This dissertation is a qualitative study of post-war instability and human security in Nepal. This study is based on Nepal’s Maoist conflict, the Nepali peace-building process, and the analysis of armed conflict and political development in Nepal.

This study highlights the human security inputs in Nepal that enhance freedom through capability building. The peace-building process covers multiple issues such as education, health, economics, income, human rights, and the sociopolitical inclusion of marginal people, backward communities, and gender inequality as core components. In the context of Nepal, few attempts have been made toward peace building through capability building; moreover, the process of enhancing people’s freedoms was greatly hampered by the insurgency that affected the entire sociopolitical status of the country for a decade. This research explores the relationship between peace building and the broader concept of freedom, examining the roles and actors that affect Nepalese determination. It has been proposed that peace building is a necessary condition in both post-conflict countries and countries in active conflict. Unlike in other countries, no systematic research on Nepal has yet been undertaken in this respect. This research finds that peace building, rather than being the ultimate target, is a necessary mechanism for enhancing the citizenry’s freedoms.

This study investigates two main aspects of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal: first, the relationship between the history of Nepal and the origin of the insurgency, and, second, some of the possible tools used for negotiating the ongoing peace process. This study examines the Nepali civil war from the perspectives of conflict resolution tactics such
as traditional and indigenous conflict approaches, which are believed to be useful in minimizing further conflict. From the perspective of conceptual analysis, a purposeful, rights-based approach will be suitable for reconciliation in a post-conflict nation such as Nepal.

The first chapter provides a brief country profile of Nepal. It gives an economic overview of Nepal during the insurgency, and as well, provides an analysis of post-conflict political development.

The second chapter deals with Nepal’s post-conflict situation, which categorically lacks implementation of the understanding reached between the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), hereafter CPN (M), especially after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA). The rule of law is not effectively enforced and state mechanisms function poorly, thus making way for crimes to be committed with impunity. Similarly, the chapter studies how Nepali political parties and leadership lack the civic culture required for building an advanced society. The sociopolitical gap between people living in different regions and communities hinders the establishment of a sustainable society. A post-conflict country such as Nepal needs political passion, tolerance, reconciliation, and change in the attitude of leadership for social mobility; political participation of the common people at the local level is a necessity. A consideration of Nepal’s political culture of leadership and civic culture of the people is important to develop it into a functioning state.

The CPN (M), which broke away from the Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Center), CPN (UC), is an isolated faction with its own political structure. In the past, it has championed the rights of the ignored and unrepresented. Nepal’s diverse population
and uneven geographical features provided an atmosphere conducive to the insurgency, which in turn generated counter violence across the country. Social exclusion, political marginalization, poverty, and gender discrimination presented a serious threat to the government of Nepal. The CPN (M) submitted demands to the government at different times in order to win people’s sympathy. It demanded a stop to all types of violence, the abrogation of unequal treaties, and an end to injustice, exploitation, and all types of discrimination against people living in Terai and remote areas. With the involvement of youths from the rural mid-western region, it gradually captured most of the country, and clashes between the Maoist insurgents and the Nepalese Army claimed the lives of innocent civilians.

The third chapter deals with the history of CPN (M) and the link between its ideology and the nature of the Nepali people living in the hill regions. Similarly, this study examines the unique nature of the Nepali peace process. The level of impunity, misuse of state power, and the general state of anarchy in the country encouraged criminals to practice extra-judicial human rights violations, giving rise to contradictions and conflict. A conceptual analysis of the conflict and the identification of an appropriate solution are preconditions for minimizing the ongoing problems and achieving reconciliation in a post-conflict nation such as Nepal. This study also explores the negotiation process and the entire development of the peace process in addressing the common problems of the people.

The fourth chapter focuses on the Maoist political movement and its relation to ethnic groups in Nepal. Identity politics and the entire process of peace building are discussed. The observation of Nepal’s political development and social movements are shown to
have a close connection with ethnic and cultural identities. For this reason, Maoist and Madesh-based parties showed their attachment to the concept of an ethnic and caste-based state. After the declaration of a republic in Nepal in 2006, Nepali politics theoretically and practically turned into identity politics to fulfill short-term goals rather than finding a long-term solution to the conflicts. Such identity politics would affect the transitional politics of any fragile country if not handled effectively, and this was the case with Nepal.

The following chapter presents the idea from a human security perspective. Politically and economically, people need the assurance that the mechanisms of the state will restore their security and enforce the law in order that trust may be rebuilt. The issue of human security, which is fundamental to empowering the people, has, however, been both theoretically and practically ignored by the state. Similarly, this chapter shows that this political gap has sparked a social movement against the current regime. This failure to address human security was the result of the civic culture and poor vision of the political leadership in the past and has since been exacerbated by the post-war political instability prevailing in Nepali politics.

Finally, this research finds that the prevailing socioeconomic inequality, the poor condition of the rural economy, sociopolitical exclusion, the caste hierarchy, and the people’s normative understanding of democracy are responsible for the development of the insurgency in Nepal.