

Discursive Expressions of Water Supply in the Kathmandu Valley

A Discourse Analysis of the Melamchi Water Supply Project



Ida Bring Løberg

Master's Thesis

Department of Geography

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

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Picture, title page: “*Tunnel Intake in Helambu*” (Loeberg, 2014)

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Abstract

This thesis addresses the Melamchi Water Supply Project, which is the Nepalese Government's solution to the alleged water shortage in Kathmandu. The Government's intention is to construct a water diversion tunnel between the Melamchi Valley and Kathmandu. The construction has however had repeated extensions and new completion dates. The case is approached through a discourse analysis. The thesis' purpose is to establish which discursive positions are related to the Melamchi Project and how these positions are constructed. The discursive positions are re-presented through the informants' stories.

The thesis establishes that the Government still has adherence for its discursive position, but that materialization concerns have disengaged others, and that alternative discursive positions therefore have arisen. These discourses are constructed through repetitive language. There are two discursive polarizations within this universe. The first is one concerning the water volume in Kathmandu. One discursive side claims the water situation is scarce, while the other side claims that there is enough water. The second polarization is between the discourses that are produced in Kathmandu and the discourses produced in Melamchi. These discourses dispute which of the cities should have the most water, and how compensation can solve the dispute.

The discursive expressions are analyzed with an emphasis on power and a coherent discourse, which are suggestions of the legitimate language that produces strong and hegemonic discourses. Bourdieu's (1991, 1995) theories are used to conceptualize the power that positions the discursive positions in the discursive universe. The thesis addresses and exemplifies how economic capital transpires into other forms of capital, which is suggested to be exercised power. Elements, moments, nodal points, signifiers and silences are used to address the coherent and potential legitimate language.

I argue that the discursive position that constitutes the Melamchi Project is the strongest in the discursive universe, and I even claim that it is hegemonic. The local mobilization in the Melamchi Valley is however an eager contender. This local discourse can challenge project materialization, and the materialization concerns have demonstrated themselves important enough to be internalized in several discursive positions. The thesis is summarized in discursive timelines. One timeline explains the discursive development until now. The next timelines stipulates four alternative discursive futures.

Før dag demret for de første menn
var Floden
- før noen visste å nevne riker
og vann og himmellegemer
ved navn.

Siden
i menneskenes lille tid
var deres lengsler
tilløp til Ganges
- de vises og seernes
mektige farvann,
strømmen
gjennom de elendiges dal.

I blomstringstider
var Flodens ånde av kostelige krydder
- i tørketid
dens strender som feberkurver
slynget i rødt.

Loven for opphav og utslettelse
var i dens skjød,
skyenes uro i dens speil,
stjernenes skift
på dens tavler.

Einar Skjæraasen (1965) «Ganges» i *Sang i September*

Norwegian Preface

Jeg ble først kjent med diskursanalysen på videregående, hvor jeg analyserte diktsamlinger av Einar Skjæraasen. Om dette ble diskursens inntog i mitt liv er vel heller uvisst, men enkelte familielærdommer ble i alle fall banket inn. Deriblant at det finnes ingen større mann fra Hedmark enn Skjæraasen. Ja, med unntak av min far vel og merke.

At jeg skulle gjenoppta diskursanalysen på universitetet overrasket meg, men kanskje ikke i like stor grad min veileder som foreslo det. Lite visste han at dette hadde jeg prøvd før. Lite visste jeg hva jeg egentlig gikk til. Oppgavens tema ble på et finurlig vis til gjennom noen vage ideer fra min side og mindre vage ideer fra veileders. Denne gangen skulle jeg lenger enn til Hedmark.

Et opphold i Nepal ga meg vel så mye personlig som det ga til oppgaven. Til gjengjeld var ikke feltarbeidets bidrag til oppgaven rent lite heller. For det fortjener mine informanter en stor takk. Det gjør også Hemanta Dangal for god hjelp i felten. Jeg unner dere alt godt. Det var derfor ekstra vondt at jordskjelvet i april skulle ramme nettopp dere.

Veien til masteroppgaven har vært lang, til og med slitsom. Til gjengjeld er jeg ikke kjent for å velge minste motstands vei. Den akademiske diskursen og den politiske retorikken måtte kjempe mot hverandre på masterprogrammet. Av alle gode ideer skulle jeg absolutt skrive både et valgprogram og organisere en valgkamp i masterskrivingen. Det lovet ikke godt for oppgavens tidsfrist. Tusen takk for din tålmodighet, Tor, og til andre rundt meg som har måttet lide under mine påfunn. De er utvilsomt slitsomme for flere enn meg. Til gjengjeld er jeg et produkt av den østafjelske lærdom. Ja, selv ikke Skjæraasen forholder seg ikke til klokke eller almanakk, i alle fall ikke i sine dikt.

Men selv østafjelske visdomsord kan slå feil. Den politiske retorikken tapte dessverre, men den akademiske diskursen tok heldigvis over. Og som om ikke lokalvalget var utfordrende nok, så hadde selv diskursens vanskelighetsgrad tatt seg opp siden videregående. Denne masteroppgaven hadde vel heller ikke gått så bra uten din hjelp, Tor. Du har ikke bare en teft for diskurs, men en fornuft og fremtoning som jeg tidlig bet meg merke i. Og som jeg beundrer. Til tross for utallige kommentarer i rød penn og uenigheter om hva som er en passende setningslengde, så tenker jeg fortsatt like høyt om deg, om ikke høyere. Jeg er meget takknemlig for din veiledning.

I masterinnspurten var det godt å ha omtenksomme folk rundt seg. Bernhard, din omsorg og omtanke er upåklagelig. Eirik, du er unik og uerstattelig. Jeg har spart den østerdølske stolthet til slutt. Og ikke minst en stolt valdris. Jeg er enormt takknemlig for alt min mamma og pappa har lært meg. Jeg mener selv å tro at jeg kom rimelig godt ut av det.

Mine nære og kjære er avslutningsvis ikke bare gode, men selv praktiske å ha. Ikke alle kan være Skjæraasen, men de er i likhet med Tor flink til å bruke sin tid og den røde pennen på meg.

Takk for all den gode hjelpen.

Ida Bring Løberg,

Bergen, 1. februar 2016

Nepali Preface

तपाईं सुचनादाताहरु बिना यो शोधकार्य सम्भव थिएन, किनकि यो कार्य तपाईंहरुकै जीवन-कथाहरुको प्रस्तुती हो । तपाईंहरुको अमूल्य सहयोगका लागि म तपाईंहरुप्रति आभारी छु र धेरै धन्यवाद ब्यक्त गर्दछु । म तपाईंहरुको सबै राम्रो होस् भनि कामना गर्दछु, र हेमन्त दंगाल ! तपाईंको सहयोग मेरा लागि अतूलनीय छ । म तपाईंलाई धेरै धन्यवाद ब्यक्त गर्दछु, र तपाईंले चाहेको Ph D. अध्ययन को क्रममा तपाईंलाई छिटै नर्वेमा भेट्ने आशा गर्दछु ।

Ida Bring Løberg,

Bergen, Feb 1st 2016

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Abbreviations

ADB: Asian Development Bank

DP: Discursive Positions

DP1: The First Discursive Position, “The Melamchi Project”

DP2: The Second Discursive Position, “Postponed Completion”

DP3: The Third Discursive Position, “Suburb Cities”

DP4: The Fourth Discursive Position, “The Discourse”

DP5: The Fifth Discursive Position, “Reservoir and Grid”

DP6: The Sixth Discursive Position, “The Concerned Melamchi Position”

DP7: The Seventh Discursive Position, “The Pro Melamchi Position”

KUKL: Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited, Kathmandu’s water management service

MLD: Million Liters per Day

MWSP: Melamchi Water Supply Project

MWSPB: Melamchi Water Supply Project Board

SUP: Social Upliftment Program

VDC: Village Development Committe

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1. Introduction

The post structural perspectives are occupied with human perspectives and conceptualize these human perspectives as discursive constructions of certain ideas. The perceptions of objects are however not objective. We rather accept an idea of the object. This acceptance process is seldom explored nor the ideas conceptualized (Tvedt and Oestigaard, 2010).

Certain objects even have the abilities to shape entire societies, while the societies attempt and sometimes succeed to shape the objects after their idea of it. These ideas are the product of discourses, and these discourses construct our comprehension in repeated language (Grue, 2013). The purpose of this thesis is to explore the interaction between the human experience with and discursive expression of one essential object. This object is water in Nepal.

Water is an integral part of all societies. It is an object entwined with ideas of it, which extend from the ritual and religious to the practical use (Tvedt and Oestigaard, 2010). The ideas of water have long historical traditions in the Nepalese region, with examples dating back to the beginning of mythologies. The very creation of Kathmandu is an idea of water, which is described in the Vamshavalis (chronicles of Nepal). It claims that the Kathmandu Valley was a lake, which made the region uninhabitable until drained (Dangol, 1999). The chronicles construct an idea of two opposing forces, the water's reign over human habitat versus the eventual tamer of the water. Either side is in language constructed as a force of tremendous power. The eventual tamer is Krishna, who cuts a gorge into one mountain and drains the water from the Kathmandu Valley, and thus makes the valley suited for human habitation (ibid).

The Vamshivalis' idea of water is more than the construction of the divine Krishna. The chronicles ascribe the control of water as the source of civilization and attribute the one with water under his obedience with vast power and responsibilities. The current water narratives might have another expression, but the meaning ascribed to water is as important. It is vital. This thesis' matter of interest is these *current* discursive expressions. The interaction between the subjects, the object and discourse are emphasized in an analysis of the Melamchi Water Supply Project.

1.1. The Melamchi Water Supply Project

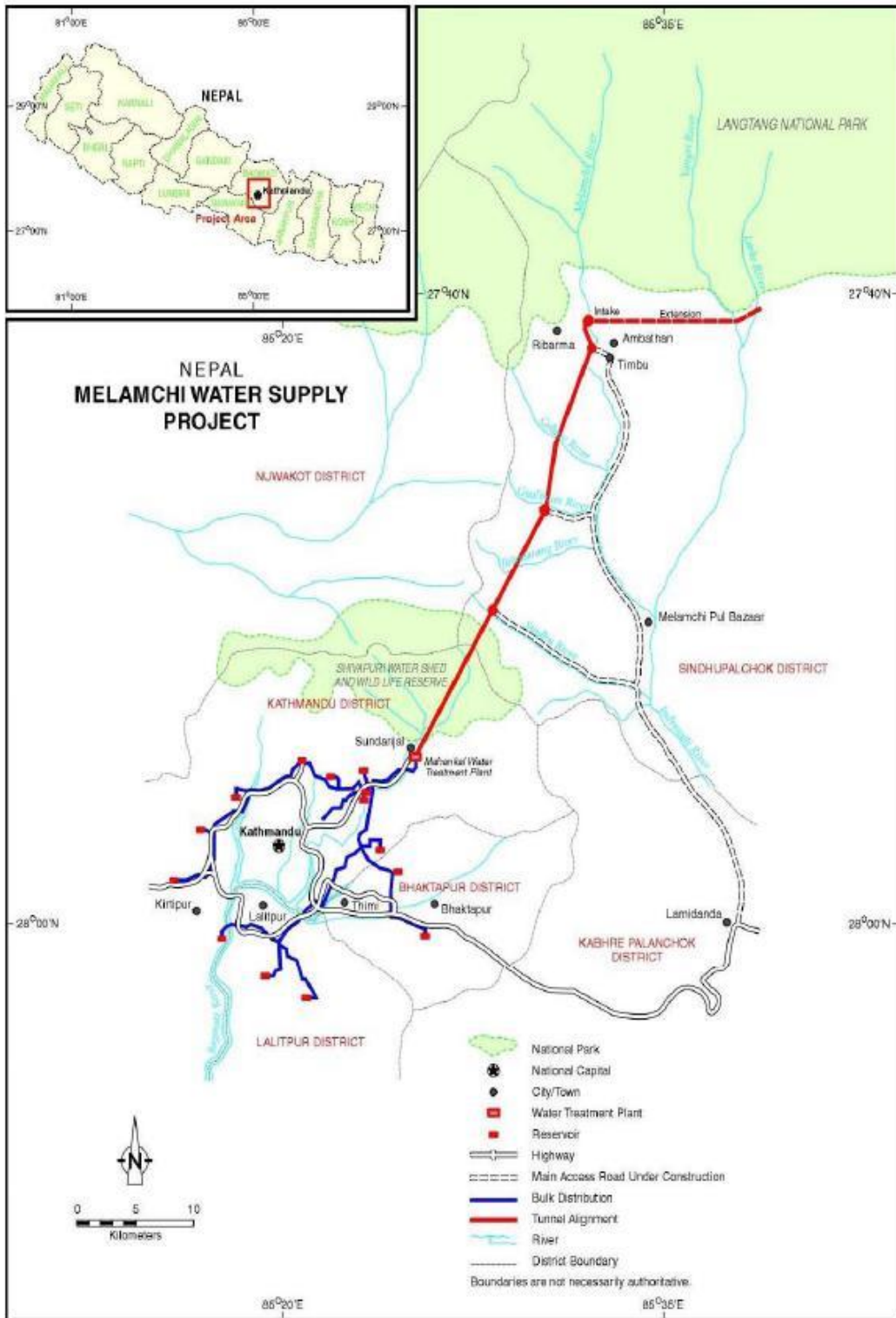
The concerns of a scarce water situation were voiced in the 1980's, with the former prime minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai as one of the movement's strong figures. The voiced opinion was effective and gained support. The Government responded to the movement's

concerns in the 1990's with the Melamchi Water Supply Project (MWSP), which is often referred to as "The Melamchi Project" or "Melamchi". Its purpose is to supply the Kathmandu Valley with drinking water. The Government describes it as: "*the most viable long-term alternative to ease the chronic water shortage situation within the Kathmandu Valley*" (Government of Nepal, no date). The description still has some adherence, but the support has diminished with repetitive extensions and new completion dates. The project has hence become the reference point for numerous opinions on the water situation and potential solutions.

The project includes massive infrastructure improvements and constructions. The construction that has received the most attention is the 27 kilometer long tunnel from Melamchi to Kathmandu, which is illustrated with a red bold line in Map 1. The water will be diverted from the Melamchi River through Sundarijal to Kathmandu, with the intention to transport 170 million liters water per day (Government of Nepal, no date). The current main donor is the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (ibid). Previous donors include the World Bank, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the Swedish authorities for international development (SIDA) (ibid).

The numerous extensions and weak materialization abilities led to the project being restructured in 2007 (Government of Nepal, no date). Three subprojects were established: 1) the water diversion tunnel, related infrastructure, the water treatment plant and local development, 2) rehabilitation and improvement of the water pipes in Kathmandu, distribution systems and reservoirs, 3) addressing project impacts (resettlement, environment, etc) and administration (ibid). The project is still controversial, despite its restructuring. It is these opinions related to the project this thesis addresses.

The Melamchi Project is one focus of this thesis, which is integrated in the thesis through another focus. This latter focus is the discourse analysis.



Map 1: "The Melamchi Project" (Asian Development Bank, in *NepaliEconomy*, 2006)

1.2. A Historical Introduction

Nepal's state formation happened in 1846, when General Jang Bahadur Rana obliterated all court resistance in the Kot Massacre and secured the position as prime minister (Thapa, 2012). The State has since this time institutionalized privileges to certain upper-class groups. The Rana succession marks the first institutionalized power dispersion in Nepal. The General diminished the Shah King to a ceremonial figure, and thus secured the prime minister post with full state power and as a hereditary position within the Ranas. The Shahs would however win back some of this power over time. Nepal has from its state formation time been a State in flux between power assertion attempts and authoritarian regimes (Thapa, 2012).

The stable Rana reign institutionalized substantial benefits for high castes, while marginalizing the peripheries (Thapa, 2012). These groups remained marginalized until King Mahendra's power succession in 1951. The parliamentary system was abolished in this succession. The new system was dubbed the panchayat rule, and was grounded in the traditional village councils. It developed however in favor of power concentration rather than the intended decentralization. The Kathmandu based elites were granted higher influence, while the peripheries were marginalized. The marginalized groups were nevertheless organizing in silence (Thapa, 2012).

The People's War started with attacks on police posts and a government owned bank on February 13th 1996 (Thapa, 2012). From then on the brutality escalated (ibid). It was the Maoists that had struck. Their ideas embraced the grass root and made them able to mobilize in the local communities within a short time span and with no regards to costs (Thapa, 2012). The civil war was followed by peace talks. Nepal has since the civil war replaced the kingdom with a republic, and gone from an interim constitution to a promulgated constitution.

1.3. The Current State

The social conditions in Nepal are still an unjust matter. This is a reflection of the Hindu discrimination that children are confronted with from their birth. The cast system is abolished, but its hierarchical structure is nevertheless practiced in Nepalese societies. Nepal has on the other hand progressed since the civil war. The general state is now stable, but as an informant expresses: *"It is however a fragile stability"* (Informant 13, 2014). The future development is all at the halt of this fragile stability. The historical examples do not favor development. The last example of vast development was during the rise of the Gorkha Empire. The Gorkha State was in the words of Dangol (1999): *"the poorest, most hated and outcasted petty state on the*

western side of the Kathmandu Valley.” This economic state was ridiculed, and the Gorkhas willingness to improve this standard was extensive (ibid). This led to an expansion of this rising empire at any cost under the program dubbed ‘do or die’ (ibid). Recent development examples are few, but there are several reversed examples. The Melamchi Project is one of these reversed examples. It has, like the Government, stagnated over and over again.

2. Problem Definition and Research Questions

The problem definition is a preparation for the research questions, which ensures that the reader and I share a common comprehension and emphasis of the alleged problem. The perceived problem is the water supply in the Kathmandu Valley and it is addressed through a discourse analysis. Both the perceived problem and the discourse analysis are described in this chapter. I will thereafter address the thesis' purpose. The approach is further addressed in chapter 3 and 4, while the alleged problems are addressed again in chapter 5.

2.1. What is the Alleged Problem?

The idea that the water situation was scarce spread in the Kathmandu Valley in the late 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's. This perception held sufficient power to instigate Governmental response. This response proposed the Melamchi Project as a solution to the alleged problems. It was an attempt to act in alleged critical circumstances, but the vaster progress has been absent. The promise of water still has some adherence, but the limited progress and postponed completion dates have disengaged others.

2.2. A Methodological Approach to the Alleged Problem

The alleged problem is addressed through the informants' stories and expressions in a discourse analysis. The discourses are general ideas that are repeated in language, and thus provide the subject with a perspective. The articulated discourse is a discursive expression. Common discursive expressions that can be positioned together are discursive positions. It is these discursive positions the *discourse analysis* addresses. The discursive universe includes all the discursive expressions and positions. In this universe there are no neutral or outsider perspectives (Alroee and Noe, 2011). All comprehension exists within certain perspectives (ibid). The discursive expressions are related to the discursive positions in the analysis, and the discursive positions are positioned in relation to other discursive positions in this universe.

The discursive positioning can be exemplified with a parallel to physical positioning. Two persons observe the same lake. This is two subjects that observe an object. One person is located in the mountains, and he observes a lake. The other person is located in the valley, and she observes a waterfall. The water is the same, but different locations provide different perspectives. The subjects are positioned in relation to the object. The discursive positions are comparable, but here it is the discourses that locate the subject. The discourse is repetitive language, and it is this that provides the subjects with perspectives.

