This is the first book to cover existing debates on decolonising and developmental social work whilst equipping readers with the understanding of how to translate the idea of decolonisation of social work into practice. Using new empirical data and an extensive detail of social, cultural, and political dimensions of Nepal, the author proposes a new model of ‘decolonised and developmental social work’ that can be applicable to a wide range of countries and cultures.

By using interviews with Nepali social workers, this text goes beyond mere theoretical approaches and uniquely positions itself in a way that embraces rigorous bottom-up, grounded theory method. It will further ongoing debates on globalisation-localisation, universalisation-contextualisation, outsider-insider perspectives, neoliberal-rights and justice oriented social work, and above all, colonisation-decolonisation of social work knowledge and practice. It also promotes solidarity of, and the struggle for, progress for those in the margins of Western social work and development narrative through an emerging theory-praxis of decolonised and developmental social work.

*Decolonised and Developmental Social Work* is essential reading for students, academics, and researchers of social work and development studies, as well as those striving for a decolonial worldview.

**Raj Yadav**, PhD, is from Nepal, and now makes his temporary home in Australia. His interest lies in decolonising epistemologies and their use in advancing knowledge production in the fields of social work and development. He has worked as a lecturer and has contributed to social work curriculum development in universities in Nepal and Australia.
Sustainability is the social justice issue of the century. This series adopts a global and interdisciplinary approach to explore the impact of the harmful relationship between humans and the environment in relation to social work practice and theory. It offers cutting-edge analysis, pioneering case studies and current theoretical perspectives concerning the examination and treatment of social justice issues created by a disregard for non-Western cultures and environmental detachment. These books will be invaluable to students, researchers, and practitioners in a world where environmental exploitation and an ignorance of indigenous peoples is violating the principles of social justice.

Titles:

**Decolonised and Developmental Social Work**  
A Model From Nepal  
*Raj Yadav*

Decolonised and Developmental Social Work

A Model From Nepal

Raj Yadav
Contents

List of figures viii
List of tables ix
List of abbreviations x
Acknowledgements xi
Notes on transliteration and Nepali terminology xii
Meaning of Nepali terms and cultural practices xiii
Foreword xv
Preface xviii
Prologue: an honest, heretofore untold story of Nepali social work xx

1 Thinking about decolonised and developmental social work 1
Why decolonised and developmental social work? 1
Decolonised and developmental social work: pedagogy, politics, and praxis 3
Background to, and rationale for, the decolonised and developmental social work in Nepal 6
Genesis, central arguments, and inquiry method of the book 11
Author’s positionality and reflexivity in knowledge production 14
Synergies with indigenous ways of knowing 16
Synergies with a critical theory and thinking 18
Definition of key terms used in the book 18
Way forward 19

2 The puzzle of Nepali narratives: historical dynamics and contemporary issues 20
Geography, ecology, and regional dynamics 20
Critical junctures in the making of the Nepali state 25
Revisiting Nepali history: one step forward, two steps back 29
Sociocultural groups of Nepal: cleavage, conflict, and new politics 31
Quest for inclusion, rights, and justice: revisiting the people’s movements and Maoist insurgency 36
Contents

Lifestyles, values, and identities: cultural narratives 39
Context of social services: state and non-state actors 41
Conclusion 43

3 International non-government organisations and Nepali development: a place for Nepali social workers to engage 44
Metaphysics of, and definitional challenges to, INGOs 45
INGOs in Nepal 51
Development planning and INGOs’ engagement in Nepal 58
INGO culpability for failed development 71
Costs of development 74
Conclusion 77

4 Social work education in Nepal: a brief historical perspective 78
Historical development of higher education in Nepal 78
Development of social work education in Nepal 80
Contemporary scenario of social work education in Nepal 84
Influence of international organisations on social work education 85
Major issues in social work education 85
Conclusion 86

5 From an imported model to a decolonisation of social work 87
Revisiting imported social work in Nepal 87
Modernising social work 88
Technology transfer: from the West to the rest 89
Indigenous social work: concept and construct 91
A paradigm shift from indigenisation to decolonisation 99
Conclusion 100

6 Influence and context for decolonised and developmental Nepali social work 101
Social workers’ motivations 101
Concerns about Nepali social work education 102
Concerns about professional elitism 108
What the ‘social’ in Nepali ‘social work’ entails: the case for decolonisation 110
Social issues for Nepali social work: the case for development 114
Advocating for the voiceless: the case for political focus 121
Conclusion 123
7 Decolonised and developmental Nepali social work: a model 
ground up

Social workers’ concerns 124

Social components of decolonised practice 126

Developmental components of decolonising practice 131

Political components of decolonising practice 134

Model of decolonised and developmental Nepali social work practice 136

Implications in social work: synergies with extant literature 142

Conclusion 145

8 Moving forward

Yet, a temporal end 148

The beats of decolonisation 150

References 151

Index 174
Figures

1.1 Advent of social work in Nepal and colonial and imperial connections 7
2.1 Provinces of Nepal 22
2.2 Physiographic regions of Nepal 23
2.3 Representation in bureaucracy 34
2.4 Representation in the Constituent Assembly of 2008 35
2.5 Nepali social legislations 42
3.1 Positioning INGOs 47
3.2 Control mechanism 51
3.3 INGOs registered with the Social Welfare Council 55
4.1 Development of social work education in Nepal 82
5.1 Response to Western social work in the Global South 95
5.2 From indigenisation to decolonisation 99
7.1 Model of decolonised and developmental Nepali social work 137
Tables

1.1 Characteristics of research participants 13
2.1 Nepali social hierarchy in 1854 27
2.2 Some major caste and ethnic groups of Nepal 32
2.3 Brinton’s (1965) analysis of Nepal’s movements and Maoist insurgency 37
2.4 Cost-benefit analysis of Maoist insurgency 38
3.1 NGO and INGO governance measures 57
3.2 Rural development INGOs 63
3.3 Urban development INGOs 64
3.4 Health INGOs 65
3.5 Education INGOs 67
3.6 Peacebuilding INGOs 67
3.7 Women, children, and youths INGOs 69
3.8 Agriculture, forestry, and environmental INGOs 70
3.9 Democracy, good governance, and human rights INGOs 71
4.1 Higher education institutions in Nepal 81
5.1 Analytical framework for literature review 92
6.1 Development-related activities 118
7.1 Summary of social workers’ concerns about borrowed Western social work 125
7.2 Balancing internal and external forces 132
7.3 Focus of decolonised and developmental Nepali social work 138
7.4 Integration with extant literature 143
Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFU</td>
<td>Agriculture and Forestry University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIN</td>
<td>Association of International NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APASWE</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Association of Social Work Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSW</td>
<td>Bachelor of Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-based organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHHE</td>
<td>Caste Hill Hindu Elite, includes Brahmin, Kshatriya (or Chhetri), Thakuri, and Dashnamis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIMM</td>
<td>Dalits, Indigenous (or Janajatis), Madheshis, Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FWU</td>
<td>Far-Western University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GO</td>
<td>Government organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoN</td>
<td>Government of Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HO</td>
<td>Humanitarian organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IASSW</td>
<td>International Association for Schools of Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICSW</td>
<td>International Council on Social Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFSW</td>
<td>International Federation of Social Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBU</td>
<td>Lumbini Baudhha University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MWU</td>
<td>Mid-Western University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>Master of Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCP</td>
<td>Nepali Congress Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGSDO</td>
<td>Non-government Social Developmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>National Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSU</td>
<td>Nepal Sanskrit University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoKU</td>
<td>Pokhara University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PU</td>
<td>Purwanchal University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>Social Development Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPA</td>
<td>Seven Parties Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWC</td>
<td>Social Welfare Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TU</td>
<td>Tribhuvan University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VDC</td>
<td>Village development committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Though I am the author of this book, I would be arrogant in claiming that all the ideas contained herein, and thus the result – this book – is my own. With the support of many people, I have continuously used reflective reading and critical reasoning to study, analyse, and reference diverse scholarly works to build upon prior ideas in structuring my arguments for this book. I owe a debt of gratitude to the scholars who have blazed pathways in this endeavour. I also wish to recognise the following:

This journey would not have been easy without:

Mel Gray

I accomplished this goal with the support of:

Kylie Aglias and Amanda Howard

And I thank those who dared to raise their voices and think differently:

The participants in Nepal

For enriching my thinking about decolonised and developmental social work:

Mel Gray, Michael Yellow Bird, John Coates, James Midgley, and Ibrahim A. Ragab, only to name a few here

And for bringing this work forward:

All the folks at Routledge including Georgia Priestley and Nick Craggs

People who stood by me:

Benjaporn Meeprom, Soobhiraj Bungruz, Rohith Thota, Justin Nicolas, and Amit Kumar Yadav

For unconditional love:

My parents, brothers, and sister
In this book, ‘Nepal’ refers to the ‘Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal’, which was called the ‘Kingdom of Nepal’ until the monarchical rule of the Shah Dynasty ended on May 28, 2008. Up until the 20th century, ‘Nepal’ referred to the Kathmandu Valley, while the country was called ‘Gorkha’.

