NEGOTIATING IDENTITY:

FROM RECIPIENT TO PARTNER IN DEVELOPMENT AID

A study of "capacity building"
in the Formative Research project in Nepal

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TABLES AND FIGURES

ACRONYMS

BPEP I	Basic and Primary Education Program I
BPEP II	Basic and Primary Education Program II
CERID	Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
CD	Capacity Development
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DOE	Department of Education
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
FR	Formative Research
FRAG	Formative Research Advisory Group
FRP	Formative Research Project
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
HMG	His Majesties Government of Nepal
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports, Nepal
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TA	Technical Assistance
UFD	Ministry of Research and Education, Norway
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCING THE TOPIC

Over the past decades, the landscape of strategies for aid delivery has changed drastically. The concept of "*capacity building*" has come to be one of the most popular phrases in recent development aid strategies. The assumption that *lack of capacity* in developing countries is one of the key explanations for the difficulties in achieving sustainable development has become to be more and more emphasized, and represents an important feature in what has been called the "new architecture" of development aid (Fukuda-Parr 2002, Lopes and Theisohn 2003). The essence of capacity building strategies is that sustainable development can not be achieved by throwing money, projects and external know-how at problems in developing countries (ECDPM 2003). Poverty is in such strategies seen as the product of each developing country's historical and cultural conditions, and solving the problems of poverty must involve an individual transformation process (Lopes and Theisohn 2003). In this context, the challenge of capacity building lies not just in training people or strengthening organizations. It also has to deal with complex, rather vague issues such as norms, values, political and institutional culture, identity and motivation for change in developing countries (ECDPM 2003). It is seen as vitally important to enhance the capacity of people and institutions in order for them to manage development *on their own* in an efficient and sustainable way, and the notion of *local autonomy* is emphasized.

The trends in supporting capacity building reflect a combination of the acknowledgement that "earlier" approaches to development are not working and a response to new realities in the environments of development aid relations (Whyte 2005: 17). These earlier approaches to development has tended to categorize the relationship between the "donor" and "recipient" in an "us" and "the others" dichotomy, where "us" has positive and developed values and systems which "the others" lacks (or have not achieved yet). In recent years however, attempts have been made to change the rhetoric in development strategies in order to avoid this dichotomy, by embracing concepts like "*partnership*", "*development cooperation*", "*local autonomy*" and "*ownership*", and developing countries are no longer defined as "*recipients*", but "*partners*". This rhetoric indicates a change in the relationship between the donor and developing countries – from a relationship where the donor has something desirable that the

developing countries wants – to a relationship where the donor and the developing countries are equals, cooperating towards joint goals concerning sustainable development. I will argue that much could be accomplished by focusing on the individuals' own understanding of the rhetorical change from "recipient" to "partner", as a development context is complex and diverse, and does not necessarily fit neatly into idealized notions of "partnership" and "partners". I claim that a shift of focus which entails a move away from studying the "others", in an attempt to increase the understanding of the individual on the "inside" will prove highly useful.

This thesis analyzes this process – how changing the strategy of development affect the way people in developing countries that are object to the strategy identify themselves. What consequences do the changes in rhetoric have for the identity of the local participants[1] in development projects – do the local participants identify themselves as "recipient" or "partner"?

The empirical approach to the changes in development strategies is a qualitative study of the "Formative Research project" in Nepal. This development project aims to build up capacity among individuals and institutions in some chosen areas in the education sector in Nepal. It uses concepts like "partnership" and "local ownership" to explain the purpose of the project and therefore represents some typical features that can be found in "the new architecture" of development. By conducting an empirical analysis of processes of social change the Formative Research project, this thesis takes a practical look at how capacity building strategies been implemented in the project, and how participants in the project interpret and react to this. By looking at how Nepalese participants interpret their own life world and their role in the Formative Research project, and how they negotiate and talk about capacity building in this context, the thesis seeks to illuminate why the participants interact and talk the way they do. Based on a comparison of how "capacity building" is defined in project documents in the Formative Research project and by the practical experiences of local participants, the following research problem is sought answered throughout this thesis:

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[1] The concept "local participants" will be used throughout this thesis to refer to people in developing countries that are involved in a development project. I have chosen not to adopt the terminology of "partnership" and refer to both donor and developing countries as "partners", as this terminology, in my opinion, undermines the full complexity and gives an impression of a relationship that is based on equality.

Is there coherence between the theory and practice of "capacity building" in the Formative Research project?

The analytical presentation of this thesis will focus around three questions, where each generates several sub-questions which in turn will be presented throughout the chapters of this thesis.

- *First, can the Formative Research project be said to belong to the "new architecture" of development aid in implementation of capacity building strategies?*
- *Second, how do local participants in the Formative Research project relate themselves to the new rhetoric of capacity building? What definitions and understandings do they have of the concept of capacity building?*
- *Third, how do the participants in the Formative Research project negotiate their roles and identity within the capacity building discourse? Do they identify themselves as "partners" or "recipients"?*

1.2 WHY STUDY LOCAL PARTICIPANTS IN A CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT?

By analyzing the Formative Research project from the level of the individual, this thesis looks beyond the development strategies (created in the west) and explores how these theories are perceived by the people that are objects for the strategies. Most capacity building strategies are not developed from the perspective of individuals, but tend to focus on project outputs or a specific problem in the project. By giving voice to the people that are involved in development issues in Nepal every day, I seek to understand social aspects with development processes from the inside. In the words of Nanda Shrestha;

> development is a human drama, a story of real people with real experiences, a story filled with personal tragedies and traumas, some directly inflicted upon them by the diverse forces of development and others simply cemented by these forces (Shrestha 1997: vi).

This thesis is an inquiry of how the participants in the Formative Research project relates themselves to the goals and intentions of the project, and thus raises questions about what the practical consequences of capacity building strategies are. What consequences do capacity building strategies have for the people that are participants in such projects?

Starting with the assumption that the issue of identity is important in the understanding of the participants' interpretation of their own development, identity is not something that already exists, but constituted through the meanings we provide to our self and others in that specific context (Baaz 2002: 4). Identity is not something established, but an understanding that is constituted through an internal-external dialectic, in which identities are object to constant negotiation between self-definition and definitions offered by others (Jenkins 1996: 20). This study analyzes how experiences in a capacity building context are provided with meaning through the *internal* and *external relations* between the individuals that are involved in the processes of capacity building, and how these experiences come to influence the participant's self-identification. As the development discourse has changed from "us" and "others" to "partnership" and "partners", and the local participants now are ascribed more power and autonomy over their own development process, the local participants will have to negotiate their identity within new frames and experiences. This is visible both in internal conditions in the developing country and the external relationship the country have with the donor. In this study, the discourse of international development is assumed to have influence on how the individuals of a development project define own roles and reflect about their self-image.

Maria Eriksson Baaz (2002, 2005) argues that how the agents involved in development aid experiences their own situation, and how they identify themselves within these experiences, is central in the understanding of development aid in it self. Genuine understandings of what social processes that takes place within social systems of development could only be explored by giving account for the personal and individual thoughts and experiences of local participants. I will employ a more phenomenological approach to capacity building than that of traditionally studies of development, by analyzing how local participants identity themselves within the frames of a capacity building strategy. By doing so, I also wish to shed light on capacity building strategies in general. In the words of C. Wright Mills (1959): the most important task for social science is to relate and understand the complex dynamics that exists between the history and biography of individuals and the systems of society they are a part of. One way of achieving this is to start from where the individuals are – in their institutions, in their work-place, in their daily life.

From this follows a more theoretical dilemma; addressing the *understanding and essence of "capacity building" strategies and the effect of such strategies for sustainable development*. I will address this dilemma towards the end of this thesis, after the three research questions

above have been addressed in chapter 5, 6 and 7. Hopefully, the analysis of these three chapters will provide a background for discussing the effect of such strategies for sustainable development. The concept may have many connotation and meanings, and one object for this thesis is to explore the meaning and content of the concept and the way it is used in the development discourse By analyzing how the local participants in the Formative Research project understand the concept of capacity building the concept will be provided with meaning throughout the thesis. For this reason, the concept will not be given a clear and precise definition at this point.

1.3 THE FORMATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT IN NEPAL[2]

The *Formative Research Project* was a development project within the education sector in Nepal. It was initiated in 2000 with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (UFD) as financial and technical guarantors. In short, "Formative Research" comprised that a team of researchers would follow the ongoing reform processes closely within a certain sector, to give advice on the progress of the reform along the way to the authorities in charge, on how reform activities could be changed or adjusted in order to achieve better effectiveness (NORAD homepage).

In order to improve the education sector in Nepal, the education reform "Basic and Primary Education Program" (BPEP II)[3] was launched by the Ministry of Education in Nepal (MOES). It was carried out from 1999 to 2004 with funds from donors such as the World Bank, EU, Norway, Denmark and Finland. The BPEP II was initiated to secure primary education for the whole population of Nepal, increase the quality of the education, and to develop school management locally and centrally. The main goals of the BPEP II program were to:

- Increase access to basic and primary education, especially for girls and disadvantaged children.
- Raise learning achievements, especially in grades one to three.