The discourse analysis has an initial evasive appearance, as it rejects truth. This encourages a balance between universal modes of thought and contextual knowledge. The universal is relatable to all humans. The contextual meaning can be addressed through the universal modes of thought. For example, all humans can relate to water as vital. This is universal. Whether water is a luxury or an accessible commodity is contextual. It is the context that provides the interpretation with meaning. The balance is one between the comprehension in the universal and the meaning in the contextual.

2.3. The Research Questions

The main research question should provide the thesis with an overarching purpose and structure. The main research question chosen for this thesis is one that restricts the choice of applicable methodologies to one within the discursive genre.

The subordinate research questions should provide the thesis with an approach to fulfill the purpose of the thesis. The first two subordinate research questions provide the thesis with an emphasis on discursive power. This is an attempt to present the findings from the main research question in relation to one another. The last subordinate research question encourages an assessment of the methodological approach.

The Main Research Question

Discourses are ascribed meaning in articulation. The discursive universe I address started with one discursive expression. This was the Melamchi Project. Alternative articulations and discursive expressions related to the initial expression have however arisen since.

Which discursive positions are related to the Melamchi Project, and how are they constructed?

This main research question encourages the analysis of the discursive expressions that have arisen. These discursive expressions will be related to discursive positions, and all these positions are positioned in relation to one another in the discursive universe. The discursive expressions have to be deconstructed to find their relation to discursive positions, and to find the discursive positions relations to other positions. The deconstruction explains how the discursive positions are constructed. The discursive positions will be re-presented through the informants' utterances.

Subordinate Research Questions

The main research question encourages the comparison between the content and construction of the discursive positions in the universe. This relates to the coherent discourse. The coherent

discourse suggests discursive power, opposed to the incoherent discourse. I will expand the comparison and the power definition in the first subordinate research question:

How are the discursive positions positioned in relation to one another?

This subordinate research question encourages *power* comparison between the discursive positions in the discursive universe. The discursive positions are positioned according to one another, and this positioning is on the basis of their strength. I understand power as the abilities to control other people, groups or developments through legitimate language. This language embraces both the coherent discourse and the capital the discourse's agents have access to and abilities to use. This needs further explanation.

All discursive positions compete to hegemonize the discursive universe (Laclau, 2014). The hegemonic discourse is the one that dominates the legitimate language. This language dictates what is acceptable to utter. It is *one* discourse that no other discourse can compete with, and it has to be the strongest in the discursive universe. The hegemonic definitions are often similar, but the interpretation of them often varies:

Can an interpretation of a hegemonic definition be established?

This subordinate research question encourages the interpretation of the hegemonic definition. I will use this interpretation in a comparison with strongest discursive position in the discursive universe. The purpose of this comparison is to establish whether there is a hegemonic discourse.

In this thesis, the methodologies are given more space than the theories, which will be further addressed in chapter 2.4. I am curious of whether this emphasis generates new insights for the main research question, which the third and final subordinate research question addresses:

Do the applied methodologies generate new insight in the research questions?

This question encourages the comparison between the thesis' purpose and findings, with an evaluation of the methodologies abilities to generate new insight as its purpose.

2.4. The Structure and Possibilities of the Thesis

In this thesis, both the methodologies and the theories are discursive. This can generate some practical challenges. Discourse theories and discursive methodologies do not have to be

compatible or generate new insights when united, despite their related discursive properties. I will use this chapter to suggest a balance between methodologies and theories, and then explain the thesis' structure.

Options and Selection within the Discursive Genre

In some theses, the methodologies can overrule the theories, or the theories can overrule the methodologies. Theoretical emphasis is on one hand assuring, because the academic communities acknowledge certain theories as legitimate explanations. This acknowledgement provides the theories with trustworthiness. I however provide the informants with this assignment. It is the informants that explain. These discursive expressions are obtained through the methodologies. It is the methodologies that provide the means and access to interpret and re-present the informants' stories. It is therefore I do not provide the theories more space. The theories can compromise the informants' stories. The theoretical explanation can become more important than the stories. I address this challenge in emphasizing the methodologies and adapting theories to facilitate the methodologies. Theories will be chosen to suit the discursive expressions rather than choosing the expressions that suits the theories. I find this emphasis compatible with the aspirations I have to re-present the informants' expressions and stories. It is also an attempt to distance the thesis from the abstractness that characterizes certain post structural theories.

The Structure

This thesis includes eight chapters. Chapter 3 is the theories, where theoretical selections that can suit the discursive expressions are presented. This introduces some of Foucault's (in Berg, 2009) definitions, but further Foucauldian theories will not be used. Foucault's limited attention to context and the subjects' freedom is not compatible with the discourse theoretical perspective I have. It is challenging to operationalize, and it does not provide the methodologies with the space I desire. Bourdieu (1991) however is, and selections from his *Language and Symbolic Power* will be used. It is his attention paid to context and the utterer that suits this thesis. Bourdieu emphasizes the subject more than what Foucault does. The methodologies are addressed in chapter 4. The first methodological emphasis is analysis, thereafter the experiences from the fieldwork. The empirical material is presented as discursive positions in chapter 5. The support for each discursive position is exemplified with utterances. Notice that one informant's utterances can support several discursive positions, and that the utterances will be used as such. I analyze these discursive positions in the discussion in chapter 6. This is where I discuss the discursive positions' relative position, and

whether a hegemonic definition can be established. I revise the methodologies in chapter 7, before I conclude in chapter 8. All the chapters integrate in one another to some extent to avoid redundant repetition. This interchangeable nature is characteristic for the thesis in overall.

3. Discourse Theories

The theories provide this thesis with analytical direction. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the theoretical definitions and concepts that can re-present the informants' stories and expressions. It is not to regulate the expressions. This theoretical contribution furthermore serves as a parallel to the theoretical discursive genre. The discourse term and poststructuralism are first introduced. The rest of the chapter is Bourdieu's (1991) concepts.

3.1. A Common Discursive Reference

The perceived origin of the discursive disciplines serves as a common reference point within the genre and hence as a comprehensible introduction to the theoretical discourse analysis in this thesis. It is the introduction to the heritage of Michel Foucault and post structural epistemologies. Foucault's contribution to the academic literature is an emphasis on the *discourse term* as an epistemological field, where discourses construct perceived realities or perspectives (Hansen and Simonsen, 2004). The purpose of this chapter is to provide a practical and epistemological interpretation of this term. Foucault's definitions are interpreted to be compatible with the methodologies, and are interpreted with caution.

The Theoretical Introduction to the Discourse Analysis

Foucault (in Berg, 2009:215) defines discourses as: "*practices that systematically form the objects of which we speak.*" The practice can as an introduction be interpreted as an act, and the object can be interpreted as what is perceived. The act has to be repeated to *systematically form* what is perceived. This repetition is articulated as *of which we speak* in the definition. This repetition provides the subject with a perspective of an object. The subject is the perceiver that perceives the object. This perspective stems from an idea. When this idea is embedded in the language in the form of a rehearsed expression it is a *discourse*. The discourses construct subjects and objects. The subject perceives this object through the discourse, and acts in accordance with this repeated idea. This is how the discourse positions the subject in relation to the object. It has provided the subject with a perspective that suggests how the object should be perceived. This is the subject's *discursive position* (Berg, 2009).

Discursive positions are positioned in relation to their relative strength to other discursive positions in the discursive universe (Berg, 2009). The stronger discourses construct the 'normal' utterances. These are legitimized practices, and are separated from the constructed 'abnormal.' This separation is produced through repetitive language. Unless one discourse is considerably stronger than the rest, several discourses can maneuver in the same

discursive universe. The *hegemonic discourse* is the discourse that alternative discourses do not have the abilities to compete with. It reproduces the legitimate language that explains what is considered normal and what is not (ibid). This needs further explanation, and is addressed in chapter 6.7. All the discursive positions in the discursive universe, hegemonic or not, are constructed. The positions can therefore be deconstructed. This deconstruction exposes repetitive acts on personal and group levels (Berg, 2009).

An Epistemological Introduction to Discourse Analysis

The discourse theories are ideas that resonate in certain overarching ideas themselves, often post structural ones (Hansen and Simonsen, 2004). Epistemologies are the reasoning of how realities are conceptualized. The post structural reasoning claims that truth or realities are constructed. The truth cannot be proven, but it can at best be *claimed*. These post structural assumptions are linguistic philosophical. Realities are constructed through language, and there are hidden assumptions in this language. This language should be deconstructed because of these hidden assumptions. Poststructuralism is located between objectivism and subjectivism (Nord, 2005). It is thus often understood as an attempt to nuance the polarized dualism between them in social sciences (ibid). The epistemological assumption is that the construction of ‘realities’ is reserved the discourse. This assumption reduces the abilities individuals have to articulate their own realities on one hand, and reduces the structural impact on the other hand. It locates the discourse outside the reach of both humans and structures. All perspectives are the products of discourses. This is how the post structural approaches serve as an alternative to the ‘either/or’- approaches in social sciences (ibid). Within this post structural approach some authors nevertheless emphasize some of the –isms¹ more (Hansen, et al., 2004).

3.2. Basic Concepts in Discourse Analysis

Several conceptualizations of the subject are applied throughout the thesis. Bourdieu (1991) uses the term agent, while Aase and Fossaaskaret (2007) use the term actor. These are not random terms. Bourdieu (1995) prefers the term agent rather than actor, as it is diverted from the verb to *act* (*agir*), opposed to the term referring to an *actor* (*acteur*). Aase and Fossaaskaret’s use of the term actor is nevertheless closer to Bourdieu’s comprehension of the term agent. This is because it is derived from the Norwegian *aktør*, not the French *acteur*. These words are related, but are used differently. The Norwegian ‘aktør’ is used about an active person. The French ‘acteur’ refers to a person’s façade. The common emphasis

¹ For example, humanism or structuralism

between the French agent and the Norwegian actor is an *active* subject. The terms are in this thesis used in an interchangeable manner with the *subject* as the unifying term. This subject has active qualities, and is attributed the abilities to recognize and express its freedom from strong discourses. The one exception from this interpretation is the term *utterer*, which Bourdieu applies with an ambiguous definition. I interpret the utterer as one who expresses and hence reproduces a discourse. I do not exclude the possibilities of the utterer also being an agent, but emphasize the utterer's expressive function. The remaining terms are attributed the same meaning, whether it is agent, actor or subject that is applied. In emphasizing the active qualities, the subject is attributed a status and a contextual component. It is this component Foucault does not address, and is rejected for in this thesis.

The subject is the discourses' personified expression (Althusser, 1966). The expression is produced in the discourse, but it is the subject that articulates the expression. Some authors provide the subject with more freedom to recognize and utter discursive expressions, while others provide the structures with more power. I let the subjects provide their discursive expression with personal interpretations in this thesis. This is where I reject an automatic adoption of the discourses. The expression therefore operates vis-à-vis the discourse, and not as the discourse itself (Althusser, 1966).

The subject is positioned in relation to an *object*. The object is on one hand material (Mead, 2014). It is on the other hand what the discourses express it to be (ibid). This thesis discusses the latter. There are nevertheless discursive references to the material object in this thesis. The discursive expressions can address material experiences with the object. The material experiences are then internalized and articulated in the discursive expression, and are thus addressed in this thesis. Utterances can also relate to the object without being related to material experiences. This is discourse, and is also addressed. These references are both subjective.

It is *power* that positions the discursive positions. Legitimate language is considered power in this thesis. The discourse has to be coherent to be legitimate. This is further addressed in chapter 4. Its agents also have to be able to access economic capital. Bourdieu (1995) claims that economic capital can transpire into other forms of capital. It is through capital agents are allocated, knowledge is produced and reproduced, and some informants even claim that capital transpires to political representation. The legitimate language separates what is acceptable to utter and what is not. It is control exercised through repetitive language.

3.3. Bourdieu on Linguistic Interaction

Bourdieu (1991) criticized the formal and structural linguistics of the late 1970's and early 1980's. He claimed their comprehension of the social and political conditions in language use was restricted, even when it was a salient component of these linguistic theories. The criticism holds an implicit emphasis on context and status (Bourdieu, 1991):

“In singling out a class of ‘performative utterances’, such as ‘I do’ uttered in a course of a marriage ceremony or ‘I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth’ uttered while smashing a bottle against the stem of a vessel, Austin stressed that such utterances are not ways of reporting or describing a state of affairs, but rather ways of acting or participating in a ritual; that they are not strictly true or false but rather ‘felicitous’ or ‘infelicitous’; and that for such utterances to be felicitous they must, amongst other things, be uttered by an appropriate person in accordance with some conventional procedure.” (Bourdieu, 1991:8)

It is the contextual social structures that determine this ritual participation of who tosses the bottle against the ship to name it (Bourdieu, 1991). The conventional comprehension of the ritual assumes that the ship-owner's wife names the vessel. This is because she is the appropriate person according to the common discourse. When an alcoholic smashes the bottle against the ship, the utterance is infelicitous. The language's implicit conditions are embedded in the ritual's construction, and should thus be understood to deconstruct the discourse (Bourdieu, 1991).

Context and Construction

Context structures discourses, discursive positions and linguistic interaction (Bourdieu, 1991). It is the strong discourses that construct the division between the perceived normal, legitimized or felicitous acts and the perceived abnormal or infelicitous acts. These acts are in the thesis interpreted as discursive articulation. The legitimate languages will dominate the discursive universe until a new idea replaces this current ‘normal’ idea. This is what Bourdieu conceptualize as idealization as an instrument. The new legitimate language ignores the current common discursive conditions. These conditions have legitimate linguistic practices, and the new discourse becomes an alternative competitive discourse (Bourdieu, 1991).

- strong and hegemonic discourses have the abilities to construct legitimate language that separates what is acceptable to utter from the unacceptable
- discourses construct language and expressions, and can hence be deconstructed
- language is structured in a context, which it cannot be separated from

Bourdieu emphasizes context in these theories of language and power. The context relates to the agents' access and capabilities to construct discursive positions, and can reveal how the positions are constructed. This again relates to 'appropriate persons.' It is the context that determines who is appropriate. Contextual knowledge thus facilitates the deconstruction of discursive positions.

Utterances

Language is used for different purposes, in politeness and in impoliteness, in formal and in informal settings, as routine or as statements, etc. (Bourdieu, 1991). All utterances have different degrees of authority. This depends on what is said, the utterances' context and who uttered them. The latter is comparable to Aase and Fossaaskarets' 'status', which is addressed in chapter 4. Social structures integrate in linguistic interaction, and linguistic interaction integrates in social structures. The two will influence one another. The agents who speak on behalf of an institution have to be authorized or recognized to do so. It is this recognition that provides the utterances with authority. The institution and utterers are inseparable. The relation to the institution can restrict what can be uttered. The agents' relation to institutions facilitates however the appropriate discursive expression and its reproduction (Bourdieu, 1991).

- status and context determines an utterance's authority
- social structures and context are embedded in the language and interaction
- the utterer and the institution are inseparable

The performative utterance relates to the possibilities of discursive materialization (Austin, 1956). Judgement is exercised in linguistic interactions. Subjects evaluate the truthfulness of an utterance. This is exercised judgement, and all humans have this affirmative behavior. Some utterances cannot be affirmed, but can nevertheless be performative. This is when the utterance is an act in itself. For example, uttering "I do" during a wedding ceremony is performative. This utterance marries the subject. It is an act. The promising verb is however not sufficient. "I promise to pay tomorrow" is an utterance which is not bound to materialize. This is the promise of an act, not an act in itself. Context, convention and agreement are decisive. The "I do" is ritual. There is an act in the utterance in that the "I do" makes the utterer married. It is an implication of what is true. The difference between the "I will marry you" uttered in a pub and the "I do" uttered during a wedding ceremony is the 'doing' rather

than 'saying.' None of them are affirmed, but one is more trusted than the other. This is because one is uttered by the appropriate person in the appropriate context (Austin, 1956).

- performative utterances are ritual and are themselves acts
- performative utterances have to be uttered by the appropriate person

Performative utterances emphasize the context's role in ascribing an utterance certain trustworthiness related to materialization. The very act in the utterance is perceived as somewhat affirmative of 'truth' and therefore perceived as trustworthy. Performative utterances and agents in appropriate positions will in the right context strengthen their discursive position.

Political representation

All humans are equally free, but not all humans possess equal abilities to express their freedom (Bourdieu, 1991). It is these abilities to recognize and express freedom from the hegemonic discourses that determine the products of politics, or in discursive words, which determines the discursive positions relative position in the discursive universe. The discursive expressions in the political representation encourage the divide between what is acceptable to utter, and what is not. It also determines which discursive positions are acknowledged in the discursive universe, and which are not. This is the legitimate language. This legitimate language establishes the normative context that production and reproduction of discourses occur within. Expressions have to be articulated in accordance with this normative political field for 'amateurs' to break this legitimate discursive line. It is a dialectical process between the group's interests and their abilities to express that interest. Bourdieu compares the political competition with the demand and supply logic. Citizens want certain products. This encourages agents to compete, and this competition results in the political products the citizens can chose between. All the agents want their products to be the strongest. This requires good allocation of the agents. The further the consumers are from the production site, the greater the risk for misunderstanding (Bourdieu, 1991).

- it is the abilities to recognize and express freedom from hegemonic discourses that determine who accesses the political field

It is these people's abilities to express themselves and perceive discourse that shapes the political field and outcomes. Comprehension of these abilities is needed to re-present and discuss discursive positions.

Censorship

All discourses are constructed and circulate within social structures (Bourdieu, 1991). It is in these structures that the legitimate language that distinguishes the constructed normal from the constructed abnormal is constructed. The discursive positions' utterers use this language to legitimize the discourse that is reproduced. The language can be used to dictate interests. The structure determines which agents have access to and articulate these legitimate expressions. This establishes the grounds for censorship. Infelicitous utterances are sanctioned. This is when agents can censor other agents. It is here alternative discourses are silenced, and the legitimate language is reproduced (Bourdieu, 1991).

- structure and context determines how censorship is exercised
- censorship can be used to reproduce discourses
- legitimate language can over time can become hegemonic

The censorship can be explicit (Bourdieu, 1991). For example, prohibition. It can also be implicit. This is when utterers regulate their utterances themselves. The transition from explicit to implicit censorship happens as the mechanisms that allocate agents support the production and reproduction of legitimate language. The censorship's form and force are symbolic productions. These are the product of the social conditions the symbols are produced in. The content becomes inseparable from the norms, and is bound to the structural context. This again shapes reception. The specialized language has to be received through formalities. This philosophical recognition of the discourse happens through common signs, and the specialized language is thus context specific (Bourdieu, 1991).

- sanctions suggest legitimate language, and thus a strong discourse
- implicit censorship can relate to a hegemonic discourse

Censorship in the discursive universe suggests legitimate language, and it is through this language that the discourse's agents can exercise power. This explains how some discourses prevail, while others do not. Silences suggest that the discourse that suppresses them is strong or hegemonic.

The Process of Subversion

The discourses' agents construct political actions with knowledge (Bourdieu, 1991). This is the agents' constructed perspective of what the social process should be. This perspective is imposed upon the discursive universe the agent operates within. The agents that have the

abilities to construct or deconstruct social groups are those with strong abilities to recognize and distance themselves from strong discourses. These agents are also related to an institution and have access to economic capital. The relation to the institution makes the person ‘the appropriate person’ to articulate the perspectives. This relation can also make the agents appropriate to access capital. The economic capital transpires into access to information and the possibilities to allocate agents. It is these agents that can reproduce strong or hegemonic discourses, and silence alternative discourses (Bourdieu, 1991).