I have consciously used the term ‘Nepali’ rather than its variant ‘Nepalese’. The term ‘Nepalese’ does not belong to the Nepali vernacular. Rather, it is the product of the Anglicisation of Nepal and gained popularity among elite English-speaking Nepali people, expats, and Western tourists. The term ‘Nepali’, used in this book, refers generally to the diverse peoples of Nepal and anything pertaining to them, such as language, culture, costume, lifestyle, values, and norms. Nepal is a pluralist society and the use of ‘Nepali’ conveys its diversity and heterogeneity.

It is easy to pronounce Nepali terms, as there is no contradiction between the script and pronunciation of the words as used in day-to-day life. However, there are some exceptions, especially the letter ‘V’, which is pronounced ‘B’, for instance, in the word ‘vikash’. Likewise, instead of flapping the tongue, the sound ‘Chh’ comes from the throat, such as used in the word ‘Chhaupadi’. The sound ‘Th’ is tricky as ‘h’ may be aspirated, such as in ‘Kathmandu’, or non-aspirated, such as in ‘sanstha’. Also, one would notice that each Nepali word has a consonant or consonant unit and a vowel used alternatively, for instance, ‘bideshi’ appears as b (consonant), i (vowel), d (consonant), e (vowel), sh (consonant unit), and i (vowel) (Shrestha & Bhattrai, 2017).
Meaning of Nepali terms and cultural practices

Arithi devo bhava – a guest is equivalent to God
Badi communities – are traditionally untouchable caste group and often engaged in commercial sex work despite its illegal status in the country
Bahuddal – multiparty democracy system after 1990
Bhumi Puja – is a Hindu ritual performed to worship the earth
Bideshi sanstha – refers to organisations working in Nepali territory with their roots outside of the country
Bideshi siksha – means education that has foreign influence
Bideshi vikash – literally means ‘foreign development’; bideshi is ‘foreign’ in the Nepali language. When coupled with vikash (development), it typically refers to ‘development initiated outside’ or ‘development initiated by outsiders’. In general, Nepali peoples refer to INGO-led development as bideshi vikash
Bihe – marriage
Bistanai – slowly, as in bistarai basnu (sit slowly), bistarai janu (travel slowly), bistarai khanu (eat slowly), and bistarai garnu (perform slowly)
Bhoj-Bhatera – feast
Chhaupadi Pratha – is a Hindu caste groups’ custom of Western Nepal, which holds that women are impure at the time of menstruation. Women are required to live in a shed rather than the main dwelling when they are menstruating. Despite outlawed by the government in 2017, Chhaupadi Pratha continues even today
Dana – charity
Dharma – religion; in Hindu society, it is believed that dharma and karma lead a person toward moksha, that is, salvation
Dharm bhakari – local grain bank
Dhikur – is the organisational concept of saving and credit
Guthi – is trust; it refers to a clan or caste-based informal religious, social, or cultural organisation
Haina ra – is a sort of tag question, used in day-to-day conversation to affirm certain things, arguments, or claims
Hajur – means yes, which sometimes also conveys second person personal pronoun used to respect elders
Hariyo ban Nepal ko dhan – greener forest is Nepal’s wealth
Janajati – is a local word for Indigenous People
Karma – fate or duty (it is our fate in life to do our duty)
Kot Parva – refers to the coup of 1846 orchestrated by Rana to curtail then monarch’s power. It resulted into 104 years autocratic Rana regime
Kshama Puja – is a Hindu ritual carried out for pardon from a god
Kuwa – a well
Madhesh Aandolan – refers to Madhesis people’s protests for inclusion in the mainstream politics
Malami – mourning
Moksha – salvation
Nwaran – celebration of the ninth day of birth
Padhera – learning through formal education
Pahade and Madhishe – refers to the people living in the hills and lowlands of Nepal, respectively. They are sometimes associated with caste and linguistic groups. For instance, a caste group speaking the Nepali language but living in the lowlands might not introduce him or herself as Madhishe but will feel proud to be Pahade
Panchayat – a community level institution active to facilitate local affairs during Panchayat system
Panchayat system – a partyless system under the direct rule of the monarch between 1960 and 1990
Parera – learning through experience
Parma – labour exchange system
Pati-pauwa – shelter
Paropkar – voluntary service
Samajik karya – voluntary activity
Samajik nyay – social justice
Samajik Sewa Ain – Social Service National Co-ordination Act
Sananta – equality
Sewa – an act of selfless service, which is also used interchangeably with paropkar
Siyos – suffix used in ex-royal’s day-to-day communication
Sukila mukila pesha – the phrase sukila mukila is linked to Prachanda – the chair of the Maoist Party of Nepal. By using this terminology, he symbolically meant bourgeois class of the society. When combined with the word pesha – profession, this refers to the profession of bourgeoisie class
Swadeshi aadhar – domestic foundation for something, such as development
Swadeshi abdharna – refers to national or domestic vision
Tapai – second person personal pronoun used to respect elders
Teej – festival celebrated mainly by CHHE women to ensure their husbands’ longevity and prosperity
Terai – lowland, also known as Madhesh in day-to-day communication
Vikashi kura – literally means ‘development debate’
Vandevta – god of the forest
Vásudhaiva kuṭumbakam – the world is one family
The discourse on decolonisation is relatively new to social work and social work has yet to explore the decolonisation literature found in the social and political science disciplines. A key issue for decolonisation scholars is naming by outsiders. Hence, in this welcome addition to the literature on international social work, Raj Yadav clarifies his stance at the outset:

I have consciously used the term ‘Nepali’ rather than its variant ‘Nepalese’. The term ‘Nepalese’ does not belong to the Nepali vernacular. Rather, it is the product of the Anglicisation of Nepal and gained popularity among elite English-speaking Nepali people, expats, and Western tourists. The term ‘Nepali’, used in this book, refers generally to the diverse peoples of Nepal and anything pertaining to them, such as language, culture, costume, lifestyle, values, and norms. Nepal is a pluralist society and the use of ‘Nepali’ conveys its diversity and heterogeneity.

(see ‘Notes on Translitarian and Nepali Terminology’ – in this book)

Raj continues in this vein to demonstrate his incisive understanding of the political, cultural, and social history of Nepal and the various changes that have occurred over time, as well as the social relationships between classes and ethnic groups that divide its society. In describing and analysing the sociocultural groups of Nepal, he demonstrates the complexities of the caste system and the cleavages, conflicts, and new politics shaping contemporary Nepali society in which social work is seeking to find its place. Through his empirical work, he aptly shows why we need to be cautious in reading prior work on social work’s development in Nepal and provides the first critical reading of the dynamics surrounding an occupation that has yet to achieve professional and social legitimacy. To date, social work in Nepal is an educational enterprise training graduates for non-existent jobs, a situation that reveals all the ethical and political complexities of social work’s internationalising ambitions. The sociopolitical complexities of the Nepali landscape highlight the over-ambitious claims of social work’s international definition that presumes a fit-for-purpose too difficult to reach in many countries in the Global South. What better place to start such a critical examination than with those few social workers, relative to the number who have graduated from Nepal’s social work education programs over the last three decades, working in the field of social development. Raj’s focus on evolving development practice among social workers working in INGOs enabled him to ask important question about the relevance of
Nepal’s growing social work education enterprise. As he explores their experiences, he learns of the problems of imported social work and the mountain practitioners have to climb to fashion culturally appropriate and contextually situated responses in Nepal. It is they, rather than their social work educators, who are carving out a place for social work in this complex sociopolitical terrain. Drawn by his critical curiosity, Raj bravely questions the relevance of Western social work to the Nepali context, seeking to discern from practitioners in the development field what social work education and practice tailored to fit this context might look like. His book offers an incisive exposition, based on empirical research, of what home-grown social work in Nepal might entail.

For Raj, locally relevant social work responsive to the complex Nepali socio-economic, political, and cultural context has much to gain from a decolonised model of practice in which Nepali social workers exercise their right to determine for themselves forms of practice responsive to local needs, rather than the interests of dominant international and regional social work organisations seeking to promote a universal notion of professional social work. Thus, Raj juxtaposes the situation of social work in Nepal and its colonial origins against a critique of western social work, in the process aligning it with indigenous and decolonising social work models. By taking an inductive, bottom-up, grounded theory approach to explore the nature, principles, and practice imperatives emerging from within Nepal, Raj finds incontrovertible evidence of what home-grown Nepali social work might involve. In this way, he enables social workers employed in INGOs, whom he regards as knowledge keepers and co-constructors of reality, to share their lived experience and thus contribute to a decolonised and developmental model of Nepali social work. By situating this exploration in the historical context, he provides a sound argument for the need to transform social work education, policy, practice, and research across Nepal. He uses his personal and professional insights and positionality to further nuance his empirical exploration in a meaningful way, demonstrating his genuine commitment to decolonising Nepali social work. By grounding his arguments in social workers’ experiences of programs endeavouring to respond to localised and regional needs, and micro, mezzo, and macro issues, he highlights the holistic nature of decolonised and developmental social work. As Raj himself writes,

‘Decolonised, developmental Nepali social work’ reflects Nepali social workers’ creative energy in advocating an emancipatory mindset and interjecting greater autonomy, self-determination, and responsiveness to local social, cultural, and political dynamics. The social work participants in this book collectively define development in terms of the needs of the Nepali population and view ‘Nepalisation’ as a right of Nepali social workers to honour the dignity and worth of Nepal’s multilingual and multiethnic populations with whom they work. . . . The resultant model of ‘decolonised, developmental Nepali social work’ is thus unique to Nepal, a country that continues to negotiate the contemporary phase of sociocultural and political transition, yet enshrines a fresh notion of decolonisation coupled with development from which many like-minded social workers across the globe might draw meaning in their contexts.

