

## Political economies and political rationalities of road building in Nepal: Notes from the archives

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Room 108N - North House, Munk School of Global Affairs, 1 Devonshire Place

Infrastructure in general, and road in particular, has become one of the priority sectors in Nepal's development efforts and it has become a major concern for many Nepali people. Road building projects have always been a major focus of government and donor programming, from the beginning of planned development initiatives in the 1950s. Road projects were highly centralized and the central state and donors were major dominating agencies during the 1960s and 70s. Now, multiple actors have engaged and road building can broadly be explained as tripartite coordination among the state (both central and local), donors, and local communities. The state, donors, and community practices through which roads have been constructed in Nepal vary across time and place. Considering those practices and the wider scale of political interests, roads have become a key site of governance contestation.

In this paper, I sketch out the emergence of governmental landscapes (policy, institutions and actors) from the readings of archives; policies, plans, and other historical documents produced by the government of Nepal, World Bank, and other organizations or individuals, and information collected from multiple research sites. Considering the dynamics of political history, I analyze the political economies and political rationalities of road building in Nepal and relate this history to some international scholarship on infrastructure.

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Mr. Sigdel graduated in Rural Development studies from Tribhuvan University, and examined local planning processes in rural Nepal for his graduate thesis. After his graduation, he served at the Rural Development Department, TU, for five years in the capacity of Assistant Lecturer. Then he joined Nepal Administrative Staff College, a national level training institution which trains government officers and carries out policy research. As a senior faculty (Director of Studies) in the college, he trains bureaucrats in the areas of governance, development planning, democracy, and state-building and he has engaged in different research projects. He brings a mix of experiences working closely with Nepali bureaucrats and researching democracy and governance practices from the grassroots.