- agents can construct and deconstruct social groups
- the construction and reconstruction of the social groups encourages the construction of new legitimate language

Political subversion happens when one legitimate idea is replaced with another (Bourdieu, 1991). This is a conventional cognitive shift. The perception of what the authorities should and can do is replaced with a new idea. The subversions can materialize with political opportunities. This is when both a critical discourse and a conflict among the agents occur at the same time. The current legitimate language is vulnerable in this situation, and it can be deconstructed. The envisioned new presentation is a *pre-vision*, which is needed to utilize such political opportunities. In the political subversion the new discourse has to reject the current legitimate language and replace it with new common sense. This common sense is the *pre-vision*. This is legitimized through collective recognition. In the appropriate context, the single utterance of the vision enhances the possibilities of materialization of the *pre-vision*. This is the performative utterance. It is an interactive process between the agents that articulate the discourse and those who the discourse concerns. It is the presentation and the cultivation of an idea. It has to be articulated in a communicable expression that disassociates from the current legitimate language (Bourdieu, 1991).

- the political subversion replaces one legitimate language with another
- the new *pre-vision* has to be legitimized

The process of subversion explains how new legitimate language prevails. This language has governing abilities. The *pre-vision* replaces the current legitimate language. The *pre-vision* that has general acceptance is strong. Attempted and failed subversions suggest that the current legitimate language, which is not rejected, is stronger.

4. Methodologies

The purpose of discursive methodologies is to provide the researcher with the devices to conduct research and discuss the findings. I use five methodological tools for the analysis. These are nodal points, moments, elements, signifiers and silences. These methodological selections are intended to complement one another, the theoretical concepts and the purpose of the thesis. I will then address the mental capabilities. These are universal modes of thought that can address contextual meaning. It is dedicated generous space to the description of and thoughts about the fieldwork. I do this to provide a transparent and coherent presentation, which is compatible with the methodological attention in this thesis.

4.1. The Analysis of Discursive Expressions

In this chapter five tools for practical discourse analysis are addressed. These are nodal points, moments, elements, signifiers and silences. Exposure of these characteristics facilitates deconstruction of discursive positions, with an emphasis on context and ascribed meaning. The mental capabilities that can address contextual meaning are addressed in conclusion.

The Sign

There are two recognized components of the sign (Aase and Fossaaskaret, 2007). These are the signifier and the signified. The *signifier* is the sign itself. This is an expression of the content it refers to. This expression can be words, images or similar. The *signified* is the content. The content can be people, phenomena, objects, etc. Evian is for example a signifier. The signified is bottled water. Evian is French and is sold in Belgium. Local stories tell that the Flemish population will not buy this water because of its French signifier. The sign is ascribed meaning through the signifier. Tor Aase and Erik Fossaaskaret (2007) address the sign in a model with three prime relations. This model is inspired from Pierce's semiotic triad. The relations are illustrated in Figure 1 (Aase and Fossaaskaret, 2007):

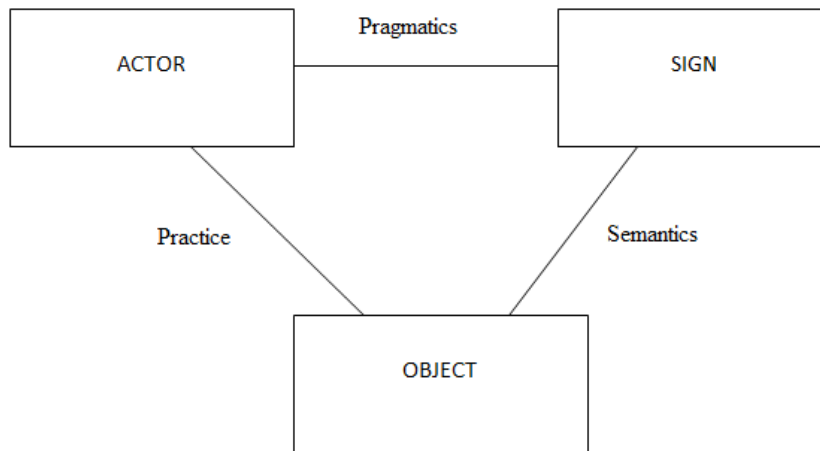


Figure 1 “A Semiotic Model for Social Sciences” (Aase and Fossaaskaret, 2007:167).

(1) There is a semantic relation between the sign and the object. Bottled water is the object, but both Evian and Spa can be signs of the object. The relation addresses what signs explain.

(2) There is a pragmatic relation between the actor and the sign. The actor selects signs to represent the object. The French would pick Evian as the sign to represent the bottled water, the Flemish would not. This makes the actor situated and capable to make strategic decisions.

(3) There is a practical relation between the actor and the object. The actor’s experience with object determines whether the sign is understood correctly. For example, both Evian and Spa reduces thirst, despite their signifiers.

The common feature between this model and Bourdieu’s (1991) theoretical emphasis is the situated actor/agent/subject. Aase and Fossaaskaret address situated comprehension in the pragmatic relation in this model. This suggests that acknowledging the subject’s status can generate new insight. Bourdieu (1991) also claims that the utterance’s context is not enough to generate new insights. It is the knowledge we have about the utterer’s position that is decisive (ibid).

Elements and Moments

Elements are signs in the discourse that do not have a fixed meaning, and are found in all social practice (Rear, 2013). The elements are articulated stable parts that constitute specific local relationships (Fairclough, 2010). These elements are brought together in social practice and internalize one another in this practice (ibid). I will in the thesis interpret the social practice as articulated discourses and the elements as the building blocks that constitute these articulated entreties. The elements have distinctive generate powers which are exercised in the discourse production (ibid). This means that the utterer combines elements in articulation to construct meaning. The identification of elements can thus explain how objects are ascribed meaning. The elements do however internalize one another in articulation. The internalization process in the social practice challenges their separation and hence the identification of them (Fairclough, 2001).

While elements are signs with no fixed meaning, the *moments* are signs with fixed meaning (Rear, 2013). The signs are ascribed meaning through articulation, where relations between elements are established, and becomes moments (ibid). These moments are time extracts or still frames of discursive expressions (Hall, 1997). It is these still frames that allow us to analyze the discourses (ibid). Figure 2 illustrates the difference between moments and elements. Water (C) is an element. Whether the water situation is scarce is however determined by its relation to other signs (A-B). This relation is a moment. The articulation is nevertheless not permanent, but such relations provide temporary totalities (Rear, 2013).



Figure 2: “A Moment and an Element” (Andrade, 2015).

A moment is the mere snapshot of one fixed meaning in a relation. Meaning differences can take place in both the same moments and in comparison with other moments. I will address two such, related moments in this thesis. These are inconsistencies and contradictions. These are the moments that breach with the contextual discursive norms that are consistent over time (Chilton, 1987). The norms are comparable to Bourdieu’s legitimate language (ibid).

Breaches of the discursive norms are sanctioned through judgement (Chilton, 1987). This judgement can be both ethical and rational. *Inconsistencies* occur when the discursive idea of an object is not compatible with the subject’s material encounter with it.

Contradictions are indicators of inconsistencies. Examples are inconsistent commitment slates or change of mind. “The tap water is safe to drink” is a norm in some places. People who still get sick from drinking the water would have a material encounter with this water that breaches with the norm. Repeated inconsistencies challenge the discursive norm and can with sufficient support become the new norm. Discourses can however exist on one level and be obscure at the same time in another level. The tap water that the people got sick from might still be safe and thus still be the norm for the general population. The discourse still exists on the general level. The people who got sick might however find this norm obscure on the personal level. Inconsistencies are hence only indicators of discursive strength, but can challenge the coherence needed to construct discursive norms (Chilton, 1987).

Nodal Points

William E. Connolly (1983, cited in Diez, 2001:16) defines discursive nodal points as “essentially contested concepts.” These concepts have ambiguous or undefined meaning. It is these concepts the discourses contest to attribute meaning to. This contest suggests that the social and discursive structures are not eternal (Laclau, 2014). There is determination to hegemonize it (ibid). The contested concepts are attributed meaning in discursive articulation. It is here the conditions that favor the discourse are related to the discursive position. This articulation process unites discourses around general concepts. The articulation provides the discursive universe with stabilization, and provides this thesis with reference points in the discussion (Diez, 2001).

Silences

Silences can be constructed and can thus suggest some legitimate language in the social practice (Wait, in Berg, 2009). The discourses construct silences with censorship, with the intention to construct felicitous and infelicitous acts through sanction (ibid). This is Bourdieu’s legitimate language. It is these sanctions that can construct the silences. The alternative discursive expressions are then absent (Wait, in Berg, 2009). Silences are however just suggestions of legitimate language. Whether the absent expressions are silences or not is harder to establish. The silence’s opposite is presence, which is more tangible. Jacques Derrida (1997, in Bell, no date) conceptualizes presence as closeness to the knowledge source. This resembles Bourdieu’s (1991) thoughts on discursive consumer and production sites. The further the distance to the production site is, the greater the chance of misunderstanding. Distance is therefore one suggestion of silences. The mere absent of alternatives is another suggestion of silence.

The absences and presences are in this thesis not comparable to the binaried distinction ‘real’ – ‘not real’ (Bell, no date). The absence can still have elements of presence (ibid). Jean Baudrillard (1983) uses an example to illustrate this blurred distinction, which I expand. The water is contaminated in one area, and two patients visit the doctor. The first patient has contracted an illness from the contaminated water, but has no symptoms (ibid). Here the signs are absent, but the illness is present. The second patient presents an idea of the illness the patient believes he has. The symptoms are compatible with the illness from the contaminated water, but the doctor cannot detect this illness. This is an example where absence has the elements of presence. The discourses relate to this example. There can be signs present in the discourse, which in the material world is absent. I do not consider it relevant that the signs are absent in the ‘real’ world. For the patient, the symptoms are important. For the informant, the signs are important. There can also be absent signs of present objects. These absent signs might be irrelevant for the subject, but I will still address them. These silences might be suggestions of legitimate language.

Mental Capabilities

In some situations there are no cultural equivalents to what the informant is explaining (Kapborg and Berteroe, 2001). It is in these situations we need to use the universal modes of thoughts to understand the contextual expressions. I suggest using Aase and Fossaaskaret’s (2007) mental capabilities as such universal reasoning. We use what we know to interpret what we do not know. These capabilities are illustrated in Figure 3.

The mental capabilities will also facilitate the categorization process (Aase and Fossaaskaret, 2007). Lakoff and Johnson (1999:21, in Aase and Fossaaskaret, 2007) distinguish categories from concepts. Categories contain what *is* ‘real’ and the concepts are how we *reason* about ‘the real.’ I translate the ‘real’ to material. The categories are constructed from material experiences. The concepts then become how we respond to these material experiences. The concepts are constructed and are cultural. It is culture that is the decisive variable in what experiences are categorized where, as the subject attributes the object meaning in the process (Aase and Fossaaskaret, 2007).

<u>Sequential Presentation</u> (a, b, c...) The narrative presentation, where a is followed by b, etc.	<u>Explanation</u> $a \rightarrow b$ The explanatory relation, where a leads to b.	<u>Dichotomies</u> $a \neq b$ Opposites, where a does not equal b.
<u>Metaphors</u> $a = b$ When two categories are even, as when a equals b.	<u>Structured Metaphors</u> $a = b$ The metaphor where one unknown category is understood through a known category.	<u>Complex Structured Metaphor</u> $a:b = c:d$ When a relates to b in the same manner that c relates to d.

Figure 3: “Metaphors and Mental Capabilities” (Aase and Fossaaskaret, 2007:114-115)

4.2. Fieldwork

I conducted the two month long fieldwork for this thesis in the spring 2014 in Nepal. The research questions were addressed in the field through semi-structured interviews, which is an approach that is compatible with the discourses’ complexities. This is because these interviews encourage re-presentation. Kathmandu was the fieldwork’s main location, which holds an administrative position with decision-making authorities in the Melamchi Project. I also spent some time in Melamchi, which is one of the cities close to the tunnel intake and an alleged affected area. The informants were easier to access in Melamchi than in Kathmandu, and hence most of the time was spent in the latter. The amount of interviews from each location is nevertheless comparable.



Picture 1: “Picture from the Fieldwork: Garbage in the Bagmati River” (Loeberg, 2014)

The Informants

The informants are introduced in Table 1. The collective presentation is chosen to facilitate comparison, and the informants have been anonymized through numbers. The informants have been divided into three backgrounds, three geographical affiliations and two social ranks. Their backgrounds can be related to the informants’ perspectives. An informant who works for the Government might for example be inclined to share the Governmental perspective. Geographical affiliations are measures of distance to the discursive production sites, and the perceived social ranks can be indicators of the informant’s abilities to obtain and share information.

INFORMANTS								
Informants	Background			Geographical affiliation			Perceived Social Rank	
	Bureaucratic	Academic	Private Sector	Center	Periphery	International	Medium	High
1	X			X				X
2		X		X				X
3		X		X			X	
4	X				X		X	
5					X			
6	X				X		X	
7			X		X	X		X
8			X		X		X	
9	X				X		X	
10			X	X			X	
11	X		X	X				X
12	X			X				X
13	X			X		X		X

Table 1 “Informants” (Loeberg, 2014)

Bureaucrats have an important position in the project and their backgrounds were reoccurring among the informants. Among these there were both working and retired bureaucrats. I perceived the retired bureaucrats as more liberal in their criticism of the project and Government, whereas the working bureaucrats tended to have a similar discursive expression to the Government’s. It is an equal distribution of informants between Kathmandu and the Melamchi area. Closeness to both discursive production sites is hence represented. I perceive most of the informants to have a medium or high social rank. The thesis’ qualitative nature presumes informants with in-depth knowledge. Possession of this knowledge is often related to a perceived higher social rank. The gender distribution favors men. There were only two women among the informants.

Access to Informants

I emphasized in-depth knowledge and relevance in the selection of the informants. Gatekeepers did however summon me, and the access to the informants had to be prioritized. Minichello et al. (1997, cited in Sanghera and Thapar-Björkert, 2008:549) defines gatekeepers as “those individuals in an organisation that have the power to withhold access to people or situations for the purposes of research.” The gatekeepers often hindered me access to the desired informants. I addressed this challenge through ‘snowballing.’ Accessible informants were in the snowball procedure encouraged to suggest new informants with certain qualities. The informants became gate openers. The procedure often satisfied the desire for both access and relevance. Figure 4 illustrates the effects of snowballing.

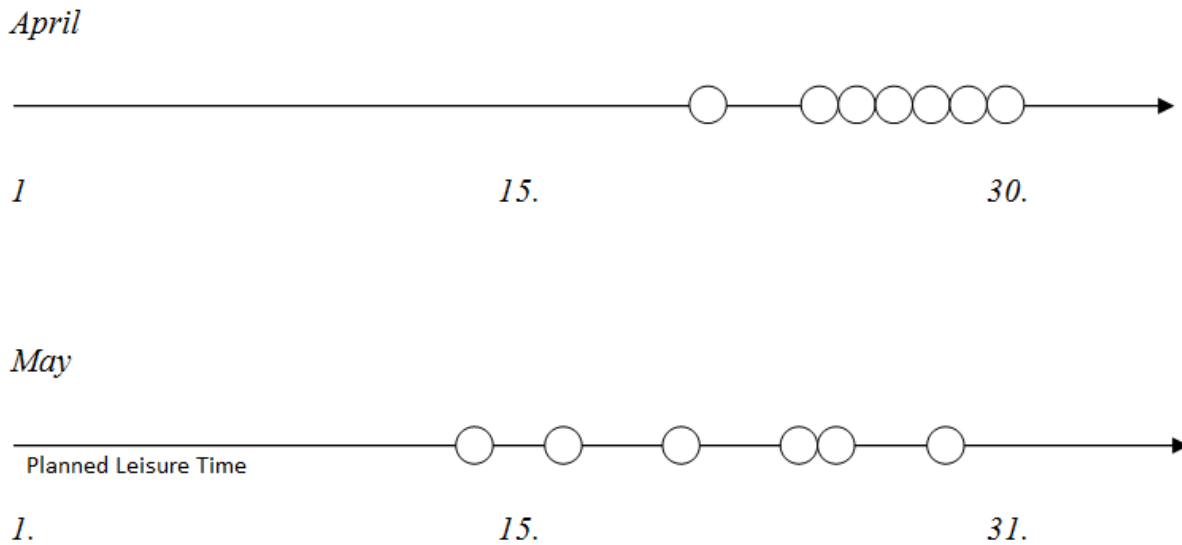


Figure 4: “Interview Timeline during Fieldwork” (Loeberg, 2015).

The snowballing made the access challenge more pliable. The interviews that followed the first recommendation followed one another in short time frequencies. The exception is the two weeks between the first and second interview period, which was planned leisure time. Certain challenges nevertheless arose when snowballing. Not all further recommendations generated new insight. For example, three informants recommended me for the same potential informant, still he was not interested. Poor digital infrastructure² challenged contact with potential informants and made me more reliant on snowballing. I was for example told that one potential informant could be found wandering up and down the Bagmati River. This is not ideal contact information. The Bagmati is long, and it is also polluted to the point that it is not recommended to reside there. The last ‘snowballing’ challenge was that informants often recommended new informants with similar perspectives. These informants provided useful information, but at some point these nuances did not provide new insight.

Cultural, Contextual and Language Barriers

It is in articulation that discursive perspectives are constructed (Kapborg and Berteroe, 2001). This is how language and discourse is related. The interpretation process happens in a context that holds our norms, values and rules of language (Doublet, 1999). It is the hidden assumptions in this language that are of interest (Kapborg and Berteroe, 2001). Interview quality and comprehension is hence decisive in qualitative research.

² limited internet, load shedding, and no phone directories

The Corruption Example

I mentioned to an expatriate during an informal talk in Kathmandu that few informants talked about corruption. I assumed that public corruption was taboo and hence caused this caution among the bureaucrats I interviewed. The expatriate, on the other hand, interpreted the corruption as embedded in the Nepali societies, thus natural and hence unspoken. It was a state rather than a cause, because the corruption could not be removed. We both attributed the silence meaning, but the meaning we attributed it was different. None of us are local and have the full contextual knowledge. I am on the other hand not sure if two locals would interpret this silence the same either. The expatriate and I sure did not. This example illustrates the challenges in interpreting local contexts.

The “Yes” Example

I conducted most interviews in English, which is neither the informants nor mine first language. There were some language barriers, but most could however be solved through re-phrasings or asking follow-up questions. In Melamchi it was however hard to conduct an interview without an interpreter. I tried it with one informant. I asked him whether there is enough water for both Kathmandu and Melamchi, and his answer was “In distance?” Interpretation is hard in such cases. Baker (1981, in Kapborg and Berteroe, 2001) claims that interpreters can solve such translation barriers, with their abilities to communicate general meaning. I therefore used unauthorized interpreters in three interviews. This was however how I learned that it was not that simple to use an interpreter either. During the first two interviews with an interpreter, long answers were repeatedly translated to “Yes.” Baker is perhaps right. I on the other hand used *untrained* interpreter, with the result that not all interviews can be used.