(see the Preface of this book)

Raj offers a case study worthy of emulation. This book, then, provides a useful resource to those striving to decolonise social work education, policy, practice, and research across the immediate region and more broadly. Its insights on the pitfalls of colonising
influences should make social workers wary of the damage they do when they intervene in international contexts foreign to them leaving locals to make sense of what they have left behind. We need to ask ourselves whether we want to make social work an undoing project. In a sense this is what Raj and the social workers in his study were seeking to do to fashion meaningful social work practice for a small, landlocked country in the Global South.

*Mel Gray*
In this book, I examine evolving social work practice in Nepal among those working in international non-government organisations (INGOs). It explores the extent to which Nepali social workers, employed in INGOs, perceive the relevance of their social work education to practice. It seeks their views on culturally appropriate and contextually situated social work in Nepal. In brief, this book examines what social work education and practice tailored to the Nepali context might look like based on the assumption that social work should be responsive to the socioeconomic, political, and cultural context in which it is practised. Given the paucity of knowledge about the practice of social work in Nepal, this book has used a grounded theory approach to examine the perceived synergy between social work education and the practice of social work as it is emerging in INGOs. The resultant model of ‘decolonised, developmental Nepali social work’ reflects the contemporary narratives of social workers engaged in the development activities of INGOs in Nepal. While international and global stakeholders insist on the universalisation and globalisation of social work, this work details how, in the mid-1990s, a small landlocked nation, sandwiched between two giant superpowers, India and China, had Western social work thrust upon it, and how some social work graduates have been crafting a unique decolonised and development based social work model in their day-to-day practice. Their narratives affirm that the uncritical importation of Western social work has resulted in disillusionment among Nepali social workers, due to the tensions between their Western-styled educational training and the competing and complex sociocultural and political processes of Nepali society. These social workers, who I have interviewed for this book, also claim that the ‘Nepalisation’ of social work will entail an incremental building-block approach to decolonisation.

The systematic process in this book involves the integration of local Nepali world views in the social work and development discourses, a process that is far less glamorous than those writing enthusiastically about the global movement of social work will have us to believe. In this way, the ‘Nepalisation’ of social work will have a permanent legacy of questioning the importation of social work into Nepal. The coming decades will act as a corrective to social work’s historical role in Nepal’s ongoing tumultuous history as Nepali social workers use their cultural and symbolic values, draw on their strengths and social capital, and transform borrowed Western social work to fit local fields and spaces.

‘Decolonised, developmental Nepali social work’ reflects Nepali social workers’ creative energy in advocating an emancipatory mindset and interjecting greater autonomy, self-determination, and responsiveness to local social, cultural, and political dynamics.
The social work participants in this book collectively define development in terms of the needs of the Nepali population and view ‘Nepalisation’ as a right of Nepali social workers to honour the dignity and worth of Nepal’s multilingual and multiethnic populations with whom they work.

Using constructivist grounded theory within qualitative research, this book allows the narrative of ‘decolonised, developmental Nepali social work’ to emerge from social workers at the coalface, while blending my interpretation as an author to yield a co-constructed decolonised and developmental model for social work practice in Nepal. The key argument of this book has been developed against the backdrop of divergent debates on globalisation-localisation, universalisation-contextualisation, outsider-insider perspectives, heteronomy-sovereignty, neoliberal capitalism-rights and justice-oriented social work, and above all, the colonisation-decolonisation of social work knowledge and practice. This has led to a model responsive to local sociocultural traditions (cultural focus), power and structural dynamics (structural focus), Nepali problems and issues (contextual focus), and poverty (development focus). The resultant model of ‘decolonised, developmental Nepali social work’ is thus unique to Nepal, a country that continues to negotiate the contemporary phase of sociocultural and political transition, yet enshrines a fresh notion of decolonisation coupled with development from which many like-minded social workers across the globe might draw meaning in their contexts.
Not only was the last decade of the 20th century the most vibrant in Nepal, with expectations of transformation in the state and polity running high, but it was also the most important in Nepal’s history, as the Nepali people’s long struggle for democracy materialised into a multiparty democratic system of governance ending an era of authoritarian rule in 1990. Between 1990 and 1995, none of the three prime ministers, who served the cabinet, completed their five-year tenure and 1996 was an especially important year, first because the tenuous coalition government of the Nepali Congress Party (NCP), Rastriya Prajatantra Party, and Sadbhawana Party was struggling to sustain the emerging democracy under Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. This shaky coalition government faced immense challenges, not only from the highly polarised political parties keeping his tenuous administration together, but also due to the corruption and fiscal indiscipline that prevailed at that time (Hachhethu, 1997). Thus, the fledgling democracy, with its populist slogans of liberalisation, decentralisation, and governmental reform, was overshadowed by the coalition government’s simultaneous making and unmaking of politics (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2004a).

Second, as if this were not enough, the Maoist insurgency, inspired by its blend of Leninist, Marxism, and Maoism ideologies, began the so-called People’s War, which encircled the cities from the countryside in 1996. The decade-long insurgency caused the death of about 15,000 Nepali people, while many were displaced or disappeared. The Nepali Maoists planned to complete the new democratic revolution after the destruction of feudalism and imperialism...then immediately moving toward socialism, and, by way of cultural revolutions based on the theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, marching to communism – the golden future of the whole humanity. (Communist Party of Nepal, Maoist, 1995, n.p.)

They claimed that, through armed struggle, they would free Nepal from its petty bourgeois, narrow nationalist, religious-communalist, and caste-based illusions.

Third, when Father Charles Law, a Chicago-based Jesuit missionary, introduced social work education at St Xavier’s College in Kathmandu in 1996, the Nepali polity was still struggling to sustain its fledgling multiparty democracy, on the one hand, and to understand the guerrilla uprising, on the other. Earlier, in 1987, fellow missionary, Brother James F. Gates, had introduced Western-style social work training at the Social Work Institute (SWI) in Kathmandu. Contrary to Nepali macro-structural conditions,
this new technology of service delivery and management envisaged a role for social work, as a profession with a social mission based on individualistic Western models. Its hidden agenda was to commemorate and continue the unfinished legacy of Saint Francis Xavier’s (1506–1552) Christian expansionist mission to East and South Asia.

These missionaries introduced social work into Nepal as a modern, scientific project based mainly in psychological models. The education program they introduced targeted young peoples, mainly in the capital city of Kathmandu, and linked them physically through social work institutes, ideologically through Western concepts, and technologically through universal skills and techniques. The landscape of this new idea allowed previously disconnected Nepali youth to think and act homogeneously by introducing them to Western texts, concepts, and, above all, the idea of cultural production. Its English language lent common terminologies of doing service that had no equivalents in Nepali languages. Despite all these, it failed in overall to encourage a critical engagement with Nepal’s multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic populations. One of the dubious contributions of the Western missionaries, or colonisers in general, to Nepal was that they introduced colonial concepts, the English language, and rational models. They also aided international aid agencies that shaped non-government services in Nepal. An elite group of social work educators readily adopted the Western social work brand and embraced its fundamental tenets. For me, the driving question is, ‘Are Nepali social workers happy with this?’
With its introduction by Western missionaries three decades ago, about 50 private colleges affiliated to four Nepali universities, mainly in the capital city of Kathmandu, teach social work in Nepal. Until now, there have not been any empirical studies to examine the relationship between social work education and practice in Nepal. Essentially, the primary stakeholders driving social work education are educational institutions, educators, and practitioners, motivated by the belief that social work can play a vital role in enhancing Nepal's development into a fully fledged democracy. However, in the absence of a service infrastructure employing social work graduates, there is little knowledge about the organisational settings in which they are employed, though most willing to have employment opportunity in INGOs. Given this backdrop, this book critically examines evolving Nepali social work practice among those working in INGOs of Nepal. It also explores the extent to which Nepali social workers, employed in INGOs, perceive their social work education to be relevant to their practice. It seeks their views on culturally appropriate and contextually situated social work in Nepal.

Drawing on its epistemology from post-colonial studies in general and recently emerging decolonising discourse within social work in particular, the book has emerged out of my doctoral degree and has its inception in my long-standing critical thinking and questioning about the fit of Western social work to a non-Western context like Nepal. In other words, the book explores the home-grown nature of social work based on the advocacy that social work should be responsive to the socioeconomic, political, and cultural context in which it is practised. This book uses a bottom-up approach to examine the perceived synergy between social work education and the practice of social work as it is emerging through INGOs in Nepal. In so doing, the book empirically responds to, *inter alia*, how relevant is the imported social work education to the work of Nepali social workers employed in INGOs; does the education Nepali social workers receive indeed have a Western bent, and, if so, how does it prepare Nepali social workers for the situations they encounter in their day-to-day practice; do Nepali social workers share ongoing concerns on the need to decolonise and shift towards developmental social work in Nepal, and, if yes, what might a model of decolonised and developmental social work practice look like in Nepal?