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[2] The presentation in this section is based on documents written by the donor. It contains of documents written by UFD as well as information from the official website of NORAD.
[3] Previous to the BPEP II, the Basic and Primary Education Program 1 (BPEP I) was carried out from 1992 to 1998. The main objective of the BPEP I reform was expansion of access to primary education, improvement of quality, and enhancement of the efficiency of the education system. The BPEP I covered 40 of Nepal's 75 school districts, while the BPEP II program covered all the 75 districts (UNESCO 2000).

- Strengthen the institutional capacity at national, district and community level to deliver more efficient basic and primary education services.

(UFD 2003)

The Formative Research project was applied as a sub-project to the BPEP II reform, as a part of Norwegian technical assistance to the reform.

> In addition to being a good way to give technical assistance, Formative Research is also a good way for the Nepalese authorities and the donors to obtain an overview over how a reform or programme develops. (NORAD Homepage, my translation).

The main objective of the Formative Research project in Nepal was to construct a mechanism for collecting data on activities connected to the BPEP II reform, for the purpose of bringing forth information on the strengths and weaknesses of the reform to the Ministry of Education, which was responsible for the reform. The purpose was to hire Nepalese researchers to study the planning, implementation and achievements of the BPEP II reform to determine its overall effectiveness and impact. This permanent research team should follow the reform over a longer period of time, collecting and analyzing their own data. Furthermore, these data would provide feedback to central stakeholders in the education sector. It was a wish to relate social research with practical interests of the government, where the central component was to "produce data and advice on actions to be taken part in the daily governance of policy implementation" (UFD 2003: 1). This was intended to open up for creating a better relationship between *researchers* and *policy makers* within the education sector.

The main agents involved in the Formative Research project were:
- The donor (NORAD/UFD)
- The executing ministry and department (MOES and DOE)
- A research institution in Kathmandu
- An advisory group, containing of researchers, administrators from central, regional and local levels, teachers and other stakeholders

(UFD 2003: 4)

The process of "Formative Research" starts with the Ministry of Education, who formulates topics and questions they need information about connected to the implementation of BPEP II. Then they cooperate with the research institution, who will formulate research questions

based on the topics and questions from the Ministry of Education. Then the researchers will collect data and present an analysis of their findings to a Research Advisory Group. The Research Advisory Group formulates advice on what actions steps to be taken, in order to make necessary changes for improvement in the education sector. On the basis of these reports and advice, the strategies and policies of MOES could be reformulated in order to achieve more effectiveness in the BPEP II reform (UFD 2003: 4). The Formative Research project was thus a tool for *evaluating* the BPEP II during the program period.

Applying "Formative Research" on a development reform had never been carried out in Nepal before, and Formative Research is also a new concept in Norwegian development strategies. The model was first developed as a tool for policy implementation and planning in education system in Norway during the 1990s, when Norway went through a series of education reforms (UFD 2003: 1). The concept was "exported" to Nepal, for the purpose of using it in reforms in the Nepalese education sector (NORAD Homepage). The project was intended to be a *partnership* between the Norwegian Ministry of Research and Education (UFD) and MOES, with finances from NORAD. The two ministries signed A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in April 2000, for the following 4 years.

NORAD and UFD argued that the Formative Research model would be useful for practitioners and implementers of a development reform such as the BPEP II because it offers a "process focus, involvement of various stakeholders, national ownership of the research process" as well as "potential for forming partnerships between donor and recipient trough a direct ministry-to-ministry cooperation" (UFD 2003: 4). When exporting this kind of mechanism to Nepal, which has an education system with totally different preconditions for conducting a reform, the project in itself became a tool to build up *capacity* among bureaucrats in the public education sector. Thus, the project was not only seen as a tool for evaluating the BPEP II reform, but also as a *process-based* model, in which the intention was to raise the awareness on how research-based information could be a basis for policy decisions within the education sector. The aim was to build a culture for *sharing information* within the different levels in the education system, as a lack in communication was believed to cause much of the ineffectiveness in the education system. There was also initiated capacity building activities among Nepalese researchers, in order for them to learn more about research methods, as their research skills were perceived as insufficient.

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Building capacity among local participants in the Formative Research project was thus a main objective of the project. Capacity building was intended to happen in all of the three groups of local participants:

- among *researchers* in the research institution in order to enhance their research skills,
- among *policy makers* in the Ministry of Education (MOES) in order to "change the way of thinking" about research based policy making (CERID 2005: 33).
- and finally among *implementers* in the Department of Education (DOE) in order to "raise the awareness of the positive role of research in implementation" (ibid).

Capacity building could thus be said to happen in both the level of the *individual*, and at an *institutional* level. The goals and strategies of capacity building in the Formative Research project will be further interrogated in chapter 5.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE THESES

Chapter 2, Methodological Considerations, presents reflections about the design of the study, made before, during and after collecting data material and conducting the process of analysis.

Chapter 3, The concept of capacity building: Definitions and clarifications, maps out some central historical trends of development, in order to say something about the "new architecture" and the background for current development strategies. This chapter provides a development of analytical categories which will later be used in order to analyze how the participants relate themselves to the rhetoric of capacity building and how they negotiate about their roles and identity within this discourse.

Chapter 4, Theoretical framework: Negotiating identity, introduces the issue of identity and discusses how participants in development aid projects negotiate their identity in relation to the current development discourse.

Chapter 5, The Formative Research project: Objectives and strategies, analyzes the objectives and goals of the Formative Research project in light of the two analytical categories I developed in chapter 3. This is done in order to detect if the project belong to the "new architecture" of development aid in implementing capacity building strategies. This will provide a background for later to compare the development strategy in the Formative Research project with the practical experiences of the local participants in the practice of the project.

Chapter 6, Understandings of capacity building in the Formative Research project, gives a presentation of how the project participants understand and describe capacity building and how these understandings relates to the analytical categories presented in chapter 3. A main focus is whether there are any differences in the three groups of participants in the Formative Research project when it comes to how they understand capacity building, and how they describe capacity building activities in the project.

Chapter 7, Negotiating Identity: Partner or Recipient?, analyzes how the participants negotiate their identity within the discoursive frames of capacity building. Do they belong to the "new architecture" of development and identity themselves as "partners" or do they identify themselves within the "earlier" rhetoric as "recipients"? This question is sought answered by connecting the participants' self-identification process in relation to the different understandings of capacity building, presented in chapter 6.

Chapter 8, Concluding remarks, summarizes and draw the lines between the different chapters. Based on the discussion throughout this thesis, some final concluding remark is given about the coherence between theory and practice of "capacity building" in the Formative Research project. As a final point, I discuss the understanding and the essence of "capacity building" strategies in general and the effect of such strategies for sustainable development.

2. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter introduces how I approached the empirical study of the participants in the Formative Research project, and what reflections I have made around the design of the study. My choice of qualitative methodology as an approach to the empirical case served as an inspiration for many of the analytical choices made later in the research process. Therefore, this chapter introduces what methodological conceptions I have been inspired of in the study, the progress of the research process, what methodological tools I have used and how I have used them, and lastly I discuss the generalizability of the study.

2.1 APPROACHING THE FIELD AND CHOICE OF STRATEGIES

Choice of methodological approach shall preferably be a choice of the methods best suited to shed light over the research field and questions. What methods one uses as research tools therefore becomes a consideration of which side of the social reality one wish to illuminate. Choice of methodology is therefore choice of strategies. In the process of compiling the methodological design of the theses, I had nominal knowledge and no personal experience from the Formative Research project in Nepal. Before deciding upon my research questions and choice of methods, I therefore made a 3 days visit to the NORAD headquarter in Oslo to collect background material on the Formative Research Project. The archives in NORAD helped me with documents about the project, and I also had the opportunity to talk to three persons that had played a central role in the planning and implementation of the Formative Research Project, two in NORAD and one in the Ministry of Education (UFD). This gave me a preliminary data material to start my inquiry.

When analyzing the preliminary data I realized that there was no reference to what specific activities the Nepalese participants should be involved with, and that the project goals was only concerned about the cooperation between the research institution and the Ministry of Education in Nepal (MOES). It seemed to be taken for granted what activities the individuals in these institutions should engage in order for such exchange in information to take place. This awareness made me curious about what role the people in these institutions played, and how they experience the processes that take place. As my interest was not to look at what actual results the project had achieved, but to find out more about the personal experiences of

the people in the project, I turned to qualitative methods for inspiration. In Tove Thagaard (1998) words, the main goal of qualitative methods is to capture the reality the way it is perceived by the people that is the objective for the research. Qualitative methods were therefore a suitable tool to shed light over my research problem.

SENSITIVITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

When developing the research questions for this study, my aim was to develop questions that could illuminate some of the "taken for granted" ideas that exist within the development discourse. Social science researchers' first and foremost objective is to offer new perspectives on the problems and issues of individuals and the society (Mills 1959). However, the research situation in the field is unanticipated, and thus one can not follow predicted "rules" (Hammersly and Atkinson 1996: 53). Not having defined and specific research questions provided flexibility when making use of qualitative methods, and opened up for the possibility of capturing more of the complexity of the topic. For this reason, I found it applicable to approaching the field with open ended research questions and to develop the questions throughout the research process. A number of researchers, first and foremost Glaser and Strauss (1967), have emphasized the advantage of generating theory from systematic data collection in the field, rather than conducting pure desk studies. To inhabit an open, or "*sensitive*", attitude for the observations in the field is considered as constructive in this perspective, and having a specific and delimited research problem could diminish this sensitivity (Christensen 1998: 80). Questions like this can only be answered by looking beyond the most apparent social processes, and by the use of the sensitivity that social science provides (Silverman 2001: 9).

ACCESS TO THE FIELD AND RESPONDENTS

Getting information about the personal experiences of the participants of the Formative Research project could best be achieved by meeting the participants face to face, and thus a fieldwork in Nepal was considered as essential. Qualitative methods gave the opportunity to form a nuanced picture of personal thoughts and experiences of the participants in the project. Thoughts and opinions of individuals may be expressed trough social norms and values, which may only be partly conscious to the individual. These norms can still be captured trough an analysis of expressed thought, opinions and emotions related to the present

phenomenon, the way it could be expressed trough qualitative research tools like interviews and observation.

In order to get access to the people in the institutions in the Formative Research project, I needed a door opener. I wanted to interview people working in the research institution in Kathmandu, in the Ministry of Education (MOES) and in the Department of Education (DOE). I sent e-mails to the directors of each of the institutions, and presented myself as a master student writing a thesis on the Formative Research Project and that I wanted to come to Nepal to learn from their personal experiences of the people involved in the project. The e-mails were positively welcomed, and expressed that I was most welcome to visit the institutions and to talk to the researchers. I thus had one contact person in the research intuition and one in the ministry established before I came to Nepal, which undoubtedly simplified the start of my project. These persons lead me to other relevant resource persons, who were very helpful for recruiting respondents, and thus my sample of respondents was collected by chain and snowball method. My respondents were not randomly selected and thus cannot be regarded as "representative" in a statistical sense. They are however, reflecting the social and historical context of the institutions they work in, and such information was more relevant for me than generating statistical representative data. One advantage of the snow-ball method was that I was personally introduced to most of my respondents through a person they knew, belonging to the same network. Being personally introduced made the atmosphere around the interview less formal, and this made it possible to obtain both "public" as well as "personal" information from my respondents.

2.2 INTERVIEWS

RESPONDENTS

My interview material consists of 12 tape recorded and fully transcribed interviews with persons that were or had been involved as participants in the Formative Research Project. In addition I conducted 8 other interviews that were not taped. The interviews ranged from 20 minutes to 1 hour in length and most of the interviews took place in the offices of my interviewees. I also had formal and informal conversations with several other people

connected to the project. My respondents belong to these groups in the Formative Research project[4]:

- Policy makers an project superiors
- Researchers
- Implementers

In a strictly male-dominated area such as research and bureaucratic work in Nepal, it was not easy to find many females respondents. Therefore, only 5 of the 19 people I had conversations with, was female, and all others were with men. My respondents are all Nepali-speaking, but the interviews were conducted in English. All of my respondents spoke fairly good English, as they are used to communicating in English with donors. Almost all of my respondents are of a high caste.

I also had conversation with several NORAD staff, both consultants in the NORAD headquarter in Oslo and NORAD staff working at the Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu. Although these conversations were not taped and did not have the structure of an interview, they provided much insight to the daily life of people representing the donor in the Formative Research project. I found it useful to actually have a "face" to put on the documents and formally strategies NORAD have, as their stories made me realize the very complexity of a development project. Their experiences from it did not reflect the "simplified" reality one finds in documents. Rather, they experienced that things not always turn out as expected, and this was the reality they had to deal with. Agreements that was misunderstood, not followed up etc, made it necessary to be creative and "invent" new solutions along the way. The NORAD staff was the ones that first introduced me to a development project beyond what the rhetoric of documents could provide, and their stories made me realize the huge complexity of the Formative Research project as development project, and also the very complexity that lies beneath the relationship between the donor and the developing country in such a project.

THE INTERVIEW SITUATION

The interaction between interviewer and interviewee could be decisive for the progress in the interview. Tove Thagaard (1998) writes that the response of the respondent is closely connected to how she perceives the interviewer. The social dissimilarity between research and

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[4] See appendix B, for a more detailed list of respondents.

respondent, as well as gender and age of the researcher will influence the situation (Thagaard 1998: 91). Thagaard further writes that social dissimilarity between the researcher and respondent may lead to the researcher being categorized as "superior" (ibid). The fact that I was a Norwegian, trying to learn more about a project which is economical funded by the Norwegian government, might have colored my respondents stories about the Formative Research Project. I sometimes felt that some of my respondents connected me to this project in a way different from witch was my actual role. I was careful to explain that I was a student and that I had no connection to NORAD as such. I explained that my intention was to find out more about this project for research purpose, and not on the commission for NORAD. But despite such explanations, I felt that many of them were careful to not say anything that might give a negative impression of the project.

When interviewing, I started with general questions, before I moved to more specific questions later in the interview. This pattern was only partly done on purpose. When doing the first interviews I had an interview-guide, with some topics and questions I wanted to ask. However, I soon realized that the respondents did not answer all of my questions, and many talked rather generally about the project. Actually it was sometimes quite difficult to get some of them to talk about specific incidents in the project. They seemed to tell me about idealized situations in the project, such as how positive it was to cooperate with the Norwegian ministry, and not actual personal experiences from the project. However, on direct questions about their personal experiences, the answers could sometimes reveal that the project did not work as well as intended after all. At the time I was there, the research institute was heading towards signing a new 5-year contract for the Formative Research Project, which would provide the institute 5 year with work. I suspected that because I was a Norwegian my respondent's answers could be colored of a wish to make a good impression. However, it is almost impossible – also in daily life - to guarantee that people are not telling a modified version of how they experience the world, depending on whom they are speaking with. What people answer to interview questions does not necessarily always relate to ho they behave in natural occurring situations (Silverman 2001: 232). Nevertheless, even if this could not be totally controlled, I was careful to be conscious about it in the interview situation.

I was also met with understanding and sympathy because I was a young student with little research experience. I experienced that the people was very interested in my work and were enthusiastic to answer my questions. Especially the researchers were eager to help, and

wished me well with my research. Thagaard (1998) writes that being a young student may be an advantage as he or she will not be perceived as threatening or authoritative. I felt this was the case in my meeting with my respondents.

The fact that I was from a completely different country could also be regarded as positive in the interview situation. Thagaard (1998) writes that outsiders can in fact take advantage of being new to the situation and thus be in position to ask more detailed and specific questions than other vice. This was also the case with my meeting with my respondents. That I was new to the project, and the culture, made me able to inhabit a position where I could ask questions about what is taken for granted by a person in that culture (Thagaard 1998).

Interestingly, the five women I interviewed seem to be talking more "freely" than their male colleagues, and had in fact many more critical reflections on the Formative Research Project than any of my male respondents. Tove Thagaard (1998: 93-94) writes that an interview situation where researchers and respondent are of same gender could form a "common understanding". Jocelyn Cornwell (1984) employs the concept "sisterhood" to explain the relationship with her female respondents in her interview study. She says she appealed to what is common to women in their life experiences, and that this provided a vehicle for overcoming inequalities between the interviewer and interviewee (Cornwell 1984: 12-13). I felt that the atmosphere in the interviews with women was easier than with my male respondents, and I also experienced that women contacted me more often than men did to ask about me and my research. The women also shared more information about their own role in the Formative Research project and personal opinions of the project, and thus also "personal" issues, than most of my male respondents. The men seemed to be more insecure in how to approach the interview situation and had less to say about personal matters in relation to the Formative Research project. One of my researcher respondents even said before the interview that he talks like two persons, one connected to his profession, and one that was his personal opinions.

TAPE RECORDING

Of the 20 interviews I conducted, 8 of them were not recorded. There are several reasons for this. Some of the conversations were so short that it was rather unpractical to tape. This was a very busy period for both the researchers and the ministry people, and many did not have very

much of their time to share, sometimes as little as 10 minutes. Three of my respondents specifically asked me not to tape the conversations with them. Some of them argued that they simply felt that we could have a better conversation without letting the tape-recorder interfere.