4.3. Statuses during the Fieldwork

Linton (1936, in Aase and Fossaaskaret, 2007:61) defines *status* as a social position that associates with a set of rights and duties. The status is constructed in relation with other persons, and it is the position the status holder has in the pattern of interdependent behavior between individuals. I had several statuses during the fieldwork. Some generated new insight, and others did not. The statuses all were context specific and held non-formalized expectations. Some were possible to alter, and others were not. I for example often had the status as researcher. The *role expectations* are then constructed from that status, and often take the shape of norms or informal rules. Not all statuses generate new insights, but new

positions can be constructed in some situations through the disengagement with the role expectations. The researcher status was possible to alter, but it did not bother me. It often gave me access to informants. The status is the boundaries of how a person can act, while the role expectations are the manners of act within that status (Aase and Fossaaskaret, 2007).

The Female Role

I had the status as female. This is a status I, within reason, could not alter. I did however break with the role expectations with being female. The gender balance in Nepal favors the man. It is the man who holds important positions and is the utterer, while the female keeps to the background.³ I experienced this gender divide during a dinner I was invited to. All the women in the household prepared the food, and would not eat until the men had finished their meal. I however ate with the men and spoke of the issues that were reserved them. That I was invited and expected to eat with the men suggests that I had breached with the role expectations and that the men had accepted this.

The “American” Status

The statuses that would restrict my access in certain situations would be the access in other situations. One example is the status as foreign. I was addressed as ‘the American’ over and over again. The high social rank associated with being member of the ‘American society’ opened gates, while the external status also restricted the access to sensitive information. The informants are less inclined to communicate with outsiders. This status was however harder to alter. The status was the result of my appearance.

4.4. Ethical Practice

During one interview, I had spoken with the informant for 10 minutes, before she interrupted me. She said ‘I can tell you the problem, but then it has to be off-record.’

We all relate to ethics on some level, but it is often appreciated as an overarching structure, without further consideration for individual practice (Alver and Oeyen, 2007). Research ethics is that set of guidelines the researches should use to balance the demands for individual freedom with the researcher’s desire for data that generates new insight. This balance is challenging in qualitative research, as the researcher tends to relate to the

³ There is however an apparent rural-center cleavage. I perceive women in Kathmandu as more liberal.

informants on a personal level and the two can become dependent on each other (Alver and Oeyen, 2007).

I knew from some place in this overarching ethical structure that ethical dilemmas could arise in *all* parts of the research process. I had prepared with informed consents, decided to anonymize the informants and considered the harmfulness of this thesis. I had even considered the possibilities and consequences of misinterpretations. The informant that asked to be off-record nevertheless surprised me. I accepted her suggestion. The information was useful to me, but was at the same time not information I felt entitled to use. This was the situation where I had to balance the demands for individual freedom with my desire for data that generates new insight.

I have not used the informants' off-record information directly, but I have used it to understand what other informants have emphasized. I have also used the act itself, to be off-record, as an example of legitimate language.

4.5. Validity and Reliability: Or the Lack Thereof?

The post structural discourse analysis challenges the positivist concepts validity and reliability in its epistemological notion (Mansvelt and Berg, 2010). The positivists claim true knowledge, while the post structuralists claim that 'true' knowledge does not exist. The positivists measures are common in social sciences, but are not suited for this thesis. This post structural thesis is not valid or reliable in the positivist sense, nor could or achieves to be. It focuses on trustworthiness instead. I will emphasize fair re-presentation of discursive expressions and stories, rather than positivist measurements. I find, like Heidegger and Gadamer (in Doublet, 1999) do, that this thesis and similar research are contributions to temporary realization that will alter over time. The current knowledge is hence the expressions of our current practical experiences and values. Heidegger and Gadamer suggest that the researcher should interpret according to common practice (ibid). I interpret this suggestion as an encouragement to interpret in a manner others can relate to. This makes the interpretations more versatile. It also involves being fair, and what Aase and Fossaaskaret (2007) conceptualize as being situated. In general, this is a practice where parts are related to entireties to achieve trustworthiness (Doublet, 1999).

5. The Discursive Positions

This chapter is an empirical presentation of the processed information from the field, presented as discursive positions and endorsed by utterances from the informants. It addresses the research question: *Which discursive positions are related to the Melamchi Project, and how are they constructed?*

This is the presentation of data. Meaning has been attributed the information in the process of categorization (Aase and Fossaaskaret, 2007). In this process I assess and select the discursive characterizations and properties that relate discursive expressions to the constructed discursive positions. This process is subjective. The addressed discursive positions all relate to the initial discursive position in this discursive universe. This is the discursive position that supports the Melamchi Project. Alternative positions are compared with this initial position. Discourses with contrasting conceptualizations of the water situation, dissimilar solutions or other future prospective become the alternative discursive positions. Utterances are used to construct the re-presentation of the discursive positions. One informant can express support for several discursive positions.

The chapter unites the preceding methodologies with the empirical material and even integrates with the succeeding discussion, and will for integral purposes circulate in all these terrains, opposed to being an estranged empirical presentation.

Discourses, Discursive Positions and Discursive Expressions

I have in chapter 3.1. defined discourses as “*practices that systematically form the objects of which we speak*” (Foucault, in Berg, 2009:215). The discourse term will in this chapter be divided into sub-definitions, while its use until now has been more multipurpose. The *discursive positions* are internalized discourses. The subjects can hold discursive positions, but it will not be the same as the discourse. It is an expression of the discourse. The distinction is the subject’s ownership, which cannot be practiced in the discourse. This is practiced in the articulation. This is the internalized discourse, and where I distance this internalization from mechanical processes. The *discursive expressions* include the informants’ utterances and practices, which are tangent to their discourse. These are again not the discourses themselves, but the articulated expressions of them. The expressions are not uniform as the discursive internalization process is not mechanical, but the expressions have common features. Individual expressions can hence be included in a larger common

expression of the discourse, and the expressions can be discussed on both an individual and an aggregated level.

Discursive Position 1 (DP1): The Melamchi Project

There are two articulated moments that are repeated in the first discursive position. Elements are combined in moments to express that the water situation is scarce, and that the Melamchi Project is the solution. This solution embraces the water tunnel between Melamchi and Kathmandu, water pipe rehabilitation and the water treatment plant.

“It will contribute significantly in reducing the lack of water” (Informant 10, 2014).

The estimated diversion volume is 170 million liters per day (MLD) (Informant 10, 2014). It is however possible to increase the volume to 500 MLD in a phase-wise extension (ibid). The current demand in Kathmandu is 300 MLD (ibid). This estimation is both the discursive position’s strength and weakness. The quantified ‘significant’⁴ volume explains the precise project expectations, which other positions do not articulate. The expectation is however not compatible with the demand:

“I think for at least the near future, ten years or so, Melamchi will be sufficient. It will be extended in two more phases” (Informant 12, 2014).

This discursive expression suggests that the project will be expanded. This discursive position is related to the Government and its agents. This is the position’s strongest support, but it is nevertheless the Government that is not capable of materializing its vision. These materialization concerns are internalizing in alternative discourses, and are challenging the first discursive position. The extension that Informant 12 addresses would lose support if the subjects did not believe in materialization. Some however still do, and the Government is still supportive of the Melamchi Project:

“The Government does not have options. Otherwise they would have already done what they could do” (Informant 3, 2014).

The first discursive position’s problem definition and perceived solution has endured several governments, which might suggest the strength in the relation between the agents and this institution. Its perseverance might on the other hand suggest weak alternative discourses. The informant also seems to suggest this. The project’s progress has however been weak and the

⁴ Informant’s phrasing.

land acquisition has been challenging, and then there have been local conflicts and even political conflicts (Informant 12, 2014). Repetitive restructuring and postponed completion dates might have weakened the Government and its agents:

“I don’t see political problems right now that concern that project. It was the Maoists who were the serious factor that really hindered the project. It is now on the retreating side” (Informant 12, 2014).

The discursive position has lost some adherence in the ‘previous’ challenges. It still harvests support from those who believe that the challenges are over, like Informant 12. Potential future extensions might however challenge some of this support. This again relates to the materialization discourse alternative positions internalize.

Discursive position 2 (DP2): Postponed Completion

The second discursive position is the first position’s dissenters. The content similarities between the positions are the claims that water is scarce and that Melamchi is the solution. The difference between the two positions is that the second discursive position expresses that the project materialization will be extended, or not happen at all:

“It will take a long time. The problem cannot be resolved immediately” (Informant 3, 2014).

The expression is experience based, and it has internalized materialization concerns in the discourse. Repetitive postponements weaken the completion date’s trustworthiness. This persuasion weakens the first discursive position, as the position’s value decreases with the materialization chances. It encourages alternative discursive positions.

Discursive Position 3 (DP3): Suburb Cities

The third discursive position shares the preceding positions’ conviction of scarce water conditions, but conceptualizes the cause as overpopulation. The water supplies are limited and the population is rising. This combination causes the scarce situation. The explicit content difference is the solution. The position suggests satellite towns or suburb cities:

“The satellite town should be more sustainable than Kathmandu, so that people will have incentive to go there” (Informant 11, 2014).

The overpopulation is addressed through population reduction. The suburb cities encourage migration, which relieves overpopulation and thus reduce the water demand (Informant 11,

2014). The inrush of people to the capital is however substantial and forced moves are no option, so the incentives to suburb migration have to be sustainable (ibid).

“In the evening people drive to Putrajaya, sleep there and the next morning the people go back to Kuala Lumpur” (Informant 11, 2014).

The discursive position is inspired by ‘bedroom cities’ in other countries, but the expression is nevertheless compatible with the local regional planning (Informant 11, 2014). This informant uses an example where the capital city has been relocated. Both capital relocation and suburb cities are expressions of this discursive position.

The Terai lowland in the Central Development Region is suitable for suburb cities (ibid). The Government’s plans for the lowland include the highway dubbed the ‘The Fast Track’ and the new international airport ‘Nijghad’ (Shresta, 2014). This planned infrastructure encourages suburb cities:

“There are certain locations at the Fast Track’s roadside where we can develop the satellite towns” (Informant 11, 2014).

The utterance expresses trust in the Government. The planned infrastructure that encourages the suburb cities are Governmental responsibilities. The absent in trust would weaken this discursive position. This position is hence also vulnerable for discursive expressions that address materialization.

Discursive Position 4 (DP4): The Discourse

The fourth discursive position alleges water surplus, and hence opposes the first discursive position. The first acquaintance I had with the criticism of scarce notions was found in literature, and the example became the initial expression of the fourth discursive position:

“The Melamchi project represents nothing more than a child’s grasping for a lollipop held out by an indulgent international banker” (Dixit, in Colopy, 2012:161).

This discursive expression is constructed as a structured metaphor:

A : B = C : D Government: Melamchi Project = child: lollipop

The Government (A) relates to Melamchi (B), like the child (C) relates to the lollipop (D). The bait is dangled and the unaware Government grasps thereafter. It is an outright criticism,

and hence an articulated contender, of the first discursive position. This discursive position claims that the scarce situation is not legitimate. There is enough water:

“If we compute the total water that is over our head in a year and the total population in Kathmandu Valley, the water is sufficient” (Informant 1, 2014).

This informant expresses that the scarce notions are claimed and constructed. The water volume that flows through Kathmandu is sufficient. The management might however not be. The expressions find assurance in the population’s abilities to adapt, which in their opinion challenge the scarce notions (Informant 4, 2014):

“People are drinking. Something is better than nothing” (Informant 4, 2014).

This informant has structured his argument with the ‘better than’ argument:

A > B something > nothing

The informant’s first sentence can be interpreted as support to this fourth discursive position. Expressions related to this discursive position claim that the scarce notion is a discourse itself:

“We have had massive migration into the valley in recent years and still people are drinking water so this whole notion of scarcity needs to be deconstructed” (Colopy, 2012:161).

This utterance relates to the ‘discourse’-notion. It uses post structural language, such as ‘deconstruction.’ I thus interpret this position’s orientation as academic.

Discursive Position 5 (DP5): Reservoir and Grid

The fifth discursive position also alleges water surplus, but the discursive expression is however more solution-oriented than the fourth position. This position claims that valley’s water supplies are sufficient, but that the household supplies are however not (Informant 1, 2014). It emphasizes the solution, while the former emphasized the conceptualization:

“We don’t have an efficient distribution system or enough storage capacity in the reservoir, so once it is filled whatever water is leftover goes in to the river” (Informant 1, 2014).

The Kathmandu supplies’ water volume is abundant in the rainy season, but the distribution system is weak and the surplus water is not saved (Informant 1, 2014). The water does not reach the consumer (ibid). The surplus water that could have been harvested is supplied to the polluted Bagmati River, and is hence not possible to re-procure. The solution encourages

spacious water reservoirs and improved water infrastructure. It is rainwater harvesting on massive scales:

“If we can save the water in the rainy season and supply it throughout the year making a big lake somewhere, then it is possible” (Informant 1, 2014).

This saved water has to be distributed to the households. The water distribution pipes have an abnormal high leakage rate, which has to be repaired to enhance this supply (Colopy, 2012). There is an inclination to substitute the current branch distribution system, where the water pipes separate from one main pipe (Informant 1, 2014). The perceived advantages of the grid system are the possibilities of redirecting water during maintenance (ibid). The grids sustain constant household water supply. The interception of the current branch pipe leads to water halts in united branches (ibid):

“Like a tree you have one main trunk and branches, and the branches end somewhere. So our supply is a tree system. What we need is a grid system” (Informant 1, 2014).

This discursive expression is the revival of an idea from the 1970's (Informant 1, 2014). It is criticized for the land and infrastructure costs, with referral to the previous costs versus the current. The Government of Japan volunteered to cover the infrastructure cost in the 70's, but demanded that the Government of Nepal covered the land cost. The proposition was however declined.

Discursive Position 6 (DP6): The Concerned Melamchi Position

The sixth discursive position opposes the first position. This position's production site is Melamchi. I embrace these expressions as a separate position because of this location and its opposing content. The position expresses concern for a viable future in Melamchi. The local development is not compatible with the water diversion. Uncertain consequences and possibilities of local decision-making are reoccurring expressions.

“The villagers don't have any idea of how they can control the project after the project is complete” (Informant 9, 2014).



Picture 2: “View of the Melamchi River” (Loeberg, 2014).

This concern relate to how the water diversion will affect the local livelihood and environment (Informant 9, 2014). The uncertainties of the diversion volume and the locals’ possibilities to control the diversion have sparked the utterers’ hesitance. The local suspicion is that the Government will control the diversion, with limited consideration for the local interests (Informant 10, 2014):

“The 170 MLD [Million Liters per Day] is the first phase of the project. The government has to expand it. Their ultimate target is about 500 MLD” (Informant 10, 2014).

The expressions doubt that there is enough water for both cities. Water diversion at the expense of Melamchi is not desirable. The concerns for future generations and population growth are strong moments in these expressions (Informant 4, 2014). The uncertainties cause precaution:

“It is fine at the moment, but the future is uncertain. We might require more than the 50 % water flow” (Informant 4, 2014).

This precaution can be related to power. Both limited access and weak interpretation abilities can cause the limited knowledge, and both can suggest that this is a weaker discourse. I interpret the discourse as a parallel discourse, which does not have direct interaction with the Kathmandu discourses. This can also be interpreted as limited power.

Discursive Position 7 (DP7): The Pro Melamchi Position

The seventh discursive position opposes the sixth position. It is a Melamchi based discourse with an expression that denies that the water diversion is hazardous. The range of the discursive expressions within the discourse is nevertheless wide. The project expansion is the cause of confusion in the sixth discursive position. In the seventh position this possible expansion is often used as an assurance. This will be further addressed in the position's economic incentive. The repetitive expression is that there is enough water for both cities and that it can hence be shared:

“The diversion of water from another source in the same water tunnel is considered as an extension of the Melamchi Project. The tunnel will be enough. The water will be enough. Other sources are being designed” (Informant 7, 2014).

The discursive expressions that relate to the possible expansion are either one of two. The first expression claims that the diversion from the Melamchi River will not surpass a determined water volume, often referred to as 170 MLD (Informant 10, 2014). Further water demand will be supplied from other rivers, such as the Janji River (ibid). The second expression acknowledges the possibilities that the extraction surpasses 170 MLD, but claims that Melamchi can handle larger diversion volumes.

“If the diverted water volume happens to be more than what is left some problems might arise in the future. The problems will however not be that big, because there are many rivers in Melamchi. The Melamchi River has a very small stretch before it joins another river. The development of big cities or industries in that stretch is not that prominent.” (Informant 1, 2014).

There are however further incentives for this discursive expression than the moral sharing commitments and non-hazardous explanations. The notion that water deprivation and compensation claims are compatible is strong in the expression. This is however were the discursive position contradicts itself. It claims that the water diversion does no harm, but compensation assumes in its own definition that unpleasantness is afflicted. The agents can therefore claim harm in some situations to be compensated. When the agents are compensated they claim that the diversion is not harmful.

“The locals well understand that they are sacrificing for the common good. In words they are willing to sacrifice” (Informant 7, 2014).

The incentives of the discursive expressions become ambiguous. On one side there is an element that justifies the sharing. It addresses the relations between people. The gift of water could have reciprocal expectations. On the other side the personal and financial compensation incentives might be stronger. Opposing the project can lead to compensation. The interpersonal incentive can however be interpreted as more personal than collective:

“They are now income-labile and their income status is high” (Informant 9, 2014).

The incentives of personal winnings versus collective gain merge in the discourse. The individual, the Melamchi population and Kathmandu all have stakes in the project. The personal gain is compensation for land acquisition (Informant 9, 2014). The local collective gains are road access to Kathmandu, development measures and capital (ibid). Kathmandu’s gain is water supplies. The winnings serve all the stakeholders, at least in the short term. This compensation is described as the locals’ ‘golden chance’ (ibid).

6. Discussion

This chapter addresses the first subordinate research question: *How are the discursive positions positioned in relation to one another?* It is power that positions the discursive positions in relation to one another. I will in this chapter embrace legitimate language as power. The discourse needs agents with access and the abilities to transpire economic capital to other forms of capital to produce legitimate language. This is addressed first. The discursive expressions also need to be coherent to produce the legitimate language. This is addressed next. The hegemonic definition is discussed, and the discussion is summarized in discursive timelines in conclusion.

6.1. The Informants' Storyline

There is a difference between histories per se, and what we re-tell from them. The stories we re-tell are selections of histories that we attribute meaning. It is these stories that are emphasized in this chapter, not histories. The informants' stories will in this subchapter be re-presented in a discursive timeline. This subchapter is hence a contribution to the discursive timelines that will be presented in chapter 6's conclusion. The utterances are from different informants and are attached to historical events for the sake of coherence. The presentation is not representative for each individual informant's experiences, but is a united presentation for the sake of tidiness.

"It was the former prime minister, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. He proposed this Melamchi Project, and then he made a statement that: "Like in Singapore, we will have adequate water, even to clean the Kathmandu State" (Informant 12, 2014).

The perceptions of scarce water conditions thrived in Kathmandu in the 1980's (Informant 12, 2014). The solution was introduced by Bhattarai in the general election in 1991 (ibid).

Bhattarai uses a metaphor to construct his idea:

A: B=C: D Singapore: water= Nepal: water

Singapore (A) relates to water (B), like Nepal (C) will relate to water (D). Singapore here becomes a signifier that refers to efficient water supplies. The context relates the expression to the Melamchi Project. This utterance can be claimed to have performative qualities. Bhattarai was an agent related to the Government, which is a relation that Bourdieu claims is inseparable. Bhattarai's appropriate position strengthened the discursive expression.