**Why decolonised and developmental social work?**

As the central theme of this book, I wondered whether ‘decolonisation’ was the correct term to use in relation to a country like Nepal, which had never been formally colonised by external forces. Initial forays into the literature on decolonisation affirmed this
choice since ‘maritime enclaves’ and ‘settlement colonies’ were not the only manifestations of colonisation. It existed where exploitation and ‘quasi-colonial control’, ‘informal rule’, and even ‘non-colonial determinant influences’ (Jürgen, 1997, pp. 21–22) prevailed. The decolonisation discourse polarised the West and non-West. Al-I Ahmad (2004) believed,

There is not only a great gap between the two groups, but . . . an unfillable chasm deepening and widening by the day. Thus, wealth and poverty, power and incompetence, knowledge and ignorance, prosperity and ruin, civilization and savagery, have been polarized in the world. One pole is held by the sated – the wealthy, the powerful, the maker and exporters of manufactures. The other pole is left to the hungry – the poor, the impotent, the importers and consumers, . . . The difference arises not just from the time and place – it is not just a quantitative one. It is also qualitative, with two diverging poles: on the one hand, a world with its forward momentum grown terrifying and, on the other, a world that has yet to find a channel to guide its scattered motive forces.

(p. 58)

For decolonisation scholars, Western missionaries introduced their cultural and religious values while running rough shod over traditional cultures and social support networks that had long sustained Indigenous Peoples in the colonies they sought to transform to Western world views. Colonial aggressors pursued their territorial agenda through war and violence, if necessary, to claim supremacy over, and bring modernisation and enlightenment to, so-called ‘uncivilised people’. Thus, the missionaries who brought social work education to Nepal colonised young Nepali minds introducing a profession based on Western ways of thinking and doing, undergirded by Western values. This continues in Nepal’s educational institutions that teach social work. These concerns led to my interest in studying the ‘decolonisation’ of social work in Nepal.

Development is another key theme alongside decolonisation in this book that warrant explanation from the outset. As discussed in-depth later in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6, thinking about Nepali social work within the developmental purview is two-fold. First, as Murdie (2014) suggested, development as the need for Nepali population delivers human security that

is recognised as coming both from freedoms that protect citizens from state repression and political violence and from the overall material well-being of the country. Many of those outcomes can be couched in language concerning the promotion of economic, social, and cultural rights (freedom from want) outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights . . . and in outcomes listed as political and civil rights (freedom from fear).

(p. 29)

Thus, developmental social work with a focus on human security model is best suited to address the needs of Nepal given its state of underdevelopment. As explained in Chapter 6, the integration of development into decolonising social work emphasises a rights-based notion of community development approach to deal with the issues of deprivation [that] remains a key aspect of life in Nepal. More than eleven million people – nearly half of its population – live below the poverty line and almost 38
percent live below $US 1 per day. There are growing inequities between rural and urban areas, and substantial discrimination against women, *Dalits* and indigenous minorities persists.

(Kernot, 2006, p. 298)

On the other, in its second aim, developmental focus of Nepali social work encompasses a critical view of development that goes beyond the concept of ‘pathological misdevelopment’ (Ingram, 2018, p. 110) often touted in international development discourse. Instead, it embraces post-development perspective to view development itself as an imported entity in Nepal and, therefore, promotes the notion that development perspective should be guided by the notion of ‘self-expression’ and ‘self-determination’ as several post-development theorists (for example, Fujikura, 2001; Pigg, 1992, 1993; Shrestha, 1997) have argued in the case of Nepali development.

**Decolonised and developmental social work: pedagogy, politics, and praxis**

The social reconstructionist traditions have made several proposals to counter the challenges of ongoing hegemonic and colonial effects in social work. Most of them have evolved around the notion of culture and its variants such as cultural competence, cultural sensitive, cultural appropriateness, and cross-cultural, only to name few here. Rather situating the term decolonisation in the epistemic and existential context of struggles in which social work ‘leaders and peoples mutual identified, together create the directive lines of their action’ (Freire, 1974, p. 183) – educational, developmental, political, and liberation; these scholarships have provided a descriptive mode through writings in the hope that these will create patterns that might yield prescriptive norms in order to reverse the effects of West-centric social work in the ‘Other’ contexts. The failure to address political injustice in social work as well as in some occasions within the decolonisation debate and their tendency to enforce narrow indigeneity and cultural identities demand a critical alternative, one that re-thinks the ‘Other’ context by re-centering differences through a focus on the particularities of ‘Others’ mutual interdependence rather than generalities of ‘Others’ universality. Such thinking, according to Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) requires

on the one hand, a recognition of how social constructed categories of . . . [geographic, linguistic, and cultural variations within the national boundary, and likewise caste] and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and social class have real and directive consequences on both the material and symbolic conditions that affect individuals and groups. On the other, it requires acknowledging that the consequences of such conditions are not always predictable and that particular circumstances and relationships enable or disallow particular responses and modes of being-with-others and acting in the world.

(p. 44)

Therefore, it is important that I outline the pedagogy and its politics and praxis from the very beginning that inspire the thinking about decolonised and developmental Nepali social work. Embedded in the critical, emancipatory notion of social work currently in vogue, the idea of decolonised and developmental Nepali social work rests on the decolonising pedagogy of solidary progress. More specifically, I
argue that the decolonising pedagogy of solidary progress as introduced in this book is a conceptually dynamic worldview informed by a theoretical heteroglossia. In its conceptual dynamic sense, it draws on the constant tension arising from paradoxical process of globalisation, universalisation, internationalisation, and indigenisation and localisation debate in social work, whereas, in terms of theoretical heteroglossia, it has its inception in the works of post-colonial studies (Gandhi, 1998; Spivak, 1999), critical race theory (DuBois, 1961; Fanon, 1986), critical (decolonising) pedagogy (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012; Mignolo, 2012), spatial theory (Soja, 1989), and active decolonisation in social work (Gray, Coates, Yellow Bird, & Hetherington, 2013a). Similar to what Yellow Bird (2013) has argued in general, the pedagogy of decolonising solidarity progress goes beyond the blaming games such that first and foremost it ensures solidarity of Nepali peoples and simultaneously advocates frontline social workers to engage in achieving anticolonial, anti-racist, antisexist, anti-oppressive, antidiscriminatory, including anticasteism and antiethnocentrism, social work education and practice.

In other words, the decolonising pedagogy of solidary progress evokes a post-perspective in social work to unmask the ongoing insidious effects of domination, exploitation, oppression, and injustice all too visible in the importation of West-centric social work in ‘Other’ contexts. Within its post-perspective claim, or say simply as a post-social work perspective, it asserts the view that peoples in the ‘Other’ contexts who are the victims of Western enlightenment and modernist social work as well as West-centric development discourse must emphasise cultural-historical activity of solidarity to achieve progressive home-grown social work to ensure sustainable human development goals. Here, then in post-social work, the subaltern can speak to gain control over social work in their context. Borrowing from McLaren (1988), the decolonising pedagogy of solidary progress is thus ‘irrevocably committed to the side of the oppressed’ (p. 164) that equips social workers with the notion of rights-based developmental goals to ensure peoples’ freedom from fear and want. The following are the positions that inform the conception of the pedagogy of solidary progress:

- Social work education and practice in ‘Other’ context should be understood in terms of ‘West’ versus ‘rest of the West’ and its related colonial and imperial links.
- Social work education and practice theories should encourage social work educators and students to engage and develop a critical understanding of the relationship among culture, ideology, and power.
- Social work education and practice is the subject matter of subjectivity that involves the context and its complexities, contradictions, contesting norms and values, and multiple realities.
- Social work process and practice must involve historical background as well the existing social, cultural, political, and developmental dynamics of the particular context.
- Social work education and practice should be analysed to understand the ways it primarily serves the interests of the wealthy and powerful urban classes while working in the name of poor, marginalised, and minorities.
- The relationship between social workers (as educators, students, practitioners, researchers, policymakers, advocate, and so forth) and peoples should be based on critical engagement and dialogue than merely objectifying the peoples as consumers, customers, or clients.
• Social work education and practice should engage in empowering marginalised and minorities sections of society and contribute to the emancipatory and developmental goals.
• Social work education and practice should focus on empowering ‘self’ prior to the mastery of professional and technical skills.
• Social work education and practice should be mindful to the modernist notion of objectivist inquiry and truth, and therefore should challenge the ongoing efforts for universalisation and globalisation of social work.
• And, above all, social work education and practice should bring peoples together in solidarity for their collective progress.

These positionalities bring us to the fore to view pedagogy as an intrinsic part of political nature of social work, which ‘encompasses both an anticolonial and decolonizing notion of pedagogy and an anticolonial and decolonizing pedagogical praxis’ (Tejeda, Espinoza, & Gutierrez, 2003, p. 18). Further, in its political sense, social work itself is the site for critical consciousness and activity where there is a need that adherents of decolonising discourse create solidarity to counter and eventually end the effects of colonisation that has sustained until now in social work. This way, the political notion promotes self-determination not only to re-design social work but also to re-envision and re-shape social work such that human development goals become central to social work interventions in ‘Other’ context.