Even if my interviews contained no sensitive data[5], some people were still reluctant to let me tape the conversation. Thus, the topic for the interviews could be interpreted as sensitive for them in other ways. There can be several explanations for this. One thing is that a master thesis is a public document. Some of the respondents might have worried that they would be recognized. I think many worried about that they might say something that could be conceived in a negative way by others, and especially by their employers. The relief my respondents expressed when I ensured them that it would not be able to recognize them could be an indicator for this. In addition, there is no culture for being critical to authorities or other persons in Nepal[6], and I have to be aware that many of my respondents feel that their statements can be viewed as critique of the project in a certain way. Again I believe I had an advantage in being a young student. Several of my respondents said that they normally would have had questions against the conversation being taped, but because I was just a student they felt it was OK. Still, there was some skepticism amongst many of my respondents when it came to letting me interview them, and especially to tape the conversation.

During the interviews that were not taped, I took notes during the conversations. Taking notes instead of recording may take away agony and stress in knowing that everything the respondent says will be recorded. This can make the respondent less selective in their utterances, and thus give more complementary answers. On the other hand, one can not be sure that the researcher includes the main points in the notes. (Silverman 2001: 161). Because of this, I will not use any direct quotes from the interviews which I did not tape, but only use them generally to support other quotes.

ANONYMIZATION

My respondents belong to relative small groups of people, and are therefore easily recognizable. Consequently, I have made some steps to anonymize them as much as possible.

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[5] Gender, race, religion or politics are commonly viewed as criteria when deciding if the data material is sensitive, and are used as indicators for if there is a need to anonymize the respondents.
[6] See Appendix A, section on *The Ministry of Education, Nepal (MOES),* for an analysis of bureaucratic culture in Nepal.

All of my respondents agreed that I could use their statements for my thesis, both the ones I taped and the ones did not tape. Before starting the interview I explained that they would be anonymous and would not be able to be recognized. Several mentioned this as a criterion for letting me interview them, and many were relieved when I told them that they would not be recognized. I also told them that the tapes would be maculated when I was finish with them. I have made the following steps for anonyminizing my respondents:

First of all, I do not refer directly to one persons statements, but generalize them by saying such as "one of my respondents said that…" or "several meant that…". I also cluster them in groups to make them as less recognizable as possible. As I elaborated above, I have three main groups: "*policy makers and project superiors*", "*researchers*" and "*implementers*". I also refer to all my respondents as male, to make the group as anonymous as possible, in despite 5 of my respondents being women. The respondents are given a random number for reference.

Second, some of my respondents have a position that is only occupied by one person, and mentioning this position would make this person highly recognizable. I consider that it is not necessary to mention the direct position to get a full understanding of the person's statements. Rather, I will refer to these persons as a "senior" wherever it is relevant, as the length of experience is sometimes relevant for understanding their opinions. There is only one important exception to this. The only person that is mentioned by position, and also has been given a pseudonym, is the Norwegian advisor. This person is quite often referred to by my respondents and it is important that the reader understands who they are talking about. This is because the Norwegian advisor is seen as a representative for the donor, the local participants' interpretations of this person become central to how they define their relationship with the donor. Thus, it is relevant for the presentation of the analysis that the Norwegian advisor is mention by position. This means that he could be in position to be recognized by persons that has been involved in the project and has been in contact or heard of this person. However, I do not consider this a major problem, as I am not interested in this person himself, and the information my respondents give about this person is not sensitive or personal. The information provided through out this thesis about this person is only connected to the job as a Norwegian advisor in a development project.

A third step for anonymizing my respondents is not using direct transcribed quotations. There are several reasons for this. First of all, some of my respondents had a characteristic way of talking, which could reveal their identity to people who know them. Second, that they are talking with me in a second language. Most of my respondents are high-class and highly respected people in their environment. To present direct quotation from the transcriptions, with the possible mispronouncing and grammatically mistakes a transcription from oral speech can have, could in some cases be considered as offensive. Thus, in consideration of my respondents' integrity and anonymity, I have chosen to re-write some of the quotation wherever I find it necessary. This is an example of how I have re-written the quotations. This is the original transcription from the interview:

> Yeh, yeh, I think in two year… in second years course… during second years time, we were very confident, and the involvement of the people from the ministry and department… ah… it went very nicely… ah…

This is the formatted one, used in the text:

> Yes, during the second year we were very confident and the involvement of the ministry and department went nicely.

Re-writing the direct quotations could by some be defined as a break in research rules for *reliability* (Silverman 2001). However, as the re-writings do not change the meaning of the quote, I consider the integrity of my respondents to me of more importance than the question of reliability in this case.

2.3 OBSERVATION IN THE FIELD: CAPTURING THE UNSPOKEN

My fieldwork took place in Nepal in October and November 2004. I spent most time in Kathmandu, where I visited the research institution and the ministry and department. As I spent my days among researchers and ministry people, observation became an important data gathering method. Sometimes I had an appointment, and sometimes I just came there on my own. Most of the times when I already had an appointment, I was able to arrange meetings with several others while I was there. Sometimes I had to wait for longer periods for appointments later in the day, which was an excellent opportunity for me to get a glimpse of daily life at the office and to have formal and informal conversations with several people connected to the project. It was also a good opportunity to get in touch with people that I don't necessarily would have met with the help of the senior officers, like secretaries, younger

researchers and such. One contact in MOES, for instance, seemed to think that I would have no use of talking to people that held "lower" positions in the Formative Research Project. According to him I would profit more from talking to people that had been involved in higher levels of the project, and thus the people he recommended me to speak to were in high positions only. These people had been actively involved in the project for the whole period and had undoubtedly a lot of experience to share. But I was more interested to know about the experience of people involved at different levels in the Formative Research project. As I had the opportunity to stay for longer or shorter periods in these institutions, I was able to get other respondents on my own. And the opinions and experiences they shared with me, proved to be of a different character than the more experiences people, and would become just a useful source of information.

Observation in the field allows getting valuable information for the researcher, both methodological and analytical. It allows creating a image of the people in focus of the research, and thus knowledge about the social system one studies. The researcher also gets insight in why people think and act the way they do, and how they relate to themselves and their social network. Much of this knowledge is *tacit*[7], meaning that it might not be directly visible or observable. Respondents might not express all information by verbalizing it or express it directly. However, the researcher can acquire understanding of this knowledge trough apprehensions and feelings etc. in his meeting with them (Christensen 1998: 82).

The skill to capture the unspoken in the field is an important aspect of what C. Wright Mills calls the *sociological imagination.* This ability makes the social researcher able to look beyond the "taken for granted" in society. According to Mills, the personal experiences of a researcher should be integrated into his professional work:

> your past plays into and affect your present […] As a social scientists, you have to control this rather elaborate interplay, to capture what you experience and sort it out (Mills 1959: 196)

This, Mills argues, makes the researcher able to use his experience to guide and test his reflections, and in this process shape himself as an *intellectual craftsman* (Mills 1959). A part of Mills' notion of intellectual craftsmanship is the need to take notes, or "keep a journal"

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[7] The concept of "tacit knowledge" was introduced by Polanyi (1966), who distinguished between explicit knowledge and knowledge that is not able to be made explicit (tacit knowledge)

(Mills 1959: 196). Such notes allow to use personal experience and to relate this directly to the research in progress:

> It also encourages you to capture "fringe-thought": various ideas which may be by-products of everyday life, snatches of conversation overheard in the street, or, for that matters, dreams. Once noted, these will lead to systematic thinking, as well as lend intellectual relevance to more direct experience. (Mills 1959: 196).

One illustrative example of this can be the issue of culturally biased dress codes. In Nepal, most women wear either a s*ari* or a *punjabi* in public[8]. When I, after a week or so, had been to a tailor and acquired a punjabi, I experienced that the way Nepalese people looked at me and talked to me, somehow changed. People I incidentally met on the street or on the bus often commented that I wore a "*nice punjabi*", even if the punjabi was not expensive or had a special design that made it particularly "nice". I interpret this to be because it was a *foreigner* that was wearing a punjabi that made it "nice". My respondents also commented this, and indicated that they liked that I dressed in coherence to the Nepalese dress-code for women, and I feel that the way I was welcomed was different from the situations where I wore the punjabi to the meeting and where I was not. The meetings were I wore the punjabi more often turned out to be more "personal" than the others. That we were sharing the cultural biases for the dress code might have made the conversation more easy, resulting that I were able to draw out more "personal" data from these than the others.

My field notes includes notes made after informal conversations as well as the notes on incorporating culture and observations of things I noticed in the surroundings around me. However, it is impossible to write down things in so accurate descriptions that you can recall the memory exactly as it was originally, one has to make selections. And these active choices I had to make all the time, undoubtedly colored by the situation I was in, making the data material colored by analytical reflections I had at that time. However, C. Wright Mill's ideas about letting such personal experiences be a part of the research process in it self, has been of inspiration for the later systemizing and analysis of the data material.