Bhattarai's proposal did however not have full support. Alternative and opposing discourses arose. The Government nevertheless preferred, and still prefers, the first discursive position:

“Another river is in Langtang National Park, but as it was a national park they did not allow us to bring the water from the national park. Then the only option left was Melamchi” (Informant 1, 2014).

This expression is illustrative of the first position's attempted legitimate language. Utterers structure their argument as Informant 1 do, where there are no other solutions than the Melamchi Project. It is an attempt to exclude alternative discourses. There are however alternatives, which the related discursive positions exemplify. The Government's position in the first discursive position has facilitated the construction of the first discursive position's legitimate language. This relation between the discourse and the institution needs further explanation.

The authorities accepted the Melamchi Project. The initial construction phases did however happen at the same time as another overarching social development. It was the rise of the civil war in 1996. The Maoists used the civil war to obstruct the Melamchi construction site (Newar, 2003). The Government shifted its attention from water to warfare:

“It was mostly because the Maoists [CPN-M] wanted another form of government. They wanted a different Nepal. It was a confrontation of the centralized authorities the kingdom represented. That was the basis of the conflict” (Informant 13, 2014).

The Government became a weaker discursive endorser during the civil war's instable periods. This informant uses an explanation to illustrate:

A-> B Desire for a 'different Nepal' -> armed confrontation

The warfare challenged the Government's strength. The Maoists also challenged the first discursive position in their pursuit of a 'different Nepal.' The Maoists rested on a communist metanarrative, but also on armed forces. Explicit censorship is one of the most apparent forms of exercised structural power, and armed defeat is hence figurative. The Maoists entered the Government with the peace agreement of 2006 (Colopy, 2012). Developmental optimism was newfound in the freedom from war. The political subversion was fulfilled:

“They probably still have quite good definitional power because the peace agreement was done with them. They are a part of the peace agreement, but the peace agreement is still not fulfilled” (Informant 13, 2014).

This informant suggests that Maoists political subversion led to a discursive shift in Nepal. The Maoists had obtained a new position, and used this newfound power to acquire support in the water supply case. The World Bank had withdrawn its financial support in 2002 (Colopy, 2012). The Asian Development Bank could provide new support on the condition that the new contractor was foreign.

The post war period was characterized by more than the political subversion. Informants describe an unexpected increased migration to Kathmandu. This was a challenge for the water situation:

“The people had not projected this type of migration within the Kathmandu Valley” (Informant 3, 2014).

The population increase was an increase in water demand (Informant 3, 2014). It was also a challenge for the water pipes that were in need of rehabilitation. The denser settlement required more planning and more compensation to access the pipes (ibid).

On the Melamchi side, the China Railway 15 Bureau Group had underbid the local contractors with a price below the estimated tunnel cost, but the Government still entered into contract with them (Reeves, 2016). The construction started, but the developmental optimism entrenched in Bhattarai’s vision was not long lived:

“For one year the Chinese Railway Company couldn’t make much progress, and suddenly they broke the contract and went back to China” (Informant 12, 2014).

The ‘suddenly’-expression is illustrative for the discussion about the Chinese contractor. This contract cancelation is debated in Nepal. I talked to several informants and people, who served me different stories. Some people expressed that the Chinese never planned to complete the project and suggested that this contractor just wanted the money. Others claim that the contract was suspect from the beginning. These suggest that the price below estimated cost was questionable. The common expression for all informants and people I talked to in Nepal is described in Informant 12’s utterance. The Chinese did not progress:

A≠B Chinese contractor≠ progress

Optimism was however revived in 2013, when the new tunnel contractor CMC Cooperativa Muratori e Cementisti di Ravenna was engaged:

“Fortunately the Italian company came and then the Italian company took the charge of the Melamchi Project. The construction work has been making very good progress. And the Melamchi Project is very important in the sense that it is potential” (Informant 12, 2014).

This informant explains that contract with the Italian contractor has led to good progress:

A-> B Italian contractor -> progress

The moment ‘water supply’ is related to the moment ‘potential’ in the informant’s articulation, and meaning is hence ascribed. It is from this moment I interpret the revived optimism. Despite this optimism, the introduction of a western company in Melamchi generated a range of new local challenges:

“It took a long time to settle the dispute between the [Melamchi] villagers and the project (...) The villagers demanded some other development works, like education, health and roads” (Informant 11, 2014).

This dispute is about compensation. The intervention has provided the locals with incentives to mobilize. Some locals mobilize against the intervention itself. Others mobilize with an economic incentive. This informant addresses the challenges in past tense, which does not resonate well with all informants. There are hence at least two discursive expressions here. It is the expressions that claim there are no challenges, and there is the expressions that claim there is or will be challenges here. I interpret the former as support to the first discursive position. This position has had materialization challenges because of the compensation claims. It would be in this discursive position’s interest to silence these challenges through legitimate language.

6.2. The Current Water Situation

This subchapter is an extension of the previous. This is the informants’ stories of the current water situation. Water is a discursive element, which’s meaning cannot be fixed. The informants however attempt to fix its meaning in their articulations:

“People have adapted in Nepal. You can’t imagine it. In twelve days I get 500 liters of water. It is therefore very precious. Let’s call it holy water” (Informant 3, 2014).

The informant describes his situation as scarce. The 500 liters water he receives in 12 days equals about 2, 5 bathtubs of water. The average Norwegian uses in comparison 200 liters water each day (Vraale and Thaulow, 2009).⁵ To illustrate the scarce conditions the informant compares the water volume with holy water in a complex structured metaphor. This was initially told as a joke to his wife earlier that day, and was then retold to me. It might have been a joke, but it is nevertheless through this comparison the informant ascribes the water meaning:

A: B= C: D the religious: holy water = the Kathmandu population: tap water

The religious people relate to holy water like the Kathmandu population relates to tap water. It is precious. The comparison can be interpreted as support to the discourses that claim the situation is scarce. The expression also relates to a distinction in the Nepali language between water for multipurpose use and for religious use, paani and jaal, which is addressed in the next chapter. The informant expresses on the other hand in the utterance that people have adapted. This can be interpreted in favor of the discourses that claim water surplus.

Water has been promised the Kathmandu population for more than 30 years. The current opinion is an ambivalent expression, where both desires and ‘realities’ are balanced. I find this ambivalence defining for the current discursive universe:

“When I was an undergraduate I heard about [The Melamchi Water Supply Project] and was dreaming that I wanted to go to Melamchi. I would bring back the water and just make some change. It’s a dream. We are dreaming and we know the geopolitical realities” (Informant 4, 2014).

Water as an object has no meaning, but is ascribed meaning in its articulation. Informant 4 explains how the Melamchi water equals change (A=B).⁶ The mere articulation of the Melamchi water dreams demonstrate the desire for it and is a motive for mobilization, but the comparison between the water and the dream expresses a state where the desire is not obtainable (Mendola, 2008). The desire is an expression of the ascribed meaning, but the desire might not be able to compete with the ‘realities’ over time.

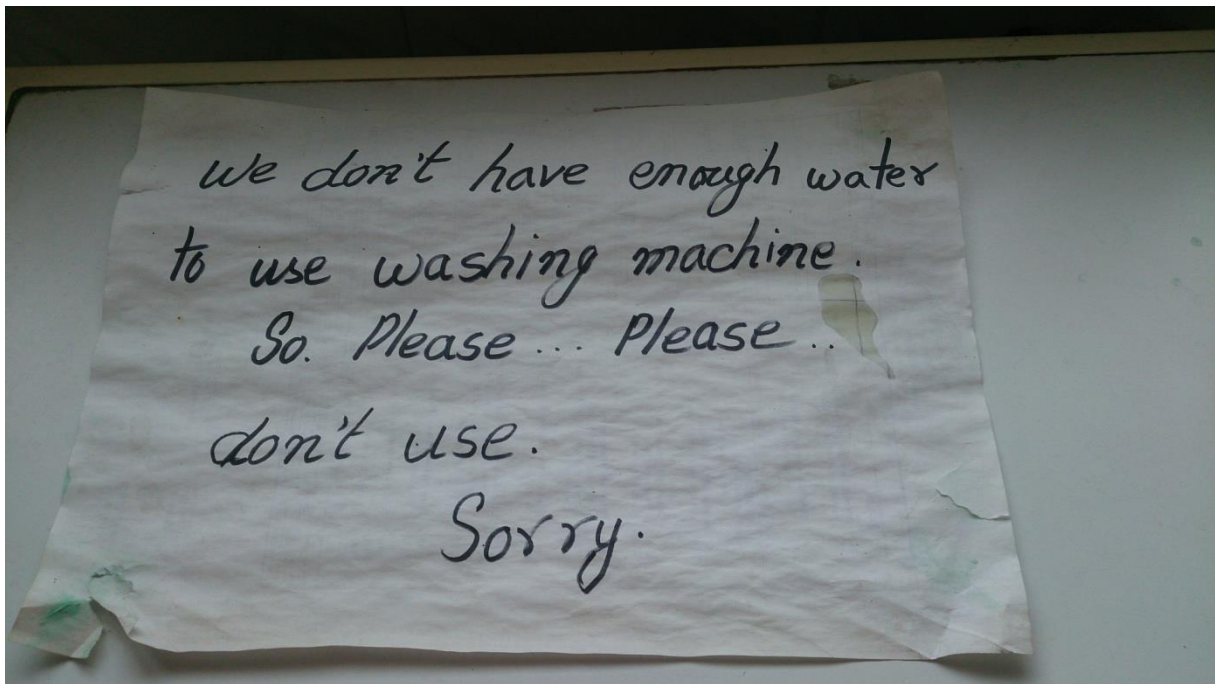
⁵ The numbers are from 2005.

⁶ It can also be interpreted as an explanation: A->B

The experienced material changes in the water conditions are also repeated among the informants in their descriptions of the current situation. The Bagmati River is one of the informants' preferred signifier for the scarce situation:

"When I was young, the Bagmati was so clean. Now you can't even go there. The smell is so bad" (Informant 12, 2014).

Surplus water from the diversion will be supplied to the river, and is believed to dilute the pollution (Informant 1, 2014). This is how Bagmati is related to the water situation and the water supply. I interpret the signifier as a dire expression, where the water volume is so limited that not even the holiest river can be restored. Informant 12 fixes meaning to the element water as polluted in the discursive expression, which then becomes a moment. The river used to be an area of utilization, but the current material experiences with the river do not support this utilization (Informant 12, 2014). Both humans and fish swam in the former Bagmati, but do not swim here anymore (ibid). The utterance is constructed as a sequential presentation in which there are two moments. The two moments are two still frames, where one is the 'current' Bagmati and the other is the 'former' Bagmati. The utterance is supportive of increased water flow, which comes from surplus water from the diversion.



Picture 3: "Water Shortage in Kathmandu" (Loeberg, 2014).

There are material changes experienced in Melamchi as well. The concern is growing in this parallel discussion:

“The volume of water is decreasing (...) I, as well as the villagers, perceive that the springs that are the prominent source of that river are drying up. That is one reason. And the villagers they used to see the snow from down in the Valley, but now they don't see that snow. The snow cover is decreasing” (Informant 11, 2014).

Informant 11 expresses a practical relation with the object. The local actors perceive the water volume as decreasing, even before the water diversion. This informant hence takes a strategic position protecting the local environment. There is not enough water for both cities. The concerns in Melamchi cause tension in the current situation.

6.3. Dismissed Assumptions

I had the suspicion that water could hold meaning above the mundane in Nepal, and that such meaning could be interwoven in certain arguments and discursive expressions. I will use this chapter to address this assumption and why this assumption is dismissed. The interwoven expression is not unfamiliar. In the Vamshivalis, where Krishna drained the Kathmandu Valley, both observations and sacred hints were embedded. The observation was the claim that the valley once was a river, which geological discoveries now also claim, in accordance with the chronicles (Colopy, 2012). The suspicions I had were however grounded in newer assumptions than the chronicles:

“All waters are pure, because it has purifying capacity (...) all waters are pure, but some rivers have purer water” (Informant 1, 2014).

Water is important in Hinduism, and Hinduism is indeed important in Nepal. The locals distinguish between two words for water in their language. *Paani* translates to water for multipurpose use, while *jaal* is the word for sacred water (Informant 1, 2014). Both terms refer to water, but their ascribed meaning is different. The informant told me that all rivers have purifying capacities, but that the holy books used the term *jaal* to describe water (ibid). This distinction made some rivers purer than others (ibid). The Bagmati River in Kathmandu is one of the rivers ascribed sacred meanings. It is a river with religious buildings surrounding it. The Pashupatinath temple is described as one of the most sacred for Hindus:

“Its origin is unknown, but it is told it was there as the beginning of civilization” (Informant 1, 2014).



Picture 4: “Cremation at the Pashupatinath” (Loeberg, 2014).

The informant relates the temple along the Bagmati River to the beginning of civilization, to illustrate the temple and river’s importance. The beginning of civilization is the work of creation, and one does not tamper with the work of creation. That was at least my suspicion. I address two rivers in this thesis, whereas one is holier:

“Bagmati is a holy river. Melamchi is not a holy river” (Informant 1, 2014).

This utterance spurred the question: would water from the Melamchi River dilute or degrade the Bagmati River’s sacredness? Could this sacredness be used as an argument to oppose water diversion? The informants acknowledge the distinction between jaal and paani. The informants even have coherent ideas of them. The sacredness was however not perceived as relevant in this context. I declared the matter irrelevant for the thesis, after posing the question of whether the Melamchi River could be supplied to the Bagmati, whereupon this and more informants expressed:

“It is OK. Nobody will object” (Informant 1, 2014).

The assumed importance of the use of sacred rivers in water supplies was dismissed, with the exception of the importance of the Bagmati Civilization, which is addressed in the next paragraph.

The Bagmati Civilization

In the exploration of the relation between the religious and the mundane, I came across one issue. In this issue the practical, the sacred and water supplies overlapped. This was the Bagmati Civilization. This is a current social movement, and should not be confused with the historical Bagmati Civilization. The movement is related to both the Bagmati River and the discursive universe this thesis addresses. The river is illustrated in Map 2.



Map 2: “The Bagmati River” (Rana, 2007).

The Bagmati was the location for sacred and mundane interaction (Informant 12, 2014). The movement uses the term civilization to refer to the activities that occurred around the river and the strength in the numbers that used it. Informants within the civilization describe activities as both the baths and prayers. It was a social structure that arose in this interaction. This structure has however deteriorated over the last 50-60 years with the river’s pollution. Some activities remain, but the civilization is fading. The material change has led to a social change. The polluted river is no longer suited for the daily bath (Rana, 2007). This change has sparked the movement’s initiative for the civilization’s revival (Informant 12, 2014):

“You have heard in the national media, there is a Bagmati cleaning process? Volunteers will collect the waste from the Bagmati bank and clean it” (Informant 12, 2014).

The informant told me that volunteers clean the river every Saturday. This act might be more symbolic than effective, but is nevertheless where the movement relates to water supply. The movement's supporters believe that increased water supply will dilute the sewer in the Bagmati River and thus recover the civilization (Informant 1, 2014):

“It will be tapped, treated and supplied to the Bagmati River, so it will flow in the Bagmati River” (Informant 12, 2014).

The desire for revival is an indirect support of the first discursive position. The surplus Melamchi water can dilute the river sewer, and make the river suited for new activities. The extent to which the civilization can recover with larger supplies is however debated (Informant 12, 2014). I was curious of the expression and researched it further. This is when I realized that the cleaning campaign, dubbed “Save the Bagmati River” online, is the Government's initiative and that it might not be as successful as expressed:

“Unfortunately corruption set in after that. Green insects infected it. Do you know what the green insect is? It is the dollar” Huta Ram Baidya (in Colopy, 2012:157).

Baidya addresses the corruption in the movement through a metaphor. The green insect relates to infection, like the dollar relates to the movement. The Governmental support could make this ‘cleaning’ discourse's agents inclined to support other Governmental interests. The dollars is a further incentive to support these interests. This discursive support will however not be further addressed in the thesis. The Bagmati expressions do however interfere in the discursive universe this thesis addresses, but the position prioritizes river cleaning rather than political campaigning or other efforts affecting the discursive universe. I consider this discourse related to the Bagmati Civilization tangent to the discursive universe this thesis addresses. I treat it as a subexpression of the first discursive position, and it will not be addressed as a separate position.

6.4. Capital and Power

There are two assumed conditions in the discursive universe. These are that the discourses' agents' intentions are to hegemonize it and that the discourses' success relies upon power (Laclau, 2014). Bourdieu (1989) defines power as economic capital, which can transpire into other forms of capital. It however has to be used to be influential. Then the agents' capital transpires into a legitimate power expression:

“Unfortunately, what happens here in Nepal is that the corrupt person always is the rich person. He donates something to the political party and he always gets the ticket” (Informant 11, 2014).

Informant 11 provides an example of how economic capital transpires. In this example the capital purchases political representation, which is political capital. I consider capital as needed to produce legitimate language. It is hence suggestive of the discursive positions relative position in relation with others in the discursive universe. I will in this chapter explain who has access to the economic capital and how it is distributed. This economic capital is the first suggestion of legitimate language. It is the legitimate language that suggests power. I will address the next suggestion of legitimate language, coherent discourses, in the next chapter.

Tracing the Capital

Possessing capital is not the same as exercising power, but tracing the capital will nevertheless generate insight in where the potential power lies. There are limited amounts of capital strong agents in the discursive universe. The Government can access more capital than any other institution or agent, and is hence this chapter’s main emphasis. The Government as an institution is inseparable from its agents. It is the Government’s agents that are the appropriate persons to access the capital, and hence distinguish these agents from other agents.

It is the Asian Development Bank (ADB) that provides the Melamchi Project with its capital at the present time (Informant 7, 2014). The capital distribution is illustrated in Figure 5. The ADB has the power to influence and to oppose project decisions, but does not necessarily act on this power regularly. Part of the project funding is foreign aid and part is a loan. The capital is divided between two local authorities in the first round. These local authorities are the Social Upliftment Program (SUP) and the Ministry of Urban Development. This division is the apparent division between the capital directed to Melamchi and the capital directed to Kathmandu (Informant 7, 2014).