In exploration about social work’s political nature, it is also important to briefly highlight the diffusion of social work from the ‘West’ to the ‘rest of West’ and the ways this technological transfer has both distorted ‘Others’ day-to-day realities and silenced contextual voices. The pious motherhood and apple pie image of West-centric social work, to borrow from Munck (1999), continues to justify the West-centric social work image as faithful angel and places it as uncontested, universal human good (Specht & Courtney, 1994). Similar to what Esteva (1992) argued to critique development, the metaphor of social work ‘gave global hegemony to a purely Western genealogy of history, robbing peoples of different cultures [in “Other” context] of the opportunity to define the forms of their social life’ (p. 9). Social work’s technological transfer advocated, and to an extent continues to do so even today, that one true path to civilisation and salvation as well as helping individuals, families, groups, and communities irrespective of varied contexts is to follow Western fashion of social work bent on ‘capitalism, social Darwinism, the Protestant ethic and individualism’ (Nagpaul, 1993, p. 214). The West is best, and the rest has to conform to it – social work’s technological transfer explicitly preaches across the world. If there is world views, approaches, or intervention frameworks that do not result from Western social work genealogy, then those, no matters how effective they can be for local peoples, cannot be accommodated in or accredited as social work. The tragedy is that peoples everywhere, including in Nepal, have caught up in a Western perception of social work reality not realising that they have become an object for Western social work. The political goal within pedagogy of solidary progress is to unmask these dominant views and reinsert the home-grown perspectives of ‘Other’ and those who have been victims of these narratives. In essence, the political nature of pedagogy considers the experiences of ‘Othering’ as a point of departure where the subaltern, more specifically Nepali social workers, can speak and eschew ‘double-consciousness’ (DuBois, 1961), ‘double-bind’ (Spivak, 1999), or ‘corporeal malediction’ (Fanon, 1986).
In relation to decolonising social work, the pedagogy of solidary progress is not only about entering into theoretical discourse — creating another jargon that might only fit into academic debate. But, it is also about translating pedagogy into praxis that concerns how social work’s imported Western root in ‘Other’ context can be altered on the one hand as well as can be used to reshape social work that genuinely provides social workers ‘with a rich theoretical, analytical, and pragmatic toolkit for individual and social transformation’ (Tejeda et al., 2003, p. 31) on the other. The transformative issues particularly in relation to Nepal concerns delivering rights and justice based developmental goals such that Nepali marginalised and minorities groups can become the part of mainstream Nepali society (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 6). In this sense, the idea of solidary progress as a praxis, or more specifically, solidary progress as a manifestation of conscientisation, resistance, and transformation, equips Nepali social workers with an inward-looking ability to compare between imported social work and what is needed on the grassroot levels.

**Background to, and rationale for, the decolonised and developmental social work in Nepal**

Figure 1.1 illustrates my conceptualisation of the diffusion of social work from its international centres in the USA and UK and its reinforcement via regional and international social work organisations, such as the Asia-Pacific Association of Social Work Education (APASWE), the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), and the International Association for Schools of Social Work (IASSW). It shows Nepal as a satellite of their influence, on the one hand, with India on the other, as the ensuing discussion shows.

**Satellite connections: Western cuisine with an Indian flavour**

The Jesuit missionaries introduced the Western invention of social work (Gray, Coates, & Yellow Bird, 2008a) from its colonial centre in the USA, along with US social work literature with its heavy psychological base in clinical, mental health. In the process of introducing social work education to Nepal, they relied on a neighbouring satellite, India, where social work, long established in the main urban centres, was not yet a recognised profession. They drew technical support from the social work institute, Nirmala Niketan, based in Mumbai (Nikku, 2010a). Thus, social work in Nepal resulted from the missionaries’ Western colonial influence combined with Indian support. India had been colonised by Britain from 1858 to 1947, with Western social work introduced as part of the colonial welfare administration in 1936.

Indian social work remained steeped in Western influences, when, in 1996, Jesuit missionaries invited its social work academics in Nirmala Niketan to support its development in Kathmandu. Hence, Nepali social work might be described as a menu of ‘Western cuisine with an Indian flavour’. The effects of what became the dominant satellite of India were present until recently in the two social work institutes in Nepal. Indian nationalities have run and managed St Xavier’s College and the Nepal School of Social Work (joint initiatives of Kadambari Memorial College of Science and Management and Nepal College of Development Studies), which had laid the early foundations of social work education. They influenced curriculum development at the Bachelor and Master levels and represented Nepal in international and regional social work forums and organisations (Nikku, 2010a, 2010b; Nikku, Udas, & Adhikari, 2014).
New imperial centre: International and regional social work organisations

Colonial/imperial centre: UK & USA

Dominant satellite: India

Satellite: Nepal

Figure 1.1 Advent of social work in Nepal and colonial and imperial connections
New imperial centres: regional and international and social work organisations

Despite ongoing resistance, new imperial centres in international and regional social work organisations have sought to institutionalise and legitimise Western social work’s universalising, globalising, and internationalising agenda across the world (Gray et al., 2008a; Gray & Webb, 2014). Nepal is one of the centres vigorously pursued and supported in the Asia-Pacific Region (Nikku et al., 2014). Critics have referred to this territorialising agenda variously as ‘colonising’, ‘westernising’, ‘globalising’, ‘Americanising’, ‘homogenising’, ‘imperialising’, ‘McDonaldising’, and ‘neoliberal fantasising’ (Gray et al., 2008a; Harris & Chou, 2001; James, 2004; Midgley, 2008; Pugh & Gould, 2000; Webb, 2003). Gray and Webb (2014) believed international and regional social work organisations’ efforts to legitimise their global agenda presented it as a benign influence. It invited the members of these international and regional organisations to act as forces of moral good, spreading social work education to new sites, while overlooking the political nature of this agenda and its injurious results in non-Western contexts. Here indigenous, culturally and ethnically sensitive, and decolonising social work practice were called for.

These professional social work organisations began to exert their influence in earnest in Nepal in 2005 (Nikku et al., 2014), despite critiques of social work’s lack of fit with Nepal’s ‘feudalistic social structure framed in traditionalism . . . and institutions of self-help, and self-reliance’ (Shrestha & Bhattrai, 2017, pp. 2–3). Not only were professional services foreign to Nepali culture, but also there was no word in any Nepali language and dialect to describe imported social work itself. Nevertheless, ‘Western cuisine and Indian flavoured’ social work education was introduced to Nepal, though it was offered mainly in Kathmandu. Social work remains an unknown entity outside this urban enclave, while a home-grown model of Nepali social work education and practice has yet to emerge. In short, given there is no welfare infrastructure to employ graduate social workers, there is no Nepali social work practice of which to speak. Further, local social workers have little knowledge of international social work structures and organisations. This was shown at the time of the 2015 earthquake, when I was interviewing Nepali social workers for this book. Most social workers on the ground were oblivious to the short-term, ‘do-good’ approach of the IASSW and the interventions or changes claimed in reports, forums, and electronic media from its allied international partners (IASSW, International Council on Social Welfare [ICSW], & IFSW, 2016; Nikku, 2015). Gray and Yadav (2015) have argued that international social work bodies were oblivious to Nepal’s contemporary challenges, such as migrant workers, human trafficking, and military personnel returning from service without benefits, noting the need to take account of structural factors and political forces at work there. A privatized market-oriented, neoliberal agenda, totalitarian political parties, and donor-driven development are fundamental to the Nepal[i] nation state. Moreover, Nepal[i] development issues and policies are increasingly marked by transnational processes. Given the nation’s complex sociopolitical circumstances, trapped as it is in vicious cycles of damaging internal problems, such as . . . struggling to find its way into legitimate policy, failed development, persistent poverty, lack of protection for minority rights, and centralized government, Nepal[i] social
workers face major challenge, and could do well with . . . [locally developed, home-grown models].

(p. 29)

Gray and Yadav (2015) further argued,

Social work’s international organizations, like all INGOs, promote . . . vested interests and events playing out in ‘our own backyards’ do not necessarily accord with the profession’s humanistic and emancipatory agenda. Consequently, local contexts, cultures, problems, and practices are undermined under the frame of international social work organization’s extreme penchant for universalizing social work.

(p. 28)

Four quadrants: possible influences and competing tensions

Against this backdrop, Figure 1.1 illustrates the possible influences on, and competing tensions in, Nepali social work shown in four quadrants:

Quadrant 1: Colonial social work, that is, the high influence of international social work organisations versus the low effects of regional social work organisations.

Quadrant 2: Imperial-universal social work, that is, the high influence of international and regional social work organisations.

Quadrant 3: Indigenised social work, that is, the high influence of regional social work versus the low influence of international social work.

Quadrant 4: Decolonised social work, that is, the low influence of international and regional social work organisations.