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[8]A sari is composed by a tight top, embraced by several meters of silk garment in bright colors. A punjabi consists of a pair of trousers with a knee-long, short sleeved dress over it, and a long scarf neatly draped around the shoulders.

2.4 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Analysis of documents was conducted both prior to and after the field work. Prior to the fieldwork in Nepal I conducted a 3-days visit to NORAD in Oslo. In the NORAD archives I got access to all documents about the Formative Research Project that was available in NORAD. Even if I collected most relevant documents before leaving for my fieldwork, some obviously relevant documents were only available in Nepal. Most documents not available in NORAD were found in the archives of the Norwegian embassy in Kathmandu. Others were available at the research institution connected to the Formative Research project, the Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID) in Kathmandu, and in the Ministry of Education (MOES). As I had chosen a "grounded" methodological approach and did not have specific research questions, I did not know exactly what documents would be of interest later. Therefore, I collected and made copies of as much documents, pamphlets, reports, articles and contracts that was available.

When I started sorting out and categorizing the data material, however, I found that many of the document I collected was not suited to shed light over the research questions that emerged along the process. But even if most of the documents I collected are not used directly, by for instance quoting them in the text, much of the literature provided a very good insight to various stages of the project, and became valuable *background material*. For example, many of the documents I collected in NORAD, like correspondence and e-mail between NORAD staff, budgets, memoirs, appraisals and evaluations, was valuable to get insight in how and why NORAD initiated the Formative Research project, and what criteria's they emphasized as important[9].

Document analysis is conducted mainly in chapter 5, which analyzes the objectives and strategies in the Formative Research project for the purpose of making a foundation for comparing the theory and practice of capacity building in the Formative Research project.

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[9] This part of the document analysis was in fact what made realize that NORAD was actually arguing that they were conducting a "new" type of development, and that they distinguished themselves from strategies used by many other donors. This question will be more thoroughly dealt with in chapter 3: *The concept of capacity building: Definitions and understandings*.

2.5 FROM DATA TO ANALYSIS

MY ROLE AS A "WESTERN" WHEN DOING RESEARCH ON DEVELOPMENT INFLUENCED BY WESTERN IDEAS

Nanda Shrestha opens his book *In the name of development: a reflection on Nepal,* by introducing how he is biased by "colonial mindset" because of his western tradition, after immigrating to USA from Nepal 25 years ago:

> While I hope the real life stories, narrated in [my] book, reveal enough to inform the readers of how development has brought undue sufferings to countless citizens, I cannot claim that I have overcome my colonial mindset. It is still with me, and aches me like a lingering headache. (Shrestha 1997: i).

This, he claims, makes it difficult to acquire a critical point of view to contemporary development because it is difficult to manage to overcome this mindset and criticize development from a different viewpoint than the ones we are used to. This reflection is also found in my experiences in my study of development processes in Nepal. I can not be sure that I do not perceive the development processes that take place in Nepal trough a "colonial mindset", predisposed by my academic upbringing in the West. Thus, working with this project, this has also come to be a journey in development theory, where I ended up taking a more critical standpoint to western development ideas than what I had in the beginning. However, this journey did not come easy and still my "colonial mindset" is not easy to override or overcome.

GENERALIZABILITY

When using a qualitative methodology, the sample is rarely big, and thus representative enough, to make *generalizations* for a whole population. This is neither the case nor the purpose for my research. This thesis wish to shed light over some of the opinions that exists about Formative Research Project among Nepalese participants in the project. I am not interested in the whole and true picture of all of the people involved, but rather in-depth information about their experiences. But this obviously does not mean that every other person working in the same department would have the same opinions. However, as Jennifer Mason puts it: "Qualitative studies should […] produce explanations which are generalizable in some way, or which have a wider resonance" (Mason 1996: 6, quoted in Silverman 2001: 249).

This is also my point when I relate my study of the Nepalese participant's experiences with the Formative Research project with the notion of identity[10].

In social research it is important to ask questions about the consistency of the research findings, and this is what social scientists refer to as *reliability*. As I had chosen an exploring approach to the research I varied my questions after witch person I talked to, as my respondents had different aspects they could enlighten. The point was not to compare how the respondents answers the same questions to reveal patterns of behavior, but to get as much information as possible from their experiences of the relationship between the donor and developing country in a development project.

2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has given an overview of some of the most important methodological considerations made before, during and after my fieldwork in Nepal. The first part of the chapter treated how I approached the field and what methodological strategies I chose. Aiming to illuminate the "taken for granted" about development aid I chose to approach the field with open research questions and thus had a sensitive attitude to the field. The next part introduced my informants and treated how I conducted interviews and what problems and challenges occurred during the interview situation. I also accounted for challenges that occurred when tape-recording and the need for anonymization of my respondents. Next, I presented some reflections about observation in the field, and how I made use of C. Wright Mills' concept of "intellectual craftsmanship" to capture the unspoken reality of the participants in the Formative Research project when doing observation in the field.

By employing both interviews and observation methods, I have been able to illuminate both what was explicit communicated through the interviews with project participants, but also what was *unspoken* among the project participants. My choice of qualitative methodology as an approach to the empirical case served as an inspiration for many of the analytical choices made later in the research process. This makes the methodological considerations made in this

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[10] See chapter 4, *Theoretical framework: Negotiating identity*, for a discussion of how personal experiences from capacity building in the Formative Research project could be connected to the issue of identity.

chapter relevant for the understanding of the following chapters, and especially the chapters which analyses the participants in the Formative Research project.

3. THE CONCEPT OF CAPACITY BUILDING: DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The aim of this chapter is to explore the concept of "*capacity building*", in order to develop an analytical framework that allows studying the Nepalese participants' own experiences from capacity building in the Formative Research project. Defining the concept of capacity building is not easy. For instance, what is meant with "capacity"? And is there really an adequate description of how capacity can be built? Because of the ambiguousness of the development discourse itself, the concept needs to be clarified for the purpose of using it analytically. By exploring the changes in rhetoric about what capacity building is and how capacity could be built, I will be able to discuss contradictions within capacity building as a development strategy, and in the prolonging of this, understand how such contradictions also can come to influence individual's understandings and experiences of own development. This is later done in the analysis by locating the experiences of individuals in the context of wider trends in international development.

Section 3.1 gives a historical introduction to important changes in the development discourse and how the concept of capacity building has come to be more and more emphasized the last decades. Much literature about capacity building is characterized by *idealized* notions and definitions, contrasting potential experienced difficulties of *practicing* capacity building strategies. The theme of contrasting theory and practice of capacity building in the Formative Research project in Nepal provides a background to the analysis of local participants in the project, and section 3.2 gives an overview of the manner in which current literature and debates define and discuss capacity building. Section 3.3 aims to explain how certain characteristics of my data material lead to the development of the analytical categories. Section 3.4 introduces central aspects within these categories. The last section discusses how processes of capacity building must be seen in relation to aspects of autonomy, ownership and power.

3.1 HISTORICAL TRENDS IN DEVELOPMENT: MOVING TOWARDS CAPACITY BUILDING

On the 20th of January 1949, the American President Harry Truman held his inaugural speech, outlining his views of the world in the early years of the Cold War. In this speech, Truman proposed the Point Four Program: a *Technical Assistance* program to the poor countries of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The rhetoric in this speech laid the foundation for what was to become an accepted and established concept of what development is suppose to be:

> We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas (Truman 1949, quoted in Shah 2003: 2)

One of the important consequences of Point Four was that it introduced and established the idea of "underdevelopment" as a synonym for "economic backwardness" (Shah 2003: 2). Up to this point in time, development was something that just happened; nothing could be done to stimulate it or change its course once it began. This idea suggested that development could, in fact, be stimulated and planned and that all poor countries could eventually be developed with the right guidance and policies. Underdevelopment was not the opposite of development, but rather development "waiting to happen" (Shah 2003: 2), and development was something that could be attained by all as if it was a linear process (Lopes 2003: 122).

Alf Morten Jerve (2002) argues that because of this linear approach to development, the donors at that time failed to consider the importance of analyzing how the local institutions and bureaucracies functioned: "Believing that public institutions in developing countries by and large functioned like our own, there was little attention to institutional analysis" (Jerve 2002: 7). Rather, the emphasis was on strengthening the existing institutions, and filling the institutional gap with injections of their "know-how" (Fukuda-Parr et al. 2002). "It was a matter of enhancing the capacity and efficiency of the institutions, and rarely did one question the motives and incentives of the people working in Third World government institutions" (Jerve 2002: 7). The "problem" of underdevelopment could be solved if poor countries followed the same development path as the rich countries in the west, towards a similar destination. Such ideas derived from a perspective where all that is western is good and desirable, and where modernization is synonymous with westernization. The 1950s and 1960s were thus dominated by what has come to be called the "modernization perspective", with enormous optimism in the possibility and need to secure rapid growth in underdeveloped countries (Hulme and Turner 1990: 34).

