on ethnic parties, two parties linked to the indigenous movement contested in the 1991, 1994, and 1999 general elections. The movement continues to be active, louder than ever, demanding the federalization of the country, and after the successful federalization in 2015, they continue to demand more representation at the center and an increase of autonomy rights (International Crisis Group 2011; IWGIA 2022; Lawoti 2013; Lexis Nexis; Minority Rights Group International). [start date: 1990; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- The movement's core demands are autonomy and the federalization of Nepal (International Crisis Group 2011; Lawoti 2013: 201; Minority Rights International Group). Note: in 2015, Nepal adopted federalism. According to the (limited) sources we could find, the group's claim is for a greater degree of autonomy within the province and not for a separate province for themselves. Therefore, we continue to code an autonomy claim after 2015 and not a sub-state secession claim. [1992-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

NA

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- It is not entirely clear to which territory the other Adivasis' claims refer. We therefore flag this claim as ambiguous and code it based on the group's ethnic settlement areas according to the GREG dataset (Weidmann 2010), which offers the closest approximation in this case. Our coding includes all indigenous groups covered by GREG, except for those areas that belong to the Limbus and the Rais, which are separately coded.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- The Adivasis/Janajatis were involved in the Maoist insurgency (1996-2006), but this is not coded as separatist violence since the insurgency's aim was the toppling of the government. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- Ever since Nepal was created, it has been controlled by Brahmins and Chhetris, which form about 30% of the national population (The Economist 2012). Nepali was (and remains) the only official language of Nepal, and Nepali is the only official language and medium of education (Hachethu 2007: 9). Nepal is a Hindu state. There is a long-standing policy of Nepalization. Overall, the Adivasis/Janajatis (Nepal's indigenous groups) are severely discriminated against, do not enjoy cultural rights (language and religion), and do not have autonomy (International Crisis Group 2011: 3).

Concessions and restrictions

- The 1990 constitution, adopted in the context of democratization, embraced multilingualism and multiculturalism, but these changes were cosmetic and did not lead to actual policy changes, in particular not to the recognition of languages other than Nepali (Kantha 2010: 159). For example, the Supreme Court voided a decision to experiment with the introduction of Maithali as official language in a Terai district in 1990. Nepal remained a unitary state with Nepali as the sole official language (International Crisis Group 2011: 5). This was reaffirmed in 1999, when the Supreme Court declared illegal the use of any language other than Nepali in local government bodies (International Crisis Group 2011: 5). Hence, we do not code the 1990 constitution as a concession.
- In 2002, the Nepal Federation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) Act was passed, which recognizes indigenous nationalities (adivasi janajati) as a legal category, establishes the criteria a group has to fulfill and lists 59 officially recognized janajati groups. Among other things, the NFDIN aims for the cultural development of Nepal's indigenous nationalities. Moreover, in 2002 the state-sponsored National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities was founded (Lawoti 2013: 199; Hangen 2007: 40-41). [2002: cultural rights concession]

- In May 2006, Nepal's House of Representatives declared Nepal a secular state, along with suspending the political powers of the king, and thereby ending the two-centuries old Hindu kingdom (Letizia 2012: 66). The 2007 interim constitution reiterated secularism (International Crisis Group 2011: 23). The introduction of secularism is considered a concession on cultural rights since most (or all) of the indigenous groups associated with the umbrella group of the "Other Adivasis/Janajatis" are not Hindu (e.g., the Tamang and the Magars). Note, however, that Nepali remained the only official language. [2006: cultural rights concession]
- The Madhesi uprisings in 2007 and 2008 led to two peace agreements and to changes to the interim constitution (which, despite lobbying by various ethnic group leaders, had not made mention of federalism). In particular, a commitment to federalism was included (Miklian 2012; International Crisis Group 2011). It is doubtful, however, whether the agreements can really be interpreted as a true autonomy offer. There appears to be significant opposition against federalization. The constituent assembly, tasked with the drafting of a new constitution, was unable to adopt a constitution within four years, and was dissolved in 2012. Thus, Nepal remains federalist on paper only (The Economist 2012; International Crisis Group 2011). We do not code a concession because the autonomy offer is too vague and because implementation has not even started.
- In 2015, Nepal adopted a new constitution which created a federal state consisting of a federal government, autonomous provinces, and local governments. Furthermore, one or more national languages that are spoken by most people in a state will attain official status at the province level in addition to Nepali (Nepal's Constitution 2015). Overall, 7 provinces were created. Critically, states are geography-based and not identity-based (GIGA 2016). However, indigenous groups generally make up only small of provincial populations. Therefore, this did not provide indigenous groups with significant autonomy.
- The 2015 constitution also required the establishment of Indigenous Nationalities Commission focusing on the research on the protection of the rights and interest of indigenous nationalities. On September 6, 2021, the Language Commission recommended that 11 different languages including Limbu be used as official languages in addition to Nepali (Sunuwar 2022). Because we cover the movement up to 2020, we do not code a concession here.