One example of colonial, imperial, and universal social work is evident in the literature. Then member representing Nepal on international and regional social work bodies, an Indian academic, has defined what a social worker in Nepal is as follows:

‘Social Worker’ in the context of Nepal refers to new graduates and current practitioners (both Nepalese and other nationals) with recognized social work qualifications, that is, Degree in Social Work [Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) or Master of Social Work (MSW)] or a Graduate Diploma in Social Work or a recognised Social Work qualification. These qualifications should be recognized or acceptable to associations like the Singapore Association of Social Workers and or International Association of Schools of Social work (IASSW).

(Nikku, 2014, p. 103)

In distinguishing social workers from frontline development workers without social work degrees, Nikku (2014) echoed the professional extremism of colonial and imperial social work. Calling social workers social service practitioners, he mirrored the distinction in the South African hierarchy of welfare personnel (Gray, 2000). He described them thus:

Social Service Practitioners’ are those who are working in the capacity of social workers performing social work functions for the major part of their work but are
without relevant social work qualifications like BSW and MSW. Executive directors, program executives, youth workers, field social workers, case workers, who are not formally trained in social work per se are performing social work functions for the major part of their work can qualify to be accredited as Social Service Practitioners if they meet the entry requirements for Social Service Practitioners. They can become accredited Social Workers if they go on to acquire a recognized Social Work qualification and also fulfil the other entry requirements for accreditation.  

(Nikku, 2014, p. 104)

This distinction has been presented in the international social work literature and on international platforms at seminars, workshops, conferences, and meetings of international bodies. Both attempts and advocacies have been conducted to sanction this categorization of Nepali so-called social service personnel without any formal input from, or consultation with, Nepali social workers. This has provoked several critical concerns and raised questions as follows:

- Are the international and regional social work organisations genuinely concerned about developing home-grown Nepali social work models to address ongoing structural chaos in Nepal?
- On what basis can ‘other nationals’ become spokespeople on, or adjudicators of, Nepali social work?
- Are social work’s international and regional organisations legitimising universal social work by failing to consider local contingencies?
- Why should the Singapore Association of Social Work and, likewise, the IASSW be arbiters of what constitutes a social worker in Nepal, especially since, to the best of my knowledge, most social work graduates and Nepali social work institutes are oblivious to these international and regional social work bodies and their ‘self-imposed’ regional outsiders?
- Is Nepali social work an unfinished project of Western organisations and their professionalising, universalising mindset?
- Can Nepali social workers’ rights to self-determination be promoted so they decide on their own version of social work depending upon the local needs of Nepali society rather than the dominance of international and regional social work organisations?

Despite such critical concerns, as a representative of IASSW and APASWE in the past, Nikku (2014) argued that ‘regional organizations such as APASWE can play an important role in strengthening social work education in South Asian regions’ (p. 107), including in Nepal. He ignored criticisms of indigenising processes following ‘hard on the heels of social work’s colonizing past and continue[s] its penchant for spreading itself with missionary zeal’ (Gray & Coates, 2008, p. 13). Quadrant 3 represents indigenised social work, where there is high influence of regional social work and low influence of international social work forces (as shown in Figure 1.1). Others have been equally vocal in their criticisms of indigenisation for the following reasons:

- Indigenisation has promoted the burgeoning globalisation agenda and liberal utopian politics.

(Webb, 2003)
• Indigenisation has legitimised international and global social work.
  (Evetts, 1998)

• Instead of focusing on people-centred social work practice, indigenisation has
  championed international and global social work’s universal values and standards.
  (Gray & Coates, 2008)

• Indigenisation has promoted contested world views of a common and shared
  professional identity on the one hand and transcending context on the other.
  (McDonald, Harris, & Wintersteen, 2003)

• Indigenisation does not challenge the professional managerialism and bureaucra-
  tism of Western social work. Under a professionalised ethos, it is difficult for front-
  line workers to deliver on the need for human rights and social justice.
  (Carniol, 2005)

Against this backdrop, what Nepali social work requires is Quadrant 4 – decolonised
and developmental social work, where the influence of international and regional social
work organisations is low (as shown in Figure 1.1). An emergent and alternative, decolo-
nised and developmental Nepali social work would not only resist international and
regional social work organisations’ imperialist and universalist gaze, but also free itself
from the grip of missionary-styled colonial social work. Contrary to the one-size-fits-
all approach of global and universal social work, decolonised and developmental Nepali
social work would seek to comprehend Nepali pluralist social structures, interactions,
and norms and, thus, design social work interventions in a way that addresses contempo-
rary macrolevel social, cultural, economic, and political issues. Decolonised and develop-
mental social work would also reflect Nepali social workers’ right to self-determination
and deconstruct imported Western social work, which is out of step with Nepali society.

**Genesis, central arguments, and inquiry method of the book**

The genesis of this book is rooted in a transitional phase in my life, when I was about to
begin a career in academia in Nepal after I had successfully completed a BSW in Nepal
in 2007 and an MSW in India in 2010. I had accepted a full-time lecturing position
at a private social work institute run by missionaries, while simultaneously working
part-time at several other schools of social work in Nepal. My brief career as a young
lecturer found me uncomfortable with an educational system based on Western models
of social work and I began to explore how Jesuit missionaries had embedded Western
social work education in Nepal, questioning its fit with Nepal’s diverse social, cultural,
and political traditions. This led to my interest in formulating a home-grown practice
model to decolonise social work in Nepal.

Embarking on PhD study meant finding an appropriate empirical method with
which to study my area of interest. Given my journey to that point, I was drawn to
indigenous and decolonising views on social work and knowledge production. More
than whimsy, a genuine concern for local knowledge production and my sense of
insider responsibility encouraged me to embark on decolonisation of social work in
Nepal through a PhD and then converting my thesis into this book. Nevertheless, liv-
ing on the other side of the world (termed the Third World), I was oblivious to the
ongoing debates and dialogues in indigenous and decolonising social work that had already got foothold among scholars in Australia, Canada, and the countries of Africa. Also, systematic qualitative inquiry and its world views, traditions, and approaches were something that I was encountering for the first time in my life. In other words, this was as much a journey about myself moving from a state of unknowing to knowing.

In addition, despite the need for decolonised and developmental social work in Nepal, awareness of this topic has yet to be felt in private discussions and public forums. Most importantly, due to the weak research base of social work training and practice, systematic knowledge production on decolonised and developmental Nepali social work has yet to emerge, not only in Nepal, but also in similar contexts, where literature is lacking on empirical and substantive, or middle-range, theories or models of decolonising social work. In recent years, however, debates on decolonising social work have increased piecemeal (Briskman, 2008; Gray, Coates, Yellow Bird, & Hetherington, 2013c; Gray & Hetherington, 2013; Harris, 2006; Rao, 2013; Sinclair, 2004; Tamburro, 2013; Waterfall, 2008; Yellow Bird, 2008).

Therefore, in this book I explore how a distinctly Nepali social work practice approach has been developing through examining the daily activities of social workers employed in INGOs in Nepal. I also explore, among other things, the extent to which local social workers question the relevance of the Western models they have learnt in relation to the sociocultural and structural constraints of Nepali society. Above all, with its focus on Nepali sociopolitical issues, I emphasise the political nature of social work in Nepal and the degree of political awareness attached to the roles Nepali social workers play in the country. In other words, in this book I aim to explore and document the features and principles of a distinctive Nepali social work practice approach. Thus, the book set forth with the following objectives:

1. To critically examine colonialism as the major root of professional social work and its resultant impact in Nepal.
2. To explore social work practice in relation to broader Nepali social, economic, cultural, and political frameworks and service-delivery mechanisms.
3. To identify processes underway, and barriers to, the decolonisation of social work practice in Nepal.
4. To develop a model of social work practice in Nepal, which is distinctly local and well-integrated with the Nepali sociostructural environment.

To accomplish these objectives, I examine what the ‘Nepalisation’ of social work model framed in a localised, context-specific way might entail (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Lofland & Lofland, 1995). I embrace an inductive, bottom-up, grounded theory approach to explore the nature, principles, and practice imperatives emerging from within Nepal and to discern what a home-grown Nepali social work model might involve (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Worth noting here, the book involves Nepali social workers (see Table 1.1) employed in INGOs as knowledge keepers or co-constructors of reality rather than mere participants in, or objects of, the model introduced in this book (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and rigorously explores their lived experience of Nepali social work (Seidman, 2013) ‘to discover what is going on [in Nepali social work], rather than assuming what should go on’ (Glaser, 1978, p. 159). Their direct and lived experiences have been synthesised to a model decolonised and developmental Nepali social work and extensively discussed in Chapter 7.
Table 1.1 Characteristics of research participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Working areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiran</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>BSW</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namita</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>Community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niharika</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>BSW</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niti</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>BSW</td>
<td>Community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranjan</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>BSW</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritesh</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>BSW</td>
<td>Peacebuilding/conflict management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samikshya</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>BSW, MSW</td>
<td>Community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sujit</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>BSW</td>
<td>Community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulshi</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urmila</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>BSW, MSW</td>
<td>Community development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total n = 10, female = 6, male = 4