However, development evaluations done in the 1970s and 1980s showed that technical assistance during the previous decades had not led to the anticipated results, and many even claimed that poor countries had become dependent on the development support from the West. Many technical assistance projects from this period have later been criticized for being strongly controlled by the donor, undermining the effect of the aid. Fukuda-Parr et al. argues that technical assistance in the 1960, 70 and 80s was based on two mistaken assumptions: 1) that existing capacity could be replaced by knowledge and systems produced elsewhere, and 2) that donors could control the process and yet consider the developing countries to be equal partners (Fukuda-Parr et al. 2002: 8). Because of this, Fukuda-Parr et al. argues, development projects have undermined local capacity, distorted national priorities, been fragmenting and expensive, and ignored local wishes on behalf of measurable projects (Fukuda-Parr et al. 2002). The international development discourse has changed since then, especially after 1990, laying increasing emphasis on the role of local "*capacity*" in institutions and people in developing countries. In an assessment of technical assistance, published in 1993, Elliot Berg commented:

> Almost everybody acknowledges the ineffectiveness of technical cooperation in what is or should be its major objective: achievement of greater self-reliance in the recipient countries by building institutions and strengthening local capacities in national economic management. Despite 30 years of a heavy technical assistance presence and much training, local institutions remain weak and this type of assistance persists (Berg 1993: 244).

Réal Lavergne (2005) argues that the development rhetoric changed around 1990, and that "*the capacity development paradigm*"[11] came into existence around this time. This paradigm focuses on development as an

> endogenous process of change that outside partners can influence but not drive of 'do' as might be implied in other models (Lavergne 2005).

Implicit in Lavergne's definition of the capacity development paradigm lays a critique of earlier development paradigms. Lavergne argues that earlier paradigms have assumed that

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[11] While Lavergne (2005) writes about a "capacity development" paradigm, parts of the literature use the concept "capacity building" to refer to the process of building up or enhancing local capacity. In this thesis, "capacity building" and "capacity development" will be addressed as synonyms. This might not necessarily be the case in all current literature and some might attach the two concepts different meaning. For example, the term "capacity building" came into the development discourse at an earlier stage than "capacity development", and therefore have connotations of terms that was usual in earlier development approaches, like for instance "donor support" and "technical assistance" (Whyte 2005: 23). However, this thesis does not considered as relevant to address the differences between these two concepts. I choose to look into the concept of "capacity building" throughout this thesis rather than the whole "capacity development paradigm", in order to delimit the study.

knowledge and capacity can be "transferred" from the donor to the developing country through technical assistance (ibid). The capacity development paradigm, on the other hand, is forging local "*ownership*" and emphasizes endogenous processes and systems as the appropriate entry points for development assistance. The concept of capacity was introduced in order to explain why previous development projects had not given the anticipated results, and shifted the focus from economical issues to a focus on *people* and institutions in developing country countries. The capacity development paradigm thus differs from previous paradigms due to its emphasis on development as local, or *endogenous*, processes.

3.2 WHAT IS MEANT BY "CAPACITY BUILDING"?

Since the 1990s, the concept of "capacity building" as a development strategy has gained increasingly popularity among development agencies around the world. Anne Whyte (2004) argues that although most donors of development aid today are stressing the aspect of capacity building in their development strategies. However, when it comes to being clear about what they mean, or developing some operational principles on how this should happen in practice, most lack clear definitions of the concept and operationalizations concerning its practice. Few donors have gone beyond some general policy statements. "The assumption seems to be that we all know what we mean" (Whyte 2004: 23). Although the concept is subject to discussion in the international donor community and current research is in progress about capacity building, Whyte argues that "no overall theory of capacity building yet exists" (Whyte 2004: 23). The concept also has very *positive* connotations and associations, and the meaning seems to be taken for granted without further interrogation about how capacity building could be achieved in practice.

In every day speech, "capacity" is used in many different ways, and is often used as a synonym for skill, meaning the capacity to perform or accomplish something. Merriam Webster's Dictionary defines capacity as:

> an individual's mental or physical *ability* (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 2001: 168, my emphasis).

However, this general definition does not give an answer to the questions like: *ability to what*, and *whose ability*? According to the homepage of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP),

> Capacity is the ability of individuals, organizations and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve goals. (UNDP Capacity Homepage)

Capacity was integrated into the vocabulary of development agencies during the 1990s, along with the growing realization that questions of poverty could not be addressed merely by technical and economic solutions. In this context, capacity usually refers to something that could be developed or enhanced in order to achieve sustainable development. The World Bank adds in their definition of capacity building, that helping developing countries to "build their capacities" is in fact the *objective* for development aid:

> Capacity is a complex concept to define. However, at the heart of the international development consensus is the notion that capacity is the ability of individuals, institutions, and societies to solve problems, make informed choices, define their priorities and plan their futures. The objective of aid assistance is to help developing countries build their capacities, that is boost their ability to achieve their development goals (The World Bank Capacity building Resource Centre: http://web. worldbank.org).

Fukuda-Parr et al (2002) emphasizes that capacity building needs to be addressed at three levels: *individual*, *institutional* and *societal*. They stress that all of these layers of capacity are mutually interdependent: "If one or the other is pursued on its own, development becomes skewed and inefficient" (Fukuda-Parr et al 2002: 10). Building capacity at the level of the *individual* involves

> enabling individuals to embark on a continuous process of learning – building on existing knowledge and skills, and extending these in new directions as fresh opportunities appear (Fukuda-Parr et al 2002: 9)

However, capacity building does not only take place in individuals,

> "but also between them, in the institutions and the network they create – through what has been termed the "social capital" that holds societies together" (Fukuda-Parr et al 2002: 9).

Institutional capacity is not just the sum of total individual capacities. It is "a much richer and more complex concept that weaves individual strengths into a stronger and more resilient fabric" (Fukuda-Parr et al 2002: 9). Institutional capacity building also involves building on existing capacity, and involves that donors can not conduct in building new institutions based on foreign blue-prints, but must encourage existing institutions to grow (Fukuda-Parr et al 2002: 9). Finally, capacity building must happen at the level of the *society* in developing countries, which includes creating opportunities that enable people to use and expand their capacities to the fullest (Fukuda-Parr et al 2002: 9).

> Without such opportunities, people will find that their skills rapidly erode, or become obsolete. And if they find no opportunities locally, trained people will join the brain drain and take their skills overseas (Fukuda-Parr et al 2002: 9).

Fukuda-Parr et al's definitions of the three types of capacity building will prove as an analytical tool in the analysis of processes of capacity building in the Formative Research project, with a special emphasis on the *individual* and *institutional* levels. The *societal* level will be treated towards the end of the thesis.

The idea that building the capacity among people, institutions and society in developing countries should contribute to sustainable development, naturally poses questions about *how* capacity actually can be built. What theory of change underlies the new awareness about capacity building in development strategies? Ann Whyte (2004) argues that some donors are more concerned by using the concept, than explaining how capacity should be built in practice in the developing countries. I will come back to different ways to understand how capacity could be built in section 3.4.

3.3 CLARIFYING AND DEVELOPING ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES

In this thesis, "capacity building" is treated both as a phenomenon in development discourse, as well as an *analytical category*. However, using capacity building as an analytical concept is contradictory as it is a concept invented by donors of development aid, within a development context. It is filled with meanings and connotations that is influenced by current development discourses, and therefore it can not be used as an analytical category as such. For the purpose of conducting a sociological analysis of capacity building, it is thus necessary to clarify and operationalize the concept. My empirical data material is used as a starting point for the operationalization of the concept of capacity building into analytical categories through which the participant's opinions can be understood, and thus reflect a way to understand the participants in the Formative Research project on their own premises.

I started my inquiry of the Formative Research project in Nepal, by going to the NORAD headquarter to gather documents[12] that described the project. Many of the documents I collected in NORAD proved valuable in providing insight to how and why NORAD initiated

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[12] These documents were budgets, memoirs, appraisals and evaluations, as well as correspondence and e-mail between NORAD staff.

the Formative Research project, as well as which criteria's they emphasized as important. The rhetoric used in these documents made me realize that NORAD was arguing that they were actually conducting a "new" type of development, and that they distinguished themselves from development strategies used by many other donors. This observation was supported by most of the NORAD staff I spoke to, through claiming their (NORAD's) development strategies as more "innovative" than others'. For example, one of them called the Formative Research project a "*pioneering work of development*", indicating that this project represented something new within the development context. The NORAD staff also claimed to be involved in a different type of development than their Danish colleagues of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)[13]. DANIDA, they claimed, was focusing too much of their resources on small scale projects and technical assistance, while NORAD was supposedly focusing on long term development. As noted in the annual NORAD report 2002: "Much more than building schools, we are helping to build nations" (NORAD 2002b: 5), indicating that focusing on long term development by supporting nation building is considered as better than focusing on small scale projects. It seems as if NORAD has changed their strategies, and that the strategies they are forging now is "newer and better". This is in line with the changes in development strategies that happened in the early 1990s, described in the first section of this chapter, where increasing emphasis was laid on internal conditions for development in the developing countries, where the role of local institutions and people played an important role.