Regional autonomy

- Indigenous groups generally make up only small of provincial populations. Therefore, the 2015 constitution did not provide indigenous groups with significant autonomy.

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Other Adivasis/Janajatis
<i>Scenario</i>	n:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Adibasi Janajati
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	79002000

Power access

- What we termed ‘Other Adivasis/Janajatis’ relates to all indigenous groups except for the Hindu Newars (who do not seek self-determination) and the Rais and Limbus (who are coded separately). EPR codes an umbrella group of Adivasi/Janajati (the only indigenous group that is coded separately is the Hindu Newars, who contrary to the other indigenous groups have been included in the national executive ever since the early 1990s, see Hangen 2007: 10). In EPR, the Adivasis are coded as powerless throughout, except for 2003-2006, an ethnically inclusive interlude during which the Adivasis are coded as junior partners since all major groups seem to have been included in the national executive. In 2007-2020, the Adivasis are again considered powerless since the cabinet became significantly less inclusive. In line with this, Lawoti (2013: 201) suggests that the only Adivasi groups that were well-represented after 2006 are the Newars and the Limbus. Based on this, we code the Other Adivasis as powerless until 2003, as junior partner from 2003-2006, and as powerless in 2007-2020. [1990-2002: powerless; 2003-2006: junior partner; 2007-2020: powerless]

Group size

- The EPR group size estimate of the Adivasis (.31) includes the Rais and the Limbus (the Newars, another indigenous group, are coded separately), hence we subtract .0279 (the Rai share, see International Crisis Group 2011: 2) and .0158 (the Limbu share, see International Crisis Group 2011: 2) from the EPR group size of the Adivasis. [0.2663]

Regional concentration

- Nepal is a multi-ethnic state with a checkered ethnic demography. GeoEPR codes the Adivasis as not concentrated since they are dispersed across the state. The movement overlaps with the EPR group, except that two smaller groups that make up a bit more than 10% of the EPR group are separately coded. [not concentrated]

Kin

- EPR codes India’s scheduled tribes as kin, as well as “Tribal Buddhists” in Bangladesh; especially Himalayan peoples in India constitute close kindred. [kin in neighboring country]

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Rais

Activity: 1992-2020

General notes

- Note: both the Rais and the Limbus are indigenous groups, and hence so-called 'Adivasis/Janajatis'. There is also a broader movement for indigenous autonomy, but the Rais and the Limbus stand out in terms of both organizational capacity and support for autonomy (International Crisis Group 2011: 13; Lawoti 2013: 201). Hence, we code Rais and Limbus separately, and an umbrella movement of 'other' Adivasi/Janajati groups.
- The Rais live in Eastern Nepal.
- The Rais and the Limbus are sometimes referred to as one group, including also the Sunuwar people (Schlemmer 2019: 1)
- The name 'Rai' is mostly used as an ethnic category by ethnic outsiders. The endonym used for self-description by Rai people is Rodu. The Rodu groups who inhabit the area located between the Dudh Kośī and Aruṇ rivers call themselves Khambu (Schlemmer 2019: 1).