*Not their given names

In an exploration, after carefully assessing the existing methodological choices, I employ a grounded theory method, which seems to fit with the decolonising ontological, epistemological, and axiological stance and the aims of the book, as it offers a culturally safe and respectful way of exploring Nepali social work (Rigney, 1999). In particular, the book utilises a concept of the constructivist grounded theory that emphasises the co-construction of knowledge (Charmaz, 2006; Dei & Johal, 2005). The heart of grounded theory lies in its inductive method, whereby knowers theorise from their interactions in their real world. This seemed to cohere with my own intuition that Nepali social work needs to respond to national and local issues. Moreover, the use of grounded theory method in the book also holds the promise in reducing the gap between Western theory – the status quo – and Nepali social workers’ on-the-ground experience. For Glaser and Strauss (1967), generating a bottom-up theory, or a model in the case of this book, involves a process of knowledge production in which the knowledge production cannot be divorced from systematic data collection, multiple levels of data analysis, and early stage constant comparisons. Here was a way to address the mismatch between imported Western and locally grounded Nepali social work. Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) grounded theory sought a ‘fit’ between the research or knowledge production and the context in which its findings would be implemented. In Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) systematic grounded theory, ‘data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other’ (p. 23). And, above all Charmaz’s (2006) constructivist grounded theory that informs the enquiry method for this book emphasised the co-construction of knowledge. These all epistemologically and ethically suit the book’s goals of understanding the multilayered social situation and realities of Nepali social workers who have been regarded as active actors in ‘Nepalisation’ of social work. Thus, this book has chosen a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 1995a, 2000, 2006, 2009, 2011) to model the concept of decolonised and developmental Nepali social work for the following reasons:

- It allows exploration of its subject matter through a focus on the complex social and personal forces that shape individual lives and begins where practitioners are.
Its inductive nature ‘typically invites the reader into vicarious experience and therefore, is positioned to give voice to the voiceless’.

(Gilgun, 2011, pp. 346–354)

- It reshapes the interaction between knower and knowledge keepers in the process of knowledge production and equips the knower as the ‘author of a reconstruction of experience and meaning’.

(Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006, p. 2)

- It assumes that the interaction between knower and knowledge keepers ‘produces the data, and therefore the meanings that the . . . [knower] observes and defines’.

(Charmaz, 1995b, p. 35)

- It positions the knower as a co-producer of knowledge and allows him or her to add ‘a description of the situation, the interaction, the person’s affect and perception of how the’ making sense goes.

(Charmaz, 1995b, p. 33)

- The knower’s voice does not transcend the experience of the knowledge keepers but re-envisages it bringing ‘fragments of fieldwork time, context, and mood together in a colloquy of the author’s [or knower’s] several selves – reflecting witnessing, wondering, accepting – all at once’.

(Charmaz & Mitchell, 1996, p. 299)

The exploratory nature of this book on a topic about which little is known in Nepal demands a reflexivity to make sense of Nepali social workers’ worldview. Again, the key aim of the book is to explore what Nepali social work practice entails through an examination of what social work practitioners in INGOs are doing daily in Nepal. This leads to the formulation of ‘grand-tour’ questions, such as, are they aware of the wider sociostructural context of their work? Do they ask questions about how the work they are doing is contributing to social change? In so doing, how do they question the relevance of the social work education program they have received in preparing them for practice in Nepal? To this end, the key questions that guide this book are:

- To what extent do Western ideas and paradigms influence the practice of Nepali social workers?
- How does the existing social, cultural, economic, and political context of Nepal influence the work of Nepali social workers?
- What do Nepali social work practitioners say are the key influences on their practice?
- What practices comprise an emerging decolonised and developmental Nepali social work practice approach?
- Are Nepali social workers engaged in decolonising practices, that is, how are they tailoring their work to fit local sociostructural issues and problems?
- What might a model of decolonised and developmental social work practice approach look like in the context of Nepal?

Author’s positionality and reflexivity in knowledge production

Birks and Mills (2011) noted that positionality assumed a relationship between knowledge production and reflexive practice. The knowledge producer should be
a reflexive practitioner. This means being explicit about his or her relationship to the knowledge production and the knowledge keepers and building in measures to equalise power imbalances and increase reciprocity with those who are active actors in knowledge production, that is, to the knowledge keepers. To do this, the knowledge producer openly declares his or her assumptions about the phenomenon under study. There was risk that making my assumptions about Nepali social work explicit to the participants would likely have influenced their responses to the exploratory questions and run counter to the bracketing technique grounded theory offered to model decolonised and developmental Nepali social work. Nevertheless, positionality required that I made my epistemological and ontological stance explicit at the outset, since this was fundamental to the qualitative knowledge production process (Crotty, 1998), especially when one embraces decolonial epistemology. I must admit that I am unable to divorce myself from my past experiences and actions that, wittingly or unwittingly, has guided me to this point and has shaped the way I have framed this book, the questions I have asked, the observations and interpretations I have made, and my reporting of the decolonised and developmental Nepali social work. Notwithstanding, I have enhanced the trustworthiness of this book by explicitly locating myself in the narrative, probing my biases throughout, clearly describing my role as an author and my vested interests in the book, as discussed below (Creswell, 2009; Janesick, 2000).

Gilgun and Abrams (2002) suggested that situating the knower in knowledge production was an act exemplifying ‘the spirit of reflexivity’ (p. 41). Given that ‘observations are laden with culture-specific ontologies’ (Gordon, 1991, p. 606), I am part of the knowledge production process and the model generated in this book (Charmaz, 2006). Hence, it is essential that I make my position explicit in the book from the very beginning so that readers are not misguided throughout the texts:

- I belong to the same community of Nepali social workers whose world views have contributed to generate the model of decolonised and developmental Nepali social work presented in this book.
- My epistemology and ontology have influenced the knowledge production process.
- I have elicited the conceptual density and thick description required to develop decolonised and developmental social work by establishing a rapport with participants and bracketing my biases.
- My focus has been the meanings social workers attribute to their experience.
- I want to frame decolonised social work practice from the day-to-day experiences of Nepali social workers, expecting they had been influenced by Western theories and models learnt through their education and further embedded by the donor-driven INGOs in which they have been working.
- The model of decolonised and developmental social work I have developed is a collective construction based on my and the knowledge-keepers’ shared experience and understanding.
- Others might frame the model of decolonised and developmental Nepali social work in a different way and thus might elicit different world views.
- I have chosen the grounded theory approach because of its synergies with indigenous and decolonising knowledge production and critical pedagogy, as discussed here.
Indigenous ways of knowing perceive knowledge production as a transformative process in which people’s voices must be heard (Hart, 2009; Kovach, 2005, 2009; Smith, 2012). Though my initial ideas about decolonised and developmental Nepali social work had been influenced by critical social work theories, including radical social work (Bailey & Brake, 1975; Lavalette, 2011), Marxist social work (Corrigan, 1978), structural social work (Hick, 2009; Mullaly, 1997, 2002), and post-modern social work (Allan, Briskman, & Pease, 2009; Morley, 2014), none of these theories did justice to my evolving understanding of the indigenisation of social work, defined as ‘making Western approaches relevant’ (Gray & Hetherington, 2013, p. 25). I saw indigenisation as the left wing of universal social work and the unfinished job of imperialist social work. Given the idea of the indigenisation of social work still draws on Western-informed theories, it could be described as ‘brown or black on the outside and white on the inside’. Indigenisation, in other words, has not been ‘neutral in its objectification of the Other . . . [and has] clear links to Western knowledge [that has] . . . generated a particular relationship to indigenous peoples which continues to be problematic’ (Smith, 2012, p. 39); notwithstanding, many scholars in social work have promoted indigenisation without critical scrutiny.

Indigenous knowledge producers are extremely mindful of the history of white logics and their colonising practices in research and remain suspicious of their epistemological, ontological, and methodological paradigms and their production of fragmented truths and distorted histories (Birks & Mills, 2011; Rigney, 1999; Smith, 2012). What is needed is an approach that deconstructs hegemonic white world views and decolone knowledge systems embedded by early scholars – Western missionaries, travellers, explorers, and anthropologists, like Hamilton (1819), Hodson (1817), Kirk Patric (1811), and Oldfield (1880) – who had instilled the dominant view of ‘cultural romanticism’ and ‘soul searching’ through spiritual possession’ (Hitchcock & Jones, 1976 in Devkota, 2007, p. 27) in Nepal. For a time, Nepal became a mecca for Western researchers’ personal romanticism and professional development (Devkota, 2007), and in every possible way the knowledge produced in this book seeks to eliminate the similar tradition.

More recently, the space previously occupied by Western missionaries and researchers has been occupied by INGOs, and bilateral and multilateral aid agencies to which many Nepali social workers have been drawn as a source of employment. Nepali social work education and its practice has yet to break down the intellectual colonisation brought by colonial research methodologies and develop its own home-grown research methods to study local peoples’ subjective reality. Thus, what is required is an empirical method rooted in Nepali values and norms. To this end, I wonder whether I should develop a completely new methodology or adapt an existing methodology. I am mindful of Smith’s (2012) observation:

Decolonization . . . does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or [the] Western knowledge. Rather it is about centering our concerns and worldviews and then coming to know and understand the theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purpose.