The fact that NORAD distinguished themselves from other donors became relevant for the development of my research design for the fieldwork, and contributed directly to my decision to look more thoroughly into whether any differences existed between the "new" development approach, which NORAD referred to, and "earlier" development approaches. During the fieldwork in Nepal the object was therefore to explore what opinions the local participants in the Formative Research project had about their own development, and whether this corresponded with NORAD's "new" approach. When I interviewed the participants, I discovered that these patterns could actually be traced in line with a distinction between "new" and "earlier" development approaches, as the participants' opinions could be divided

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[13] NORAD and DANIDA is cooperating about development projects in several countries, amongst others the Basic and Primary Education Program (BPEP II) in Nepal.

into two different development approaches. Thus, both NORAD staff and my respondents in the Formative Research project talked about the "new" type of development.

When reading literature about capacity building, I found that others had also emphasized the distinction between different types of development. David Ellerman (2002, 2005) makes a distinction between what he calls a "*direct approach*" and an "*indirect approach*" to development. In the direct approach, development assistance is based on externally supplied motivation, often with financial recourses used as carrots and sticks (Ellerman 2005: 9). Ellerman argues that this approach is not sufficient to achieve sustainable development, and introduces the indirect approach, which is based on the idea that motivation can not be externally supplied but must be based on existing intrinsic motivation. Within the indirect approach, development assistance will stimulate autonomous actions, in contrast to the direct approach which stimulates gap-filling aid relations (Ellerman 2002, 2005). Ellerman's indirect approach seems to bear similarities with Lavergne's "capacity building paradigm", presented above, and also with the "new" approach related to by NORAD staff and my respondents in the Formative Research project.

3.4 From "gap-filling" to "autonomous" capacity building

Inspired by NORAD's "new" and "earlier" development strategy, Ellermans distinction between "direct" and "indirect" development and Lavergnes "capacity building paradigm", I have developed two analytical categories, through which the local participants in the Formative Research project will later be analyzed. In the following sections, a presentation of what I have chosen to define as the "*gap-filling approach*" and "*autonomous approach*" [14] to development will be provided. The distinctions between a gap-filling and an autonomous approach to development will thus serve as an attempt to operationalize the concept of capacity building, in order to understand how the participants in the Formative Research project relate themselves to the discourse around this type of development.

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[14] I consider the labels "gap-filling" and "autonomous" to be precise and to cover the main features of each approach. The reason for not making use of for example Ellerman's concepts is that I consider the names "gap-filling" and "autonomous" to be precise and clear in which the meaning alludes directly to the questions raised in this thesis.

This section conceptualizes the analytical categories, "gap-filling approach" and the "autonomous approach", and aims to clarify the differences between them. I will make use of four central objectives to distinguish the two approaches. Each of these objectives serve to introduce central concepts in order to explain the differences. The following table provides an introduction to the four objectives:

Table 1: Two approaches to capacity building

Objectives	The Gap-filling approach	The Autonomous approach
How can capacity be built?	Filling the knowledge-gap	Building on existing capacity
Role of the donor	Donors as expert	Donors as advisor
Role of developing countries	Passive recipients	Partners
Purpose of capacity building	Capacity building as an input	Capacity building as an output

The next sections will elaborate on these objectives by analyzing how the discourse about capacity building is different in these two approaches.

FROM FILLING THE KNOWLEDGE-GAP TO BUILDING ON EXISTING CAPACITY

The first objective indicating the difference between the gap-filling approach and the autonomous approach is the question of *how capacity could be built*. In the earliest decades of development aid, knowledge and capacity in poor countries was seen as something which could be developed through the right guidance and help from the West. The presumption was that the West could fill a "knowledge-gap" in the "underdeveloped" countries, by taking advantage of their knowledge, technology, experience and economical advantages (Fukuda-Parr et al. 2002). The supposition was that developing countries lacked important skills and abilities, and that people from developed countries could fill this gap with "quick injections of know-how" (Fukuda-Parr et al. 2002: 2). This resulted in that thousands of experts and consultants from the West "fanned out around the world, taking up residence in ministries and project offices, partly to supervise aid projects, but also to plant their skills and expertise […] by working alongside local counterparts" (ibid). The question, however, is whether the capacity building efforts during the first decades of development assistance could fill the "knowledge-gap". Ellerman emphasizes that the insufficiency with the well-worn path of conventional money-and knowledge-based aid, includes the donor aiming to help the developing country by supplying distorted motivation (money) and "managed knowledge" to

get the developing country to do what the donors perceive to be the right thing (Ellerman 2002: 49).

In the autonomous approach to development, however, the idea that *existing* capacity in developing countries founds the basis for capacity building is central. Knowledge and capacity "do not have to, and indeed should not, be imported from outside" (Lopes and Theisohn 2003: xii). The assumption is that only "home-grown policies based on local capacities are sustainable and potentially successful" and that there are no "one-size-fits-all" economic development models, applicable to all situations and all nations (ibid). Similarly, David Ellerman argues that the first step in creating an autonomy respecting development is to "start from where the doers are", which would stimulate a bottom-up development in the developing countries (Ellerman 2002: 54). Applying this view to capacity building, it would be better for the donor to "train local doers to do the job – even if locals do it poorly at first, so long as there is a learning mechanism – than for the helpers to do the job well but with little or no local capacity-building." (ibid). Thus, autonomous capacity building should include a process of learning for the developing countries, preferably as a result of the donors' advice and guidance in the assistance of the knowledge accumulation in the developing countries (Ellerman 2002: 55). Donors should not supply motivation, but supply resources to enable the developing countries to do what the developing countries were already motivated to do themselves (Ellerman 2002: 57). As the "autonomous approach" represent, in Real Lavergnes words, a new "paradigm" the new ideas within this approach has also had an effect on how one reflect about what knowledge is, and how new knowledge could be enhanced in poor countries. The discourse seems to have changed from assuming that capacity could be enhanced by *transferring knowledge* from the West, to focusing more on the potential for enhancing *existing capacity*.

FROM EXPERTS TO ADVISORS

The second objective indicating the difference between the gap-filling approach and the autonomous approach, concerns *what role the donor should play in the capacity building process*. Robert Chambers (1997, 1995) argues that development projects before the 1990s were often "top-down blueprint" projects, where external experts played important roles. In the autonomous approach, on the other hand, the discourse emphasizes a participatory process rather than blue-prints, and developing local knowledge rather than transferring the external

knowledge of the donors. Here, the donor plays the role of a facilitator in order to help enhance learning capacity in the developing country so they can learn from any source such as their own experience. Capacity building should thus be an "endogenous process, strongly led from within a country, with donors playing a supporting role." (European Commission 2005: 25). The role the donor should play in supporting building thus became an important issue:

> Evidence over the last decades points strongly to the limited overall effectiveness of donor support to capacity building. Much is known about what donors have done wrong in their support. Technical assistance (TA) and training has too often been supply driven, local ownership has been undermined, commitment overestimated, and donors' focus on disbursement and quick results have eroded domestic capacity as quickly as it has been developed. (European Commission 2005: 25)

It seems as though the role the donor is supposed to play in the autonomous approach to development has changed from a situation where the donor are mostly in charge of the project, to handing the responsibility to the developing country. The autonomous approach thus clearly states that the role of the donor should be reduced:

> […] the role for donors should be reduced. They should not take the lead in CD [capacity development] processes. They should stick to the analysis needed for their own decisions about whether or not to support what must essentially be domestically lead processes. Donors may support such processes with technical and process expertise, but the support should be acquired and managed by the domestic partners, not by the donors themselves. (European Commission 2005: 27)

Concerning this change into capacity building, the role of *expatriate staff* in development projects constitutes perhaps the most significant difference between the gap-filling approach and the autonomous approach. As David Ellerman argues above, autonomous capacity building should preferably be a result of the donors' advice and guidance in the assistance of the developing country's increase of knowledge (Ellerman 2002: 55). One can say that the "*expert*" role donor representatives used to have, has changed into a more modest role as an "*adviser*".

FROM PASSIVE RECIPIENTS TO PARTNERS

The third point that distinguishes the autonomous approach from the gap-filling approach is the question of *what role the developing countries should play in the capacity building process*. David Ellerman (2002) argues that developing countries are distinguishable according to how *active* they are in the development process: "*doers of development*" are actively undertaking their tasks and are juxtaposed to "*passive recipients*", who are not taking

active part in the development assistance (Ellerman 2002: 43). This is only achieved by developing trust and a shared view of key constraints on and opportunities for capacity building, inside and outside the organization (European Commission 2005: 28).