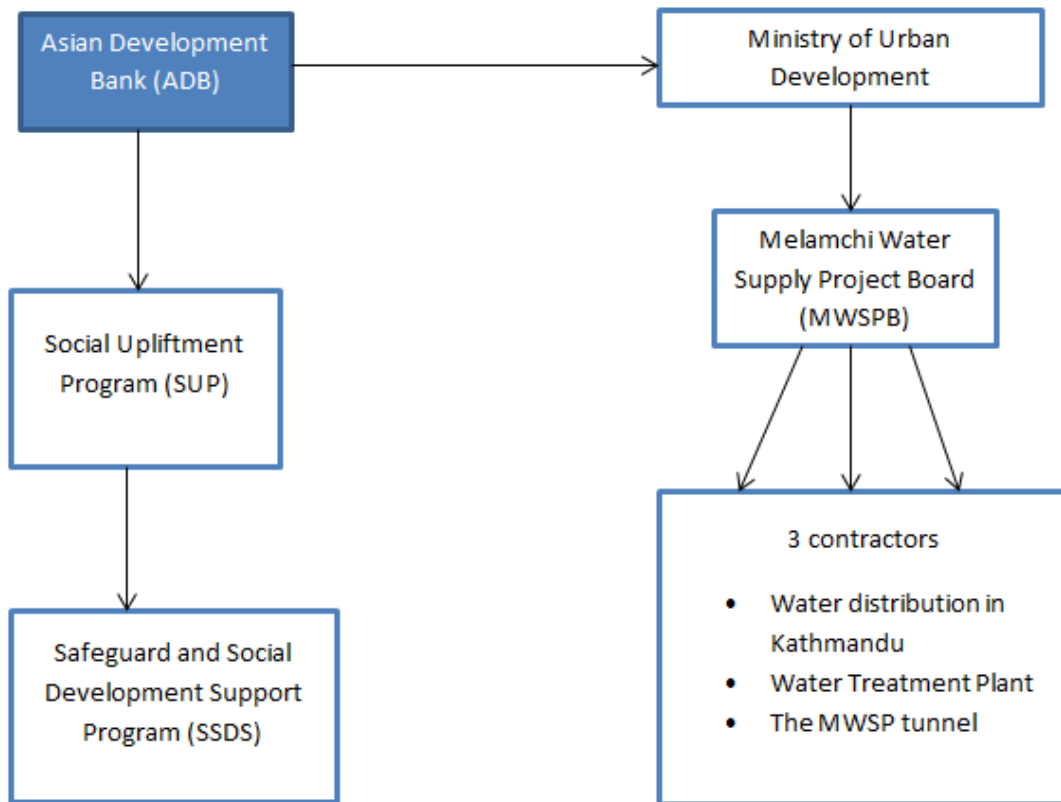


Figure 5: “Current Financial Actors” (Informant 7, 2014).

In Melamchi the capital is handled by the Social Upliftment Program (SUP) (Informant 7, 2014). SUP’s role is to engage and support the Melamchi area in the project process with for example compensation packages (Government of Nepal, no date:b). The capital that is directed to Melamchi is however still under the Government’s control. In Kathmandu, the Ministry of Urban Development provides the Melamchi Water Supply Project Board (MWSPB) with its finances. The board is responsible for management and implementation, and relates to the ministry as a directorate would. The board supplies three contractors and their subprojects with capital. These contractors are responsible for water distribution in Kathmandu, the Water Treatment Plant in Sundarijal and the construction of the water tunnel between Kathmandu and Melamchi (Informant 7, 2014).⁷

⁷ In some sources the project is divided in four phases, where the last one is rehabilitation of the water pipes. Some informants however often consider this last phase as an extension of the subproject responsible for the water distribution in Kathmandu.

An Economic Cleavage

The general economic state in Nepal follows an economic cleavage between the center and periphery on both a national and an individual scale:

«Because this is the capital [Kathmandu], people from all the country are here. Not the general people, but the richest of people are here» (Informant 11, 2014).

Kathmandu is progressing, and is the desired location for the individuals who seek opportunities. It is the capital strong that can migrate to Kathmandu, which enforces the capital cleavage between the center and the peripheries. When the economic capital unites in Kathmandu, this also becomes a location for power. This is where economic capital transpires into political representation and access to information, and this is where the institutions the agents want to relate to are located. The villages have however not progressed much (Informant 13, 2014). I address two cities in this thesis, Kathmandu and Melamchi. One is the center, while the other belongs to the peripheries. The peripheral deprivation is both financial and developmental. The economic capital transpires into development in the center, or the lack of development in the capital weak areas. These are structures that respond on both an individual and a national level:

“Most of the people working on the MWSP are from Nepal and are Nepalese, but at the management level they are all foreigners” (Informant 4, 2014).

This informant describes how the cleavage between the capital strong and capital weak individuals are reproduced on the project level. The Melamchi population was not an overstated affluent population. The capital strong Kathmandu's entrance in Melamchi has however led to compensation expectations, which mobilized the local population. The first discursive position addressed the challenges that arose from this mobilization in Melamchi with capital. The local compensation claims were met:

“There are no complaints from the villagers now in terms of compensation. The villagers didn't imagine that they would get that amount of money. That means that they got higher money than they expected” (Informant 11, 2014).

The informant explains how Kathmandu bought adherence in Melamchi. Capital has here transpired into implicit support, and the Government has used its capital to exercise power. The compensation was used to silence the Melamchi discourses. This support might however be short lived, as the population's thirst for compensation increases. On the other hand, the

compensation made the villagers affluent enough to become Kathmandu citizens themselves, and hence some now have double interests.

Multi-sited Residents

The Melamchi population's compensation made certain individuals capital strong and provided them with possibilities these individuals would not have otherwise:

“There are some migrants from Melamchi to Kathmandu. They perceive that the water also is for them. There are some migrants from there, not permanent, but they have a house in Kathmandu. They are also staying in the village. They are staying in both places. So they also support the project for their own use” (Informant 11, 2014).

This informant explains an effect of the compensation the local population has experienced:

A-> B compensation-> multi-sited residents

The compensated individuals can now afford residence in both cities. The villagers have bought themselves stakes in Kathmandu's water future, and hence have an incentive to support the discourse that this group once opposed. These multi-sited residents can on one hand be inclined to support the first discursive position. The intended diverted water is now also for them. One foot in each camp could however mean double interests, even if one interest is silenced at the moment. This is bargaining power. I do however not perceive this group as big enough to influence the discourses at the time, and these multi-sited residents will not be further addressed. It is nevertheless an example of how subjects can have several discursive interests.

6.5. Weak and Strong Discursive Positions

Power is in this thesis legitimate language, which is the composition of coherent language and the access and abilities to transpire economic capital to other capital. I have introduced the economic capital in the previous chapter, and will introduce the coherent language in this. It is through the legitimate language that people and groups can be controlled. The coherent language provides the discourse with trustworthiness. The capital can transpire into agent allocation, access to information or political representation. These are the means to produce and reproduce the legitimate language. I will in this chapter assess the relative power relations between the discursive positions. It is in this chapter I answer the subordinate research question: *How are the discursive positions positioned in relation to one another?*

The First Discursive Position

I have assessed the first discursive position as strong in its *potential* power that stems from the capital the Government's agents can access, but I have however not addressed whether this power is exercised. That is the purpose of this subchapter. Strong discourses have the abilities to construct legitimate and illegitimate language, according to Bourdieu (1991). Illegitimate language is sanctioned:

"I know the reply, but I don't know if I can reply" (Informant 7, 2014).

I asked this informant whether there was enough water for both Kathmandu and Melamchi. I interpret her answer as self-censoring. Bourdieu claims that implicit censorship indicate power. I suggest that this censorship indicates legitimate language. This silence was found within the Government and with its collaborators, and thus suggests the first discursive position's strength. The informant had however addressed the content earlier in the conversation:

"At the time the project started it was absolutely enough, the water" (Informant 7, 2014)

There are two elements in this expression that are articulated in a moment, which together suggest a contrast between now and then. The elements are 'at the *time*' and '*absolutely enough*'. The informant was quick to nuance herself. She told me that there were plans of diverting water from other sources (Informant 7, 2014). Both the tunnel and water would be enough (ibid). It is hard to interpret answers. I am supposed to re-present the informants, and not ascribe their expressions new meaning. I am not suggesting that there is not enough water now. This expression could have been ambiguous in its articulation. I did however experience similar expressions with implicit censorship among other informants, which suggest to me that there are some silences in this discourse. The next informant has no relation with the Government, but still expressed hesitation or unwillingness to discuss the Government and its work:

"Our level cannot express anything about this, what the Government does. This is a Government mediate, possible or impossible" (Informant 5, 2014).

This expression can also be interpreted as ambiguous. The informant has no formal position in relation to the Government, and might hence claim that he is not suited for utterances about the Government. The informant claims he 'cannot.' The informant is however able and free to express himself. He *can*. The informant might nevertheless not be willing to or fear sanctions

for expressing himself. This suggests legitimate language. Informants in some positions will however feel that their position regulates them. I found for example current public servants more restricted in their expressions than former public servants:

“The changes of governments have not affected this project. It is completely political free. The governments have supported it” (Informant 4, 2014).

This informant is a current public servant, and his expression is incoherent. When it is the Government that supports the Melamchi Project, it is not political free. This is an inconsistent moment. The expression however also suggests that the informant is censoring himself in the incoherent moment, and thus suggests a strong discourse. This position is reproduced among many informants, and it has demonstrated the strength to endure government after government. This is the reproduction that has secured the position’s endurance:

“No matter what the party, they would really like to get credit. All would like to say: “In my time the water came to Kathmandu.” But the contractor financing, local people, compensation, settlement, rehabilitation, profit, loss, transfer of the project managers- all these things affect” (Informant1, 2014).

The informant suggests that all the political parties support the first discursive position, in accordance with Informant 4. I interpret this materialization desire as an expression of legitimate language. The political parties might be at the point of no return. This is a state where the discourse is strong enough to self-censor its own agents. Silences are the absence of alternative discursive expressions, and there seems to be no other alternatives in the Government (Berg, 2009). There is a political cost to turning against its own legitimate language. The stronger the discourse, the harder the political parties fall. I suggest that the Government and discourse has internalized one another to the point where these are inseparable. This requires further explanation.

The Kathmandu Discourses

I will in this chapter assess the discourses that are produced in Kathmandu, and compare their relative strength to the first discursive position. I do this to establish the strongest discursive position among the Kathmandu discourses. I have established that the first discursive position is strong. Its Governmental support and access to capital places the discourse in a special position. The first discursive position also has traces of legitimate language. It is nevertheless

incoherent in its abilities to materialize its pre-vision. This is the loophole for the competing discourses.

The third discursive position, which supports suburb cities, is a strong contender. The position however challenges the power concentration in Kathmandu:

“First they try to shift the government offices to another city, so that lots of people come to the capital city for political or administrative reasons. If you take that forum outside of the city, then people will go there for other reasons” (Informant 11, 2014).

The informant uses a sequential presentation to suggest the relocation of the capital:

(a, b, c, ..) (relocate offices, administrative incentives, migration)

This is an extensive idea. The extensiveness’ weakness is its reliance upon Governmental support. Capital city relocation would counterbalance the powerful Kathmandu, and hence favors power dispersion. The historical experiences do however favor power concentration. This expressions weakness is materialization. The Government has intentions to hegemonize the discursive universe according to discourse theories, and the allocation of agents to suburb cities or a new capital might not serve this intention. There are good reasons to relocate the capital, such as the economic growth in the new area. The water reasons for relocation are however less probable to appeal to the Government. There are nevertheless examples that illustrates that this is possible, such as Rio de Janeiro-Brasilia, Karachi-Islamabad, Jeddah-Riyadh and Almaty- Astana. It requires political will. Relocating capitals requires the Government’s intervention, which is an institution with its own interests. The position’s language is however coherent:

“You have probably heard of the Nijgadh International Airport proposal? If the Fast Track is linked to the Nijgadh Airport, and if these two projects are completed, you could reach to Terai in one hour” (Informant 12, 2014).

The discourse is coherent with regional plans and this is the discourse’s strength. An idea which is less extensive and less dependent upon the Government is stronger than the opposite. Suburb cities are one such idea. Informant 12 addresses the fast track (highway) and the new airport, which is infrastructure supportive of suburb cities or an alternative capital. This infrastructure makes materialization possible, because it encourages suburb cities without larger Governmental intervention. The suburb cities are hence less dependent on the

Government, and are more probable than the relocated capital. The idea is less extensive, but nevertheless stronger. The idea however depends somewhat on the infrastructures' materialization, but here it already has Governmental support. The land acquisition is completed, but the construction is not (Informant 12, 2014).

“No, people will still move to Kathmandu. People will continue to move to Kathmandu. It takes time to practically transform into things, real decentralization and this and that. At least my generation has to wait for that. And my generation of people will not disrupt their relation and come to Kathmandu” Informant 4 (2014)

The discursive position's time limit is vague. Informant 4 (2014) believes that Kathmandu still will experience population growth, even though there is not water for all. The Kathmandu population might meet a saturation point, where parts of the population are willing to relocate. Materialization will however not happen if there is no willingness to relocate.

The elements in the third discursive position are water, population and regional planning, from which the discourse produces its moments. The Government could combine population and regional planning in another discursive universe, and the outcome would be suburb cities. The Government, as an endorser for the first discursive position, strives however to combine the element water with the element tunnel, and will therefore not combine the elements water and population. That would be fighting its own discursive position.

The fourth discursive position, which claims that water scarcity is a discourse, is consistent and inconsistent at the same time. The informants often contradict themselves in this discursive position. An example is how one informant told me that he had complained to his wife about the lack of water, but in the same interview claimed there was enough water for Kathmandu:

“If we compute the total water that is over our head in a year and the total population in Kathmandu Valley, the water is sufficient” (Informant 1, 2014).

Versus:

“We are scheduled tomorrow for water after a five day gap. The sixth day we will have water for about four hours. That is too many days in between” (Informant 1, 2014).

These utterances can be interpreted as inconsistencies. I however can and will interpret this as consistent at the same time. The first expression does not exclude the second. The challenge arises in between, in the distribution to the households. It is here I think the discourse loses some support. The material experience suggests that there is too little water, as there is no water in the tap. This is incoherent. The connection between the two expressions is not articulated and it is here the confusion arises. The position is challenged by one discursive nodal point:

“I see they have water tanks out all over the city during the rain showers” (Informant 13, 2014).

The discursive nodal point is the definition of the word ‘scarce.’ The discourses that perceive the water situation as scarce have another definition of what ‘scarce’ is than what the fourth and fifth discursive positions have. The discursive positions contend to ascribe the word meaning in articulation. Informant 13 describes a situation where the inhabitants harvest water during rain. Some would say that this suggests a scarce water situation. The fourth discursive position interprets this as the opposite. People adapt to the situation and people are still drinking. It is the contrast between the practical water access and the vital water access.

The fifth discursive position presents a reservoir and grid solution. The position is not particularly disputed, but it struggles to distinguish itself as a better alternative than the first discursive position. The Melamchi Project has incorporated the pipe rehabilitation in their design. The fifth discursive position’s main discursive expression is the desire for reservoirs and renewed pipelines. This will increase the received amount of water in the households:

“Almost 30 % of the water in the pipelines is wasted because there are leakages” (Informant 12, 2014)

The leakage percentage is debated. The informant claims there is a 30 % leakage, the Government estimates 40 % and external sources claim it is near the double (Colopy, 2012). The leakage percentage is nevertheless high and the new pipes will increase the water volume to the households. The fifth discursive position’s challenge is not just that the pipe renewal is incorporated in the Melamchi design, but that the Government itself might be working against its own design and thus against the fifth discursive position. World Bank sources claim that the Government just wanted more water⁸ during their cooperation, while the World Bank

⁸ =water tunnel

wanted to reduce the leakages in the pipes (ibid). The World Bank could have been considered an endorser of the fifth discursive position, but withdrew when the Government opposed them (ibid). This indicates that the first discursive either is strong to sustain financial withdrawal until new investors are found or not viable in the long run. The project is dependent on investors.

“The city was constructed then and now we are going to enforce all the modern facilities. It will be a problem” (Informant 1, 2014).

This position’s weakness is cost. There is land cost for the reservoirs and compensation for the pipes. Pipes that only follow the Government’s properties will deviate from the most practical route (Informant 1, 2014). A 400 meter stretch from A to B can then become a 2 kilometer pipe stretch (ibid). The solution then relies on digging through private properties, where compensation claims can be expected (ibid). This is where the cost lies, but also where capital transpires into power. These opportunities can be bought. It is however the Government that holds this capital.

I consider the fourth discursive position to be weaker among the Kathmandu discourses. It is not just the notion of water surplus, which several subjects find incoherent with their material experiences. It is the limited economic incentive. The other discourses suggest new infrastructure. This translates to capital in circulation, which can transpire into power. I would however assume that there is limited incentive to invest capital to prevent other agents to invest. The position has more in common with a consultant’s opinion than a narrative that convinces the public. This Government is however not interested in this consultation.

There are comparable features in the third and the fifth discursive positions. Both positions have the articulated potential to be materialized, but not at the expense of the Melamchi Project. Renewed pipes and reservoirs are incorporated in the first discursive position and hence have possibilities of materialization. The fast track and the new international airport are adopted politics with plans of materialization. I believe that the suburb cities will appear as an extension of the infrastructure. It will nevertheless not weaken the first discursive position. Both discourses are strong on paper with few inconsistent moments, but do not have the support or capital that the first discursive position possesses. This support and capital is the Government. Larger infrastructure also needs implementing power to materialize, which the Government possesses. The discourses might convince other

subjects, but has not convinced the Government. Their discursive positions rely on political subversion. They have the pre-vision to replace the old, but do at the moment not have political opportunity. I find the first discursive position the strongest.

Postponement Challenges in the Melamchi Project

I have established that the first discursive position is the strongest among the Kathmandu discourses. Its power stems from the Governmental support and the economic capital this endorser's agents can and do access. The capital transpires into different forms of power. The discourse is furthermore extensive, but reasonably coherent. The position is however challenged by its own inabilities to materialize its own pre-vision:

"In a joke that you can hear in Kathmandu, people say that Melamchi water and the new constitution are the same. They never come" (Informant 11, 2014).

The informant addresses these inabilities to materialize in a comparison between the Melamchi water and the constitution. The project completion dates have been repeatedly postponed. These are repeated inconsistencies between pre-vision and material experiences that are being internalized in the discourse. The Government promises the water within certain dates. The water does not come and the pre-vision is not materialized. This leads the subject to the conclusion that the water will never come. The constitution was comparable. There were several failed attempts to produce a new constitution to replace the interim constitution from 2007. The joke is however outdated. Nepal's new constitution was promulgated in September 2015.

Post structuralism has a peculiar relation to cause, where explanations are perceptions of the causes. The perceptions do flourish in the discursive universe. The reasons for postponement have become discursive moments themselves. The agents who support diversion use the reasons to defend their discursive position and the agents who oppose diversion use them to weaken the first discursive position.

"The local community is the main factor that can obstruct or facilitate the project" (Informant 7, 2014).

This informant finds the local communities responsible for the postponements and the project's future. The expression suggests that the local positions are strong and are contenders. The context implies that it is the seventh discursive position that is the first position's biggest concern. The utterance is extracted from conversations on mobilization and

compensation, which is consistent with the seventh discursive position. Other informants claim that the social issues are past issues:

“Before there were, but now the government has settled the social issues. No outstanding issues so far, only the technical issues are there” (Informant 10, 2014).

This expression can on one hand be interpreted as support for project continuation, but the informant also addresses other issues. The technical explanation is distinct. It is one of the reasons that are not unambiguously structural. It is nevertheless conspicuous that Nepal cannot address technical issues that other states do, and can hence be interpreted as structural as well.

There are also expressions that claim that the reason is the authorities. This is a comprehensive strain of explanations:

“The Government did not choose the right contractor. The Chinese did not do well” (Informant 4, 2014).

The informant refers to the The China Railway 15 Bureau Group. The Chinese were contracted to build about 26 kilometers of tunnel in two years with completion date in 2013 (Informant 4, 2014). The group only managed to construct six kilometers and lost the contract in 2012 (ibid). The Chinese on the other hand claims that the group resigned because of payment problems.

The expressions that claim the authorities are the reason are comprehensive and often inconsistent. Informant 12 claims that there at least is political consensus about the project:

“I don’t think the different political parties have different views. They have a common stand on that particular issue” (Informant 12, 2014).