(p. 41)

Also I want to be sure that the methodology that I have chosen for this book does ‘not replace the hegemonic order with one that suffocates life and does not allow
Thinking about decolonised social work

Thinking about decolonised social work 17

each of us to flourish in ways that we may not even be able to begin to imagine’ (Dei, 2005, p. 12). Transparency and accountability, so central to indigenous or decolonised study, also mean knowledge generated should be communicable to the target peoples, that is, to the Nepali social workers in particular and others with similar expectations in general. Therefore, I discern a pragmatic path to develop the idea of decolonised and developmental Nepali social work in Nepal. A further insight to overcome methodological dilemma came from my PhD supervisor, Professor Mel Gray, who has immensely contributed to the field of indigenous and decolonisation of social work studies (see for instance, Gray et al., 2008a, 2013b). Gray et al. (2013c) had argued that we should no longer use the term ‘indigenous social work’ within the decolonisation discourse relating to developing countries and wondered whether ‘indigenisation’ was an outmoded concept and decolonisation more accurately reflected the political project of Indigenous Peoples and the Global South context. Thus, shifting the ground of Western social work in Nepal means detaching it from its existing theoretical perspective and finding a way to study Nepali social work from the ground up.

Smith (1999) highlighted the importance of transparency in indigenous knowledge production; how the knowledge production process is conducted is as important as what is found. ‘Processes are expected to be respectful, to enable people, to heal and educate . . . to lead one small step further towards self-determination’, Smith (1999, p. 128) argued. Thus, critical questions arise in formulating knowledge production for this book from an indigenist perspective: Whose knowledge is it? Who has designed the question and framed the phenomena of the study? Whose interests will it serve? Who will benefit? Who is writing up this idea? How will the knowledge be disseminated?

Synergising indigenous ways of knowing, the knowledge production for this book has been conducted from a standpoint. It begins with detailed attention to the know-er’s vested interests, motivation, and positionality (Creswell, 2009). As a Nepali social worker, I am critical of the way in which social work has been imported and embedded into social work education in Nepal, especially since social work is not an officially sanctioned profession and there is no service infrastructure to employ social workers. Therefore, there are no jobs for social work graduates, though some have found employment in INGOs. Thus, the book seeks to gather information about the experiences of Nepali social workers employed in INGOs to develop knowledge on emerging social work practice in Nepal.

Further, social work research has paid scant attention to the ‘increased awareness that there are distinct cultural, social, and historical experiences shaping and influencing group experience’ (Engel & Schutt, 2013, p. 17). As outlined in Chapter 5, the transfer of social work from the West to the rest suggests a tendency toward cultural stereotyping resulting in an insider/outsider dichotomy (Matsuoka, Morelli, & McCubbin, 2013). Historically, the outsider has silenced and colonised indigenous knowledges, due to the imperialist tendencies of international social work (Midgley, 1981) and its disregard for insider cultural, historical, and contextual knowledge in the process of knowledge production and transfer (Gray & Coates, 2010; Gray et al., 2008b, 2013c; Sinclair, Hart, & Bruyere, 2009).

Given the Nepali population comprised diverse caste and ethnic groups, and diverse languages and dialects, discerning a locally oriented, decolonised practice is a complex undertaking and makes even more difficult by three decades history of Nepali social work relying on its Western roots, as discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. The methodological challenge is to find an appropriate methodology through which to examine
Nepali social workers’ experiences of practice from their insider sociocultural-structural perspective to discern locally relevant practice models of social work. This book, thus, goes beyond description to explore how Nepali social workers interpret and understand their experiences in light of the sociopolitical and cultural environment in which they are constructing practice.

Synergies with a critical theory and thinking

What I had in mind before I started this project was the critical transformation of Western-informed social work to a localised, home-grown model of Nepali social work, through the voices of Nepali social workers as ‘voices from the margins [that would reflect] . . . the range of [Nepali] knowledge, perspectives, languages, and ways of being’ (Cannella & Lincoln, 2011, p. 83). Such an approach must have synergies with critical pedagogy (Kincheloe, 2007), decolonised methodology (Smith, 2012), Red pedagogy (Grande, 2007), and an ethics of alterity (Ritchie & Rau, 2010). These approaches balance the power between the knower and those being knowledge keepers, positioning them as partners in a collective struggle: ‘If you have come to accompany us, if you think our struggle is also your struggle, we have plenty of things to talk about’ (Glesne, 2007, p. 171). Critical pedagogy highlights the politics of knowledge production and the colonising tendencies of enlightenment thinking that colonises minds (Butler, 2002; Foucault, 1984). Thus, there is the possibility that Nepali social workers may be uncritical of the social work methods they have been taught in Nepal. How can I, as a knowledge producer, listen openly to their experience, while leading them toward thinking about Nepali social work from a decolonising perspective? From the outset, I understand the interplay of power dynamics between myself (as a knower) and Nepali social workers (as those being knowledge keepers). I have been familiar with Sarantakos’s (2005) argument that knowledge is power, hence those who control the knowledge production hold the power. Though I am in control of the knowledge production presented in this book, I am reliant on Nepali social workers’ subjective knowledge as a data source, despite their possibly uncritical view (Pelz, 2014; Piety, 2010).

Constructivist grounded theory offers the technique of bracketing, whereby I may contain my assumptions and ideas – my tacit knowledge, belief systems, lived historical experiences, socialisation, culture, socioeconomic status, and educational background – in accessing Nepali social workers’ interpretations and experiences from which I model decolonised and developmental social work practice in Nepal latter in this book. Bracketing safeguards me from contaminating Nepali social workers’ accounts of practice with my own ideas.

Definition of key terms used in the book

Authentisation, according to Ragab (1982, 2017), refers to the real and critical efforts to recognise all aspects of the social work profession in light of local circumstances and environment.

Decolonisation as the process within alternative social work discourse resists the colonising and imperialistic tendencies of Western social work and gives autonomy to local peoples to shape social work according to their social, cultural, and political values.
*Indigenisation* represents the process of making Western social work fit to non-Western contexts. *Localisation* integrates local routinised behaviour in social work knowledge and practice. ‘Nepalisation’ of social work or *Nepali social work* refers to Nepali peoples’ insider approach and process to transform borrowed Western social work to fit the Nepali context. While doing so, it emphasises Nepal’s unique and diverse cultures and the sociostructural issues to which social work seeks to respond.

**Way forward**

Having introduced the book and its genesis, enquiry method, and purpose in this chapter, Chapter 2 describes the socio-cultural-politico context of the book, beginning with Nepal’s complex geography, ecology, and regional dynamics and its unique social, cultural, and political landscape. Chapter 3 examines the INGO sector as the development context employing social workers. Chapter 4 examines social work education in Nepal and, given the paucity of local literature, includes my analysis drawing on personal experiences.

Chapter 5 reviews the literature on decolonising social work and critically analyses interrelated concepts, such as indigenisation, conscientisation, authentisation, localisation, contextualisation, and culturally sensitive social work, and the need for a shift from indigenisation to decolonisation in Nepali social work. Drawing on direct experiences of Nepali social workers, Chapter 6 builds the cases for the decolonised, developmental, and political nature of Nepali social work before presenting the model of decolonised and developmental Nepali social work in Chapter 7. Finally, drawing together the arguments developed across chapters, the book concludes in Chapter 8. It also points out that decolonised and developmental Nepali social work is part of a process rather than a project and therefore scholarships must continue to engage to advance the conceptual meaning of decolonised and developmental Nepali social work in the future.
I present this book to you for critique, comment, alteration, adaption, and transfer of the knowledge presented herein. This book showed that a prominent feature of Nepali society was its dynamic normative nature. It is a society that is changing continuously. Future researchers should pay careful attention to time itself, while exploring and situating decolonised and developmental Nepali social work in the future. New dimensions, world views, and methods are, and must be, welcomed as they unfold in the ‘new time’. Equally important is to acknowledge the knowledge produced in this book is part of an ongoing process rather than an end, at least this is what my awareness claims:

**The beats of decolonisation**¹

Is ‘peaceful’ instead of ‘ultra-radical’,
Is ‘empirically grounded’ instead of ‘rational’,
Is ‘co-construction’ instead of ‘objectification’ of ‘participant’,
Is ‘internally initiated’ instead of ‘externally imposed’,
And, also,
Is ‘context bound’ instead of ‘outside emphasised’,
Is ‘cultural connection’ instead of ‘cultural diffusing’,
Is ‘enduring’ instead of ‘ending’,
Is ‘ethical’ instead of ‘vile’,
And above all, is ‘solidary’ instead of ‘competing’,

I know, too many things,
Too many ways,
Too many thoughts,
There, in decolonisation,
They are deep,
Deeper in future to build,
That I must keep.

**Note**

¹ Adapted from my own research journal written on February 19, 2015 and modified on August 24, 2018.


Clarke, G. (1998). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and politics in the developing world. *Political Studies, 46*(1), 36–52. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.00128


References 155


James, A. L. (2004). The McDonaldization of social work: Or “come back florence hollis, all is (or should be) forgiven”. In R. Lovelock, K. Lyons, & J. Powell (Eds.), *Reflecting on social work: Discipline and profession* (pp. 37–54). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.


References


References