Movement start and end dates

- Schlemmer (2019: 9) reports that there were several Rai uprisings in the 1950s and 1970s. According to Schlemmer, the Rai have been fighting against the state and high-caste domination in several ways during this period. Schlemmer also writes that "some of them [the Rai groups] have even been fighting for their independence"; however, it is not clear whether Schlemmer is referring to the 1950s, 1970s, or the Maoist civil war, which began in 1996.
- The earliest evidence for organized self-determination claims we could find is in 1992, when the Khambuwan Rashtriya Morcha (KRM) was formed. KRM has claimed an autonomous Khambuwan state and engaged in violent activities "primarily directed at symbols of 'foreign occupation' and 'suppression' of the Rai peoples (such as schools and police posts)" (NAVA 2019: 10). The group won one seat in the 2013 Nepalese Constituent Assembly Election (Khambuwan 2014). In December 2018, the group gave up arms, entering "into peaceful politics [...] by accepting the constitutional provisions of the country" (Paudel 2018; also see Thapa 2017: 107).
- Another relevant organization is the Kirat Janabadi Workers Party (KJWP), which was formed in 2007. The KJWP is notably a joint movement involving both Rais and Limbus; our research suggests that the latter play a stronger role (International Crisis Group 2011; Lawoti 2013).
- The movement was ongoing as of 2020 (Lexis Nexis; Pradhan 2015). [start date: 1992; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- The core demand of the Rai self-determination movement is for autonomy and the federalization of Nepal (International Crisis Group 2011; Lawoti 2013: 201; Pradhan 2015). Note: in 2015, Nepal adopted federalism. According to the (limited) sources we could find, the group's dominant claim is for a greater degree of autonomy within the province and not for a separate province for themselves. Therefore, we continue to code an autonomy claim after 2015 and not a sub-state secession claim. [1992-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

- Some sources refer to independence claims (Schlemmer 2019: 9); however, the evidence was too limited for us to code a politically significant independence movement. [no independence claims]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the KRM is called the Khambuwan state which is composed of the following territories: Udayapur, Khotang, Bhojpur, Dhankuta, Solukhumbu, Sankhuwasabha, Okhaldhunga, Ramechhap, Sindhuli, Dolakha, Saptari, Sunsari, Siraha and parts of Sarlahi, Mahottari, Dhanusa and Morang (International Crisis Group 2011: 15). Due to a lack of more precise information, we code the entire administrative units of Sarlahi, Mahottari, Dhanusa, and Morang instead of coding parts of these territories. We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- The KRM has been involved in separatist violence (see above), but we could not find evidence that the threshold was met. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The Rais are a semi-nomadic people (Schlemmer 2019: 1) located in Nepal's eastern-most regions. They were originally granted "a degree of autonomy" including political autonomy for hereditary Rai leaders including landownership prerogative and ability to exercise their religion – but these rights were gradually suppressed by the Nepalese state in the 1940s (Schlemmer 2019: 2). Ever since Nepal was created, it has been controlled by Brahmins and Chhetris, which form about 30% of the national population (The Economist 2012). Nepali was (and remains) the only official language of Nepal and Nepali is the only medium of education (Hachhethu 2007: 9). Nepal is a Hindu state. There is a long-standing policy of Nepalization (Toffin 2009: 4). Overall, the Rais (an indigenous group) are severely discriminated against, do not enjoy cultural rights (language and religion), and do not have autonomy, even if discrimination against Rais is somewhat weaker in practice compared to discrimination against the Madhesis (International Crisis Group 2011: 3).

Concessions and restrictions

- The 1990 constitution, adopted in the context of democratization, embraced multilingualism and multiculturalism, but these changes were cosmetic and did not lead to actual policy changes, in particular not to the recognition of languages other than Nepali (Kantha 2010: 159). For example, the Supreme Court voided a decision to experiment with the introduction of Maithali as official language in a Terai district in 1990. Nepal remained a unitary state with Nepali as the sole official language (International Crisis Group 2011: 5). This was reaffirmed in 1999, when the Supreme Court declared illegal the use of any language other than Nepali in local government bodies (International Crisis Group 2011: 5). Hence, we do not code the 1990 constitution as a concession.
- In 2002, the Nepal Federation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) Act was passed, which recognizes indigenous nationalities (adivasi janajati) as a legal category,

establishes the criteria a group has to fulfill and lists 59 officially recognized janajati groups, including the Rais. Among other things, the NFDIN aims for the cultural development of Nepal's indigenous nationalities. Moreover, in 2002 the state-sponsored National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities was founded (Lawoti 2013: 199; Hangen 2007: 40-41). [2002: cultural rights concession]