Informant 12 perceives the political parties as united in their support for the first discursive position. I have established that there are more discursive positions than the first, but could argue that this political consensus suggests a hegemonic discourse. It can on the other hand be an indication that not all interests have access to the political arena.

“In actions where nobody is accountable, there is no progress at all” (Informant 11, 2014).

This structural weakness strengthens the first discursive position. It is however in a potentially exploitive manner. The informant expresses that the authorities are not held accountable. The

authorities have an apparent political consensus among the parties and can ignore the public opinion.

There is however some agents even the Government cannot ignore. The international investors have not been the thesis focus, nor will be. The investors are nevertheless important in the reasons debate. Most investors address one cause, which the local discursive expressions often do not address:

“Nepal is highly corrupted” (Informant 12, 2014).

I interpret this discursive difference as a local silence. The few informants who mentioned corruption were not or are no longer related to the public sector. One informant mentioned during his interview that he was now so old that he could talk about corruption, while laughing.

The first discursive position’s challenge is material rather than discursive at the moment, although the two are internalizing one another. The slow materialization leads to less support from the capital strong endorsers. When the discursive support decreases, the possibilities of political subversion increases.

The Melamchi Grass Root

I will use this chapter to compare the first discursive position with the Melamchi positions. I have in this thesis suggested that the Melamchi discourses are parallel discourses to the Kathmandu discourses. Kathmandu and Melamchi are two different discursive production sites, but are still related through the common reference point ‘the Melamchi Project.’ The Melamchi discourses seem to have limited direct contact with the discourses in Kathmandu, but have proven themselves powerful on home grounds. Their grass root mobilizations have hindered the project completion many times. One example is the CPN-M’s mobilization during the civil war. The mobilization is an effective tool for the Melamchi population:

“They expect that we have a huge amount of money to spend on development issues (...) so they organize themselves around the problem” (Informant 7, 2014).

The informant explains that the Melamchi population has certain expectations when the capital strong enters their area. This suggests that there are still incentives to mobilize the grass root. New mobilization attempts would be bottom-up mobilizations, opposed to the CPN-M’s top-down mobilization. Kathmandu benefits from the water diversion and will not

mobilize the grass root. The two local discursive positions' expressions, but not intentions, are comparable. The sixth discursive position claims that the diversion is harmful and wants to stop the diversion. It is their livelihood. Water is needed for both drinking and irrigation purposes (Informant 5, 2014). The seventh discursive position will however claim that the diversion is harmful to obtain the compensation:

“As affected populations, there are some villages in this area that are spoiled from that point of view. Of course, there are still issues undergoing and going to be addressed” (Informant 7, 2014).

This informant suggests that the local population is spoiled from compensation. The utterance can however be interpreted as an expression for the local strength. Their mobilization has provided them with compensation. When the locals are spoiled from compensation, then the locals are potent mobilizers. The mobilization has become a signifier for capital. The local's persistence and strength is suggested in that the issue is still ongoing. This is how the position fights the system:

“Because there are no elections in the local government, they are really weak” (Informant 11, 2014).

The current system is centralized (Informant 9, 2014). There are no local elections. There is no formal appropriate representation for the local population, which explains how mobilization becomes their mean. One informant told me that the parliament is considering a federal system, which could provide some decentralization (ibid). Until then, there will still be desire to mobilize. The grounds for the mobilization stem from incoherent laws:

“Melamchi came up at a juncture, without defining all the rights” (Informant 11, 2014).

The informant told me about three laws related to the local level, which contradict one another (Informant 11, 2014). Here it is the laws that are incoherent. The Local Self Governance Act and Regulations (LGSA) states that natural resources belong to the local communities. The informant tells me there is a conflicting law that states that natural resources are the property of the Government, and also mentions a third law that provides sectorial ministers with certain rights. The question is further complicated by the International Labour Organization's convention “ILO169”, which states that indigenous inhabitants have the first right to resources in their own area (Informant 11, 2014).

Discursive strength will take the positions a long way in the situations where the laws are incoherent. The next informant expresses that the local positions are becoming more certain and assertive of their perceived rights:

“When the central Government wants to use our natural resources, they have to ask us first, and then they can use it. It is the voice of the people” (Informant 11, 2014).

This informant tells me that there is a ‘voice of the people’ in the Melamchi area. He expresses that the authorities cannot divert more water than agreed, or else the locals will oppose the project (Informant 11, 2014). I interpret this as a local legitimate language, which the Government is subject to. Infelicitous language will be sanctioned. Melamchi sanctions through mobilization. Both the Government and the contractors are aware of the locals’ means, and can simply not afford more obstructions:

“The Government is planning to provide royalty” (Informant 4, 2014).

One informant tells me that it is the local communities that will obstruct or facilitate the project (Informant 7, 2014). The local strength has not gone unnoticed. Informant 4 explains that the Government is considering meeting the local’s demands for compensation for future local generations. The Government is considering abiding by the local legitimate language, which suggests that the locals have strong discursive positions.

I have so far in this chapter addressed ‘the locals’ as one group, while the locals do belong in two separate discursive positions. The seventh discursive position is however stronger than the sixth. Both positions have articulated that they have rights. The seventh discursive position is however the position that pushes the mobilization. The provided compensation substantiates this claim. It is this mobilization the Government fears. The sixth position’s demands are on the other hand not met. This position is however more discursively coherent than the seventh.

Peripheral Knowledge Deprivation

Bourdieu (1991) argues that knowledge is power, and that it is through knowledge that political action and social processes are produced. This acknowledgement is an extension of the capital-power concept. Capital can transpire into knowledge. It can for example produce condition reports. I will also argue that knowledge is *moments*. Knowledge is produced in a perspective and meaning is fixed to it through the articulation. Knowledge production should be addressed because the power to produce is power to distribute knowledge, or *withhold* it.

Withholding information regulates the alternative positions' possibilities of constructing new ideas or social movements.

The Government is one of the larger knowledge producers and has public responsibilities to distribute information to the peripheries (Informant 4, 2014):

“As for Government rules there are focal people of every VDC, every ward, and in one VDC there are nine focal persons. They dispose their messages to them, and they dispose their message to the user groups” (Informant 4, 2014).

Informant 4 claims that the Village Development Committees (VDCs) are responsible of distributing the Government's knowledge and messages. There are two content features in the expression that affects the sixth and seventh discursive position. The knowledge is produced for the Government, or in this case, for the first discursive position. It is produced with a perspective. This regulates the use of the information, as the elements that produce the information are internalized in moments and are therefore harder to separate. The other concern is the VDCs themselves. The VDCs are local bodies, but the local elections are weak (Informant 11, 2014). An informant told me that the locals are invited to suggest names for the VDC, but that the appointed public officials in the VDC nevertheless come from Kathmandu (ibid). This suggests that the 'local' public servants might be the Government's agents. It is these servants who distribute and withhold information.

The Government has an interest in reproducing the first discursive position. There is hence an incentive for the discourse's agents to withhold information that can obstruct the water diversion. It is a potential exploitive knowledge cleavage between the center and the peripheries:

“The Melamchi people do not know what sort of environmental impact there will be there. The knowledge is not transported to them. That is the problem” (Informant 9, 2014).

Informant 9 suggests that there is an information deficit. This deficit can challenge the grass root movement's possibilities to oppose the water diversion. The Government provides moments with fixed meaning. The sixth and seventh discursive position needs elements without fixed meaning, which the local agents can produce moments from. The knowledge deprivation can indicate constructed silences. Bourdieu (1991) emphasizes both the abilities to distribute and *receive* information in the discursive universe. The knowledge might be suppressed. This regards knowledge distribution. The local population might on the other

hand not have the abilities to receive this knowledge. The knowledge deprivation nevertheless suggests that the first discursive power is stronger at the moment, but the future material experiences with environmental challenges can however strengthen the sixth discursive position over time.

The knowledge deprivation has led to uncertainties and confusion in the local discursive positions. The utterers disagree with one another and themselves in the information about for example diversion rates:

“50 % of the total river” (Informant 4, 2014)

Versus

“10 % left, 90 % diversion” (Informant 5, 2014)

Informant 4 claims that 50 % of the Melamchi River will be diverted, while Informant 5 claims that the diversion will be 90 % of the river. This confusion does not serve the local discourses. It becomes inconsistent when different agents within the same discursive position distribute different information, and these inconsistencies are weaknesses. I can on one hand argue that it is the Government that is inconsistent. The Government might on the other hand just be strategic. The local positions will nevertheless appear inconsistent. The inconsistencies are not as decisive for the seventh discursive position as the sixth. The seventh position's incentive is financial. The capital is more important than the diversion rates. The position will mobilize regardless.

I believe that bottom-up grass root mobilization in Melamchi against diversion requires certain changes. The skewed knowledge relations have to be addressed. The Melamchi area is far from the production site of knowledge and the stronger discourses (Kathmandu discourses). This increases the chances of misinterpretation, according to Bourdieu. The uneven knowledge distribution indicates that the sixth discursive position that opposes diversion is weaker. It does not have sufficient abilities to challenge the pro-discourses. This position could benefit from more capital, from which the agents could buy impact studies. This is local knowledge production. The former discursive position has to recruit 'appropriate' persons, which have access to information, the knowledge to process it and a relation to an institution who can distribute it. A local discursive position founded in locally produced knowledge, which addresses the impacts perceived relevant for the region, has influential potential.

The sixth versus the seventh discursive position

The sixth and the seventh discursive positions are constructed in the same location and are hence natural to compare. Their separate discursive production site is their challenge, but is also what provides them with bargaining power:

“If there is no ownership of the local people of the project, that project would be a failure”
Informant 10 (2014)

The first discursive position is dependent on local support to materialize, which suggests that the first discursive position is subject to a legitimate local language. A breach with this language is sanctioned through mobilization. The local discourses’ abilities to construct the legitimate language indicate strength. The seventh discursive position has the strongest abilities to organize, and it is their agents the first discursive position needs on their side. The first discursive position does that through compensation. I argue that this is one form of censorship. The compensation does not buy ownership, but it buys silence. It works because capital is the seventh discursive position’s incentive.

The seventh discursive position’s advantage is its economic incentive, and this incentive now seems to mobilize again. The locals are organizing for the compensation for future generations:

“They have heard on the radio, television or in newspapers that the project is completed within a couple of years. So they have started thinking: will they get revenues or will the same kind of development works continue in the valley? That is the concern amongst villagers”
(Informant 9, 2014).

The locals are raising their voices and have initiated a new committee in the Social Upliftment Committee (SUP) to deal with the Government (Informant 9, 2014). This development can challenge the sixth discursive position. The more support the seventh position gets, the harder it is for the sixth position to compete with the seventh. The informant expresses that compensation concerns can lead to new mobilization.

The seventh discursive position is stronger than the sixth. It dictates the local legitimate language and sanctions, and is hence strong enough to compete with the first discursive position. Project materialization depends on the seventh position’s support. The seventh position also has the first position’s support in Melamchi against the sixth discursive

position. The sixth discursive position could compete with the first if the position was better to mobilize and organize. This will take time, capital and better allocation of agents.

6.6. Materialization versus Discourse

I have this far been vaguer than intended in the definition of discursive power. I have addressed the coherent discourse and economic capital that can transpire to legitimate language. Materialization has however not been addressed to this extent. Both the informants and I emphasize the possibilities of materialization in the discussion, and it should hence be addressed.

The discourse is concerned with the legitimate language and the consistent expressions that reproduce that discourse, while the materialization is physical. The possibilities of materialization are vague and speculative, whereas the discourse is articulated and tangible. The discursive material I have however has discursive contents that refer to the possibilities of materialization. The subject perceives materialization and incorporates it in their discursive expression. Materialization is articulated and is hence part of the discourse. This is the result of the subjects' personal interpretation of discourses, which over time can alter the discourse. The tangible discourse hence addresses the speculative materialization, and the two internalize one another in the discourse.

I find that neither materialization nor discourse have complete meaning without one another. A discourse without meaning resembles a metanarrative, while materialization without discourse is impossible. Both are parts of bigger entreties. I believe that the fair representation of strength lies in between discourse and materialization. It is this space that concerns my informants, and it is these informants I re-present. I do however not address the possibilities of materialization as 'real' or not, but as articulated perspectives that can influence the discourses and their relative strength.

6.7. A Hegemonic Discourse?

I will address the second subordinate research question in this chapter: *Can an interpretation of a hegemonic definition be established?* Femia's (1981) hegemonic definition will be interpreted. This serves as an extension of the two hegemonic assumptions I presented in chapter 2. I will then compare this interpreted definition with the discourse I argued was the strongest in the discursive universe, the first discursive position.

The hegemonic discourse is the exercised *“intellectual and moral leadership”* (Femia, 1981). I interpret the intellectual capacities in this definition as the access and abilities to distribute information. This is the power to include or exclude information in the construction of a discursive expression. This requires economic capital. The moral capacities are interpreted as the internalized and moralizing language the subject conforms to and reasons in accordance with the “legitimate language”, which Bourdieu (1991) addresses in the construction of felicitous expressions. This requires a coherent discourse. This definition compares well with the vague initial assumptions I had of hegemonic discourses. These were that there can just be one, and that this has to be the strongest in the discursive universe. The hegemonic position is the discursive positions’ desired achievement, and hence used as the measurement of power (Fairclough, 2003). The hegemonic position is achieved on the basis of consent before force, but coercion will however be recognized as an indicator. This is because Bourdieu (1991) explains that coercion over time can become self-regulatory. It is an implicit part of the “rewards and punishment” component of the dominate language (Femia, 1981).

I have in the discussion established that the first discursive position is the strongest among the discursive position I have found in the discursive universe. The position has the abilities to transpire capital into power, and exercises this power:

“They said that if Italian company can complete on time, they will get almost a 20 % bonus”
(Informant 12, 2014).

The first discursive position’s agents here use capital as an incentive to increase the materialization pace. The utterance is constructed as an explanation:

A->B completion on time-> bonus

The capital is used to influence. It is exercised power. Capital has also been used in attempts to silence the Melamchi discourses. The compensation is exercised power, where capital transpires to support in the silence it creates. It is the Government’s support, which is decisive for the first discursive position’s power. The institution and its agents are inseparable, according to Bourdieu, and it is this relation that translates to an access to economic capital. The agents are the appropriate persons to access external funds in the Government’s name, which then is transpired to power.

The first discursive position is a competent knowledge producer and reproducer. Both capital and agents are allocated to distribute this discourse. The capital transpires into means of distribution. The Government's legitimacy provides both the discursive position and its agents with its legitimacy in the distribution process:

"We have to rely on the Government and the information they provide" (Informant 10, 2014).

This informant addresses the Government as the producer of information. This information is however constructed moments, where meaning has been fixed to elements. It is the product of the first discursive position's legitimate language. This legitimate language claim is reinforced by the silences I addressed in the discussion, chapter 6.5., which all were related to the Government. I interpret the legitimate language and silences as indicators of the intellectual and moral leadership that constitutes a hegemonic discourse.

The Government's decision mandate is unique for the institutions in the discursive universe. Political representation is an expression of the current legitimate language, whether the representation is democratic or forced:

"The government decides. The government can" (Informant 9, 2014).

This informant suggests that the Government has the power to decide, regardless of the support the discursive position it is related to have. The Government and other institutions related to the first discursive position do however meet resistance in their abilities to materialize their pre-vision:

"I am still not convinced that all the political parties are as interested in the Melamchi Project. Every party has their trade union, but all the major political parties sitting around the table have never talked about whether their trade union is instructed not to make any disturbances in the project" (Informant 11, 2014).

This informant suggests that the political parties might support parallel discursive positions. In the public discourse, the parties support the first discursive position. It is however possible that the parties encourage their trade unions to obstruct the Melamchi Project. This suggests that there is power behind the first discursive position. There is a legitimate language, which can sanction the political parties for infelicitous language. It is the population and voters who sanctions. The expression is however speculative, but is coherent with the political structure in Nepal:

“There are a lot of organizations. And they are also, directly or indirectly, associated with a political party” (Informant 11, 2014).

These organizations that are related to political parties have more freedom to work against the first discursive position than their respective parties, and uses local disgruntlement as their means to progress:

“When the Government of Nepal does not support the rules of the villages enough, and demands the rule of the people at the same time, it will not be fulfilled” (Informant 5, 2014).

The informant implies that the Government cannot have its will and the local support at the same time. It is when the first discursive position does not have the local support there are political opportunities for the organizations. The Government can on the other hand not leave its discursive position. The first discursive position has been the governments’ preferred option for the last 30 years. This endurance suggests discursive strength, which is sustained in interaction with the governments. I argue that the discursive position and the Government have become inseparable:

“For the Government that started the project, there is no point of return” (Informant 11, 2014).

The political cost of abandoning the first discursive position is too high. The informant explains that the institution’s involvement in the discourse has reached the ‘point of no return.’ The Government is now subject to and reproduces the discourse’s legitimate language. This power is reinforcing, and is a power that no other discourse in the universe can compete with at the moment. The position’s challenge is that it is reliant on loans and hence reliant on the investors’ good will. There are several investors that have supported the position and now have withdrawn its capital flow. This is where the first discursive position is related to the local support. This is to avoid further loan extensions. The position has nevertheless reproduced its discourse, despite local issues.

The addressed ‘point of no return’ is an expression of legitimate language. The legitimate language is tangent to Femia’s (1989) criteria for hegemonic discourses, “intellectual and moral leadership”, which resembles implicit censorship. The first discursive position balances between explicit and implicit censorship. The first discursive position has developed in phases. It was originally reliant on legitimate language. The perception that water was scarce gained support for the solution. When the project was opposed for political

reasons during the civil war, the position responded with arms. The position is now in the transition to implicit censorship. It addresses opposition with capital rather than dialogue, for example: social unrest in Melamchi is addressed with compensation rather than local democratic bodies. The position prioritizes long term political capital and water for its adherent rather than the environmental impacts in the region. The position constructs silences with capital.

Bourdieu's legitimate language and hegemonic discourses are related. The legitimate language can exclude alternative discourses. The first discursive position has a strong definition of the discursive universe's central nodal point. This nodal point is 'water supply.' It is this concept that the pro- diversion discourses desires to hegemonize. There are articulated alternatives to the first position's solution in the discursive universe. I nevertheless interpret the first discursive position's definition of the nodal point as the strongest. This is because the position has been able to relate the Melamchi Project as a signifier to the nodal point:

the sigifier = the Melamchi Project the signified= water supply

I interpret it as strong, because the recognition of the signifier is in accordance with the signified in my discursive material. This is the exercised moral leadership that Femia calls for. The first discursive position is as close to a hegemonic discourse one can come in a non-totalitarian definition of hegemonies. The Governmental support is political representation, which provides the position with the possibilities to monopolize the implementation. I would argue that the hegemonic discourse is one that alternative discourses cannot compete with, even when the alternative discourses are free to oppose and express themselves. I would with this definition characterize the first discursive position as hegemonic at the current moment, despite the opposition and inconsistencies.

6.8. The Future of Water Supplies

I will in this chapter attempt to summarize the thesis in discursive timelines. The first timeline suggests how the discursive positions in the universe have evolved. The four next timelines are suggestions of alternative futures. These future timelines address the polarizations in the discursive universe that can hinder the first discursive position's materialization. These polarizations are the Kathmandu-Melamchi relations and the scarce-not scarce water ideas.