- In May 2006, Nepal's House of Representatives declared Nepal a secular state, along with suspending the political powers of the king, and thereby ending the two-centuries old Hindu kingdom (Letizia 2012: 66). The 2007 interim constitution reiterated secularism (International Crisis Group 2011: 23). The introduction of secularism is considered a concession on cultural rights since since the Rais are not Hindu. Note, however, that Nepali remained the only official language. [2006: cultural rights concession]
- The Madhesi uprisings in 2007 and 2008 led to two peace agreements and to changes to the interim constitution (which, despite lobbying by various ethnic group leaders, had not made mention of federalism). In particular, a commitment to federalism was included (Miklian 2012; International Crisis Group 2011). It is doubtful, however, whether the agreements can really be interpreted as a true autonomy offer. There appears to be significant opposition against federalization. The constituent assembly, tasked with the drafting of a new constitution, was unable to adopt a constitution within four years, and was dissolved in 2012. Thus, Nepal remains federalist on paper only (The Economist 2012; International Crisis Group 2011). We do not code a concession because the autonomy offer is too vague and because implementation has not even started.
- In 2015, Nepal adopted a new constitution which created a federal state consisting of a federal government, autonomous provinces, and local governments. Furthermore, one or more national languages that are spoken by most people in a state will attain official status at the province level in addition to Nepali (Nepal's Constitution 2015). Overall, 7 provinces were created. Critically, states are geography-based and not identity-based (GIGA 2016). The Rais are located mainly in Province No. 1, which is ethnically diverse. The Rais make up just a small minority in the province (ca. 11%), and the Rai language has not been made as a provincial official language (Minority Rights Group International). Therefore, we do not code a concession.

Regional autonomy

- Nepal federalized in 2015, but the Rai make up but a small minority in one state (see above). Hence, we do not code autonomy. [no autonomy]

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Rais
<i>Scenario</i>	n:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Adibasi Janajati
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	79002000

Power access

- The Rais are one of Nepal's many indigenous (Adivasi/Janajati) groups. EPR does not code the Rais, but an umbrella group of Adivasi/Janajati (the only indigenous group that is coded separately is the Hindu Newars, which contrary to the other indigenous groups have been included in the national executive ever since the early 1990s, see Hangen 2007: 10). In EPR, the Adivasis are coded as powerless throughout, except for 2003-2006, an ethnically inclusive interlude during which the Adivasis are coded as junior partners since all major groups seem to have been included in the national executive. In 2007-2020, the Adivasis are again considered powerless since the cabinet became significantly less inclusive. In line with this, Lawoti (2013: 201) suggests that the only Adivasi groups that have been well-represented after 2006 are the Newars and the Limbus. Based on this, we code the Rais as powerless until 2003, as junior partner from 2003-2006, and as powerless in 2007-2020. [1992-2002: powerless; 2003-2006: junior partner; 2007-2020: powerless]

Group size

- According to a 2011 report by the International Crisis Group (2011: 2), the Rais make up 2.79 per cent of Nepal's population. [0.0279]

Regional concentration

- Since we could not find more accessible data, we browsed district level data from the 2011 census (data can be downloaded here: <https://data.hdx.rwlab.org/dataset/nepal-census-2011-district-profiles-demography>). The total number of Rais in the 2011 census is 600,000, or 2.3% of Nepal's population. The Rais have a somewhat higher concentration in four eastern districts: Bhojpur, Khotang, Udayapur, and Sunsari districts, but in none do they form an absolute majority, nor live more than half of all Rais there (only approx. 40%). Below we list some eastern (and some central) districts in which we found higher concentrations of Rais. [not concentrated]
 - o Solukhumbu: 21,000/106,000
 - o Bhojpur: 58,000/182,000
 - o Okhaldhunga: 15,000/148,000
 - o Khotang: 76,000/206,000
 - o Udayapur: 55,000/318,000
 - o Dhankuta: 34,000/163,000
 - o Solukhumbu: 21,000/106,000
 - o Sindhuli: 13,000/296,000
 - o Sankhuwasabha: 17,000/159,000
 - o Sunsari: 50,000/763,000
 - o Kathmandu: 40,000/1,744,240

Kin

- The Rais are a Himalayan people closely related to the Limbus, who have kin in India (see under "Limbus"); other Himalayan peoples, such as the Tibetans, may also be considered ethnic kin. [kin in neighboring country]

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