All the timelines are based on the discursive expressions that have been re-presented throughout the thesis.

1st Discursive Timeline

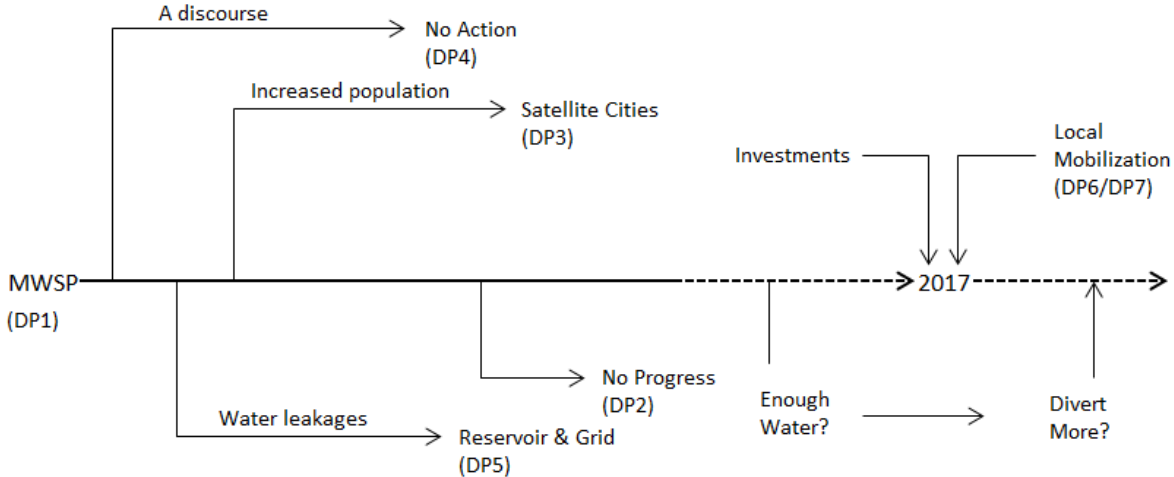


Figure 6: “1st Discursive Timeline: The Discursive Universe” (Loeberg, 2016).

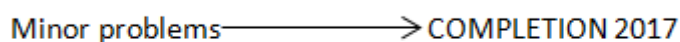
The first discursive timeline in Figure 6 illustrates the discursive positions in the discursive universe. The bold line is both the timeline and represents the first discursive position (DP1). This position expresses that the water situation is scarce and that the solution is the Melamchi Project (MWSP). The arrows points to discursive positions, until the line becomes dashed. The first illustrated discursive alternative is the position dubbed the fourth (DP4) in the thesis. It claims that there is enough water in Kathmandu, and that the scarce idea is a discourse. Their solution is no action. The next alternative addresses the water leakage rates in the water pipes. This is the fifth discursive position (DP5). Its solution is a reservoir and grid system. The third discursive positon (DP3) claims that satellite cities will relieve Kathmandu of the scarce water situation. The last arrow on the bold timeline is the second discursive position (DP2). Their claim is the same as the first discursive position. This position does however not believe the first discursive position will be materialized. The dashed line represents the time from the interviews were conducted in 2014 until the estimated project completion in 2017, and then time after this estimated completion. It is in this phase the project expansion has to be considered. The population is growing, as well as the water demand. The current expected diversion rates cannot cover the water demand in Kathmandu. An expansion can therefore be the future. The 2017-completion can however be hindered. The sixth and seventh discursive

positions (DP6 /DP7) have incentive to mobilize against the first discursive position's materialization. The sixth has environmental incentives, and the seventh has economic incentives. The seventh discursive position is a potent mobilizer. The investors have expressed that further expansions are not supported.

Four Alternative Futures

This subchapter suggests alternative futures for the Kathmandu Valley. This is a speculative process, but I consider it an extension of the discussion, where both the informants and I have implied future possibilities. The four future timelines are based on the discursive consistencies and inconsistencies that produce legitimate language, illegitimate language or potential legitimate language. The timelines are discursive, and should not be mistaken for the products of probabilities.

The first alternative future suggests that the tension between Kathmandu and Melamchi is minor, and that the first discursive position materializes within the completion date in 2017. The alternative is illustrated in Figure 7.



Minor problems → COMPLETION 2017

Figure 7: "Alternative 1: Project Completion" (Loeberg, 2016).

This alternative suggests that the first discursive position remains strong or hegemonic. The alternative is constructed from the utterances that believe in materialization. These are expressions that support the first discursive position in the discursive universe:

"Everybody is talking along that 2017-line" (Informant 10, 2014).

Or

"If the work continues as the Italians have done it, then the project will be finished"
(Informant 11, 2014).

These informants express this belief. The on time completion would be an interim water order and a political success. The water demand is however presumed to increase, which will breach this interim order over time.

The second alternative future suggests that the tension between Kathmandu and Melamchi is greater than in the first alternative future, but that it still can be resolved. The alternative future is illustrated in Figure 8. I assume that resolving the tension is both time consuming and capital intensive:

“It is not only the Melamchi Project. If you see other development projects, most of the projects have been delayed. It’s a very developmental problem” (Informant 13, 2014).

Variations of this expression are reoccurring in my discursive material. The informants describe repetitive postponements in the Melamchi Project and new completion dates in their expressions. These have become internalized in the discourses. This informant expresses distrust in progress on a general basis. The claimed challenge for the post-war progression has however been local compensation issues. The growing mobilization for long term revenues to the Melamchi Region is an indicator of this future.

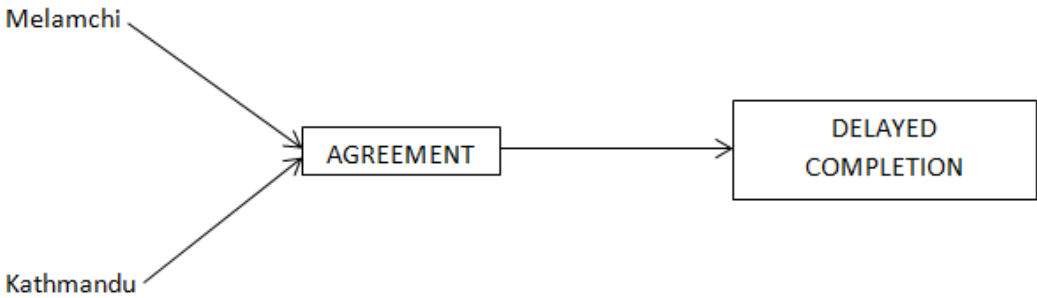


Figure 8: “Alternative 2: Project Postponement” (Loeberg, 2016).

The third alternative future is illustrated in Figure 9. Compensation is an issue in the discursive universe, and this alternative suggests that the conflict between Kathmandu and Melamchi is not resolved:

“The locals have lost their sense of reality about compensation, so it’s really difficult to address the issues” (Informant 7, 2014).

The informant expresses that the Government and the local population do not agree about the compensation rates. This alternative is in accordance with the opinion that the foreign capital’s entrance in Melamchi is an incentive to oppose. This incentive is greater than the incentive to oppose the project itself. It is the seventh discursive position that challenges the first. This is now a state of disagreement.

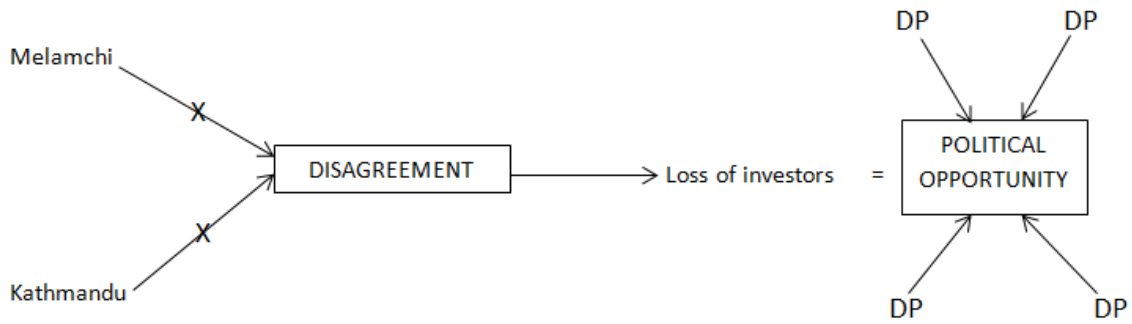


Figure 9: “Alternative 3: Political Opportunity” (Loeberg, 2016).

There have been disagreements between the cities before. The Government has resolved the issues by compensating the locals. It is an alternative to do this again. The Government will however not compensate once more in this alternative, which also is in accordance with Informant 7’s utterance. This means postponement:

“From now on there will be no extensions of the loan, in terms of funding” (Informant 10, 2014).

This informant expresses in the form of an ultimatum that the extension corresponds to the loss of investors. This breach in confidence translates to diminished support in the first discursive position. The first discursive position can still materialize, but it is weakened. This is a political opportunity for alternative discursive positions (DPs). It is even an opportunity for political subversion.

The fourth alternative suggests that nothing happens, and it is illustrated in Figure 10. The informants have described two possible further options in this alternative.

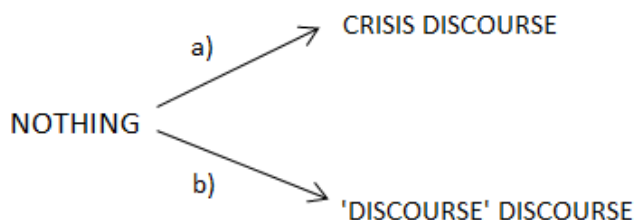


Figure 10: “Alternative 4: Crisis or Discourse” (Loeberg, 2016).

In the first option, the scarce water situation will lead to water menace when nothing happens. This is compatible with the discursive expressions that claim water crisis:

“There are issues of water crisis, and the drinking water situation will be disastrous in a few years. This issue sometimes catches up with some sentiments, some local and some regional. And then again, it produces some political anomalies claiming that this is horrible, and that and this” (Informant 3, 2014).

This informant implies some political spectacle, where the politician reacts to sentiments. The reaction is however an anomaly, because this reaction does not translate to materialization:

$$A \rightarrow B \qquad B \neq C$$

The informant has structured his argument through an explanation and a dichotomy, where the sentiment leads to a reaction ($A \rightarrow B$). The reaction does however not equal materialization ($B \neq C$). The result is a disastrous situation. This alternative future is dubbed alternative a) in the figure.

The other option is that there is no crisis when nothing happens. This option is compatible with the fourth discursive position. The materialization is irrelevant, because the scarce situation is a discourse. There is enough water in the valley. The alternative is illustrated as option b) in the figure. This outcome would make a coherent fourth position, where the practical relation to water strengthens this discourse.

Future Challenges

I aim to re-present stories in this thesis. I could have concluded after the timelines, but some of the informants expressed future concerns that were not included in the alternative futures. Two out of the four alternative futures embraced materialization of the Melamchi Project. The informants' concerns are extensions of the materialized Melamchi. I will in this subchapter address these warnings, which were not addressed in the alternative futures:

“It [renovation of the pipelines] will take a long time. Immediately the problem cannot be resolved” (Informant 9, 2014).

The first concern relates to discursive expressions. The expressions are concerned with the tunnel, but the pipes are however not as often articulated. This informant emphasizes that the pipe renovation is important for the household supply. The tunnel is not enough.

Another informant expresses his concerns about the operational maintenance of the new facilities (Informant 10, 2014). The current water management service in Kathmandu is the Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited (KUKL), and is supposed to be in charge of the management post diversion as well. The informant however tells me that the operator's reputation is not the best, and claims that 'everybody knows it.' The operator is simply not capable of maintaining the current system (Informant 10, 2014):

“Of course, principally we should have our water supply from the KUKL (...) I don't get a drop of water from that system” (Informant 10, 2014).

The informant structures his argument in the comparison between some constructed principle and the operator's practice:

principle = water from KUKL

practice \neq water from KUKL

His principle is that he should get the services he pays for, but this principle is not in accordance with the practice. He tells me that he has to buy water and use ground water, while still paying the KUKL for the services it provides. The problem is that he does not get the water that KUKL promises him. This suggests certain future challenges.

The last concern the informants expressed to me was related to the water volume:

“Even the Government's supply of a 170 MLD will be a shortfall, because the current demand is 300 MLD. If we account for the existing system, about 100 MLD plus 170, that equals about 270” (Informant 10, 2014).

The 170 MLD does not cover the water demand. This informant told me that there has to be a phase vice extension of the project, with an end volume around 500 MLD (Informant 10, 2014). The Melamchi Project is not able to supply the households with water around the clock with 170 MLD (ibid).

7. The Methodologies, Revised

This chapter addresses the third subordinate research question: *Do the applied methodologies generate new insight in the research questions?* I have in this thesis used elements, moments, nodal points, signifiers and silences to deconstruct discursive expressions. The mental capabilities were used to analyze the construction of the discursive expressions. Semi-structured interviews during the fieldwork provided the discursive material. The common for all these methodologies was that these provided the space for the discursive expression.

I used some methods more than others. Signifiers were for example not used to great extents. I could have removed the signifiers as a method, and it might have made the thesis more efficient. The third subordinate research question encourages however the evaluation of the methodologies' abilities to generate new insight. The removal of the less used methodologies would not be fair for this research question. There is new insight in the methodologies that did not generate new insight. The new insight is that these *did not* generate new insight in this thesis' research question. These methodologies per se might produce insight, but did not in this thesis. I did however find elements, moments and silences useful. The elements that became moments suggested how expressions were constructed. The silences suggested hegemonies.

I provided the methodologies with more space than the theories in this thesis and with this embraced the discursive expressions. The theories were adapted to the discursive expressions rather than the opposite. This was articulated in chapter 2.3. The methodological space provided me with the freedom to re-present, but this freedom was at the expense of stronger theoretical assistance. I nevertheless had to use theories to conceptualize power and to explain what the discursive expression could not. I will however argue that the methodologies provided new insight to the research question. The methodologies encouraged the re-presentation that I desired. The semi-structured interviews provided me the discursive material that was re-presented. It was these discursive expressions that answered the research question.

8. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to re-present the discursive positions related to the Melamchi Project. I have re-presented these positions through the informants' expressions and stories. This has required deconstruction of the discourses, reconstruction of discursive positions and the relative positioning of them. I will use this chapter to describe how I have responded to each research question and what result this has had, in an attempt to conclude.

Which discursive positions are related to the Melamchi Project, and how are they constructed?

I have in this thesis established that there are at least seven discursive positions related to the Melamchi Project. The discursive positions are either alternatives or opponents to the initial discursive position, and this is how the positions are related. The positions address suburb cities, water surplus, reservoir and grid systems, and the local population in Melamchi, besides the Melamchi Project itself. These positions are constructed through repetitive language, and needs support to be reproduced. The more support the discourses have, the stronger the position becomes. This strength is constructed through a combination of power and a coherent discourse. Economic capital transpires into other sorts of capital, according to Bourdieu. Access to economic capital and the abilities to transpire it suggests power. When this power is combined with a coherent discourse, the discourse has the potential to produce legitimate language. The discourses that do not combine them in a favorable manner are often weak or silenced over time.

How are the discursive positions positioned in relation to one another?

It is the discursive positions' relative strength that positions them in relation to one another. I have demonstrated that the first discursive position is the strongest. Its agents have access to economic capital and the abilities to transpire it to other forms of capital. Its agents have political representation, which suggests legitimate language in itself and provides the agents with implementation powers. Its agents have the capital and abilities to produce and distribute information. The discourse is coherent and produces its own legitimate language.

The first discursive position's greatest strength is the support from the Government. The Government is subject to this discourse, but the discourse appears to have internalized the institution as much as the institution has internalized the discourse. The endurance in this support suggests that these are now inseparable, which also the informants suggest in expressions such as 'the Government is at the point of no return.' It is this relation that

provides the discourse's agents with access to more capital than other agents. The agents are in the appropriate position to reproduce the discourse and are allocated well through the public system. The capital has transpired into exercised power. This has made the discourse the strongest in the discursive universe.

The other Kathmandu discourses cannot compete with the first discursive position. The positions that claim there is enough water in Kathmandu have a practical problem. Several subjects do not receive this water and hence claim the situation is scarce on the basis of material experiences. The other positions are coherent, but are not backed by enough capital or the abilities to transpire it to power. The positions that share the first positions content, but with slight alterations in its perceived future, are quite strong. These positions are nevertheless weaker contenders because of the content similarities.

The first discursive position nevertheless has two weaknesses. The first weakness is the mobilization in Melamchi. The first position relies on cooperation with Melamchi to materialize. The second is its inability to materialize the discursive position's pre-vision. This materialization concern has now been internalized in the alternative discursive expressions.

Can the existence of a hegemonic definition be established?

I had two assumptions for the hegemonic discourse to begin with. These were that just one discourse can be hegemonic and that this has to be the strongest discourse. The strongest discourse does not have to be hegemonic, but the hegemonic discourse has to be the strongest in the discursive universe. The conditions were derived from Laclau's (2014) claim that all discourses intend to hegemonize the discursive universe. I expanded this hegemonic conceptualization in chapter 6.7., when I united these conditions with Femia's (1981) definition of hegemonic discourse: "intellectual and moral leadership." Intellectual leadership was interpreted as the access and abilities to produce and distribute information. It is on this basis decisions can be influenced and made. The informants expressed their reliance on the information that the Government provided, which suggests that the Government is the main producer in the discursive universe. The moral leadership was interpreted as the abilities to produce and reproduce legitimate language. This language is internalized and moralizing, and will on this basis dictate which utterances are felicitous and infelicitous. Infelicitous utterances are sanctioned. This division between accepted and unaccepted language constructs silences. I found both silences and legitimate language in the first discursive position.

The first discursive position balances between the strong and the hegemonic discourse definition, dependent on how the hegemonic definitions are interpreted. I favor a hegemonic description where the discourse is one that alternative discourses cannot compete with, even when the alternative discourses are free to oppose and express themselves. This definition is compatible with both the two initial conditions and Femia's definition, but I find it more unambiguous. In this definition I find the first discursive position hegemonic. It has however strong contenders, which over time can challenge this position.

Do the applied methodologies generate new insight in the research questions?

The methodologies were given more space than the theories in this thesis, with an intention to re-present the informants' stories of water supply. I gave these stories precedence, which implied adapting theories to the discursive expressions rather than choosing expressions that suits the theories. This choice provided me with the freedom to re-present, but deprived me of stronger theoretical assistance in cases where the expressions provided weak explanations. This re-presentation was nevertheless the intent, weak or not. I used elements, moments, nodal points, signifiers and silences to deconstruct discursive expressions. These generated insight into how the discursive positions were constructed, suggested legitimate languages and the inconsistencies that have the potential to weaken discourses. The semi-structured interviews that produced this discursive material were indispensable. All these methodologies provided me with the stories and the means to analyze the discourses' coherence. I was however reliant upon theories to explain power. The theories also provided the bridge to entireties that informants did not explain. The overall result is in accordance with the intentions of re-presentations and the methodologies can thus be argued to generate new insights. I was also able to answer the research questions through these stories, and would claim that the methodologies did generate new insight in the research question.

In Conclusion

In conclusion, I remind the reader that the conclusions are made on the basis of 'discursive still frames.' The still frames are the discursive material I have gathered. It is one discursive extract at one particular time. The discursive material accumulation cannot be repeated. The discourses and their relative position will change over time.

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