While the gap-filling approach mostly viewed local participants as *passive recipients*, the autonomous approach seems to entail a broad consensus that donor agencies nowadays have a responsibility to form aid "*partnership*" with national governments and other stakeholders in developing countries. The recent emphasis of the concept of partnership amongst development agencies, reflects a concern for adapting to a dynamic in the relationship between donors and developing countries of development aid. Defining the relationship between the donor and developing country as a "partnership" is, according to Jerve, "an attempt at counteracting the inequalities in terms of power and access to information that are normally found in a relationship between 'funder' and 'funded'" (Jerve 2002: 2).

Jerve (2002) further suggests that one can distinguish between *weak* and *strong* partnerships, and that these are connected to how much influence and actual cooperation that takes place between the partners. Weak partnership is when

> information sharing and political discussions take place as between equal sovereign partners, […] that have no other binding agreement of bilateral co-operation (Jerve 2002: 2).

In such partnerships, the partners do not involve in other relations to each other, than the one in the contract between them. This means that they have no responsibility and *commitment* towards each other, and each care for themselves. The following figure illustrates the relationship between the donor and developing country in a weak partnership:

Figure 1: Weak partnership[15]

(Jerve 2002: 2)

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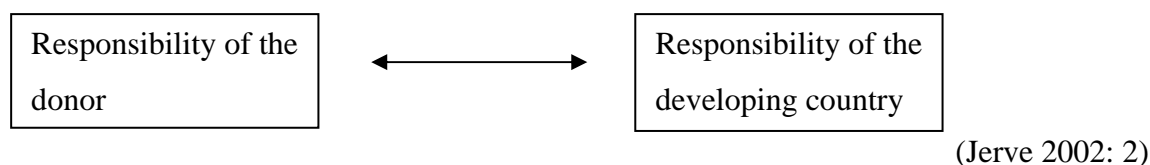
[15] Both figures are inspired of Alf Morten Jerve 2002, but are not the original figures.

This relationship describes the gap-filling approach, where the relationship between donor and developing country was based on the donor's transference of knowledge and knowing what was "best". Strong partnerships, on the other hand, are

> […] a contractual relationship that specifies *joint* responsibilities, in the form of an agreed program of actions and long-term financial commitments. (Jerve 2002: 2, my emphasis).

In strong partnerships, Jerve argues, the explicit aim is that "the recipient government takes the lead in formulating a medium-term, comprehensive […] strategy for poverty reduction, based on which donors will make multi-year financial commitments" (Jerve 2002: 4). Such partnerships will lead to joint commitment, where both partners' responsibility is necessary in order to secure the outcome of the partnership. Such partnerships are equivalent to the relationship between donor and developing countries the way it is recognized in the autonomous approach for development. A strong partnership with joint responsibility is exemplified in the centre box in this model:

Figure 2: Strong partnership
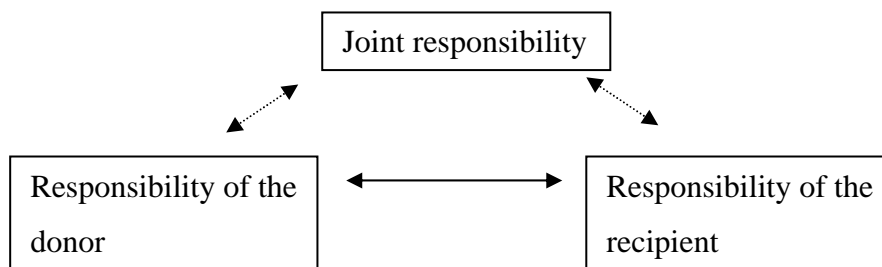
(Jerve 2002: 2)

When the partners have no other binding *responsibility* for each other but to involve in one particular setting the partnership lacks an important element, and could be considered as a weak partnership. But when the partners also share *joint responsibility*, the partnership is strong.

Maria Eriksson Baaz argues that traditionally in development aid partnerships, the responsibility is mostly connected to the *developing country* and not both partners (Baaz 2005: 7). This, Baaz (2005: 7) argues, must be seen in relation to the fact that donors have "a

perceived need to enhance sustainability" in the developing countries. One solution to enhance the sustainability is to improve the partnerships through building the capacity of the developing countries, as the assumption is that the developing countries will achieve *self-reliance* through capacity building (Baaz 2005: 7). Following Baaz's argument, capacity building could be seen as a means to ensure *equality* in aid partnerships, at least in the long run. This is necessary because strong partnerships are only possible when the two partners have equal abilities to have a joint responsibility. However, recognizing that the developing countries needs capacity building in order to achieve self-confidence and thus be able to be equal partners in the relation with the donor, is entailing some form of *inequality*. Recognizing this also includes recognition of the fact that the donor has abilities which the developing countries have not.

It is difficult to find any authoritative definitions of what a development partnership is in the social science literature, as partnership is "by and large [a] political, and not analytical, concept" (Jerve 2002: 2). "They are normative statements signaling certain qualities in relations between organizations involved in aid and processes of decision-making involving foreign aid" (Jerve 2002: 2). According to Merriam Webster's Dictionary, a partnership is:

> a relationship resembling a legal partnership and usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities. (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 2001: 846)

This definition of partnership assumes a relationship between cooperating parties with joint rights and responsibilities. In the development discourse, definitions of partnership often have similar connotations, emphasizing *equality* and *joint cooperation*. Making partnerships based on equality work in reality, however, can often turn out to be more difficult. In the world of Vicky Mancuso Brehm (2001):

> At its best, partnerships […] have the potential to be the practical expression of **solidarity** and **mutuality** between both organisations and individuals. At its worst, the term partnership is an over-used buzzword, devoid of meaning (Brehm 2001: 7)

According to Brehm, definitions of partnership in the development discourse are often describing an idealistic concept of "authentic" partnership:

> Authentic partnership implies... a joint commitment to long-term interaction, shared responsibility for achievement, reciprocal obligation, equality, mutuality and balance of power. (Fowler 2000, quoted in Brehm 2001: 11)

This definition of partnership attempts to give equal status between the donor and the developing country and to displace the power between them, by emphasizing equality, mutuality and balance of power. The question, however, is whether a "balance of power" is possible in a relationship between a donor and a developing country in development aid. Is the partnership between Norway and Nepal in the Formative Research Project expressing solidarity and mutuality between the partners, or is this sort of equality not really possible to achieve?

FROM CAPACITY BUILDING AS AN INPUT TO CAPACITY BUILDING AS AN OUTPUT

The last point where the gap-filling approach and the autonomous approach are different is in their definitions of the *purpose of capacity building*. Some authors distinguishes between capacity building as a *input* and capacity building as an *output*, where capacity building as an output is a much wider concept which includes much more than "just building capacity". Lopes and Theisohn (2003) defines capacity building as a comprehensive term, which includes that capacity building is not merely the acquisition of skills, but also the ability to *use* these skills. According to them, capacity building is connoting

> "the initial stages of creating and building capacities, as well as the subsequent use and retention of such capacities" (Lopes and Theisohn 2003: 22).

In this definition, a distinction is made between the "creating and building" of capacity and the outcome of capacity building: how people can use their capacity and abilities.

Whyte (2004) suggests that it could be valuable to distinguish between *endogenous processes* and *exogenous processes* of capacity building. Exogenous processes of capacity building implies that an external donor contributes in the process of building capacity, while endogenous processes is what the external supported exogenous processes will *lead to* in the end. Whyte's distinction thus, demonstrates how capacity building can be seen as both an *input* and as and *output*. Fukuda-Parr et al suggests that new knowledge, accomplished through capacity building must be integrated in endogenous knowledge:

> In developing countries, there are often two systems of knowledge and production operating in parallel: indigenous and modern. When new knowledge is not integrated into indigenous knowledge or production systems, it fails to be useful, despite its potential (Fukuda-Parr et al 2002: 10).

In this understanding, capacity building activities can only be efficient when it has existing capacity as its point of departure for developing new knowledge. Thus, without acknowledging existing knowledge, the capacity building activities could only be seen as an *input*, and not an *output*. The World Bank suggests that output-oriented capacity building happens when the developing country takes the initiative and when the process is endogenous:

> Capacity building is thus a gradual process, with the country taking the initiative to tailor interventions to meet its needs by investing and building on human capital and changing and strengthening institutional practices. "Ownership" is the key to capacity, and there is evidence to suggest that capacity is built faster when the process is endogenous. (The World Bank Capacity building Resource Centre: http://web. worldbank.org)

The World Bank defines capacity building as a gradual process where the developing country takes the initiative and where ownership is a necessity. Thus, as the World Bank definition implies, capacity building is something that should come from the "inside", building on existing capacities. This definition of capacity building lays an assumption that building capacity is something that developing countries must take initiative to *themselves*. Lopes and Theisohn adds in their definition that capacity building is something the people, institutions and societies in developing countries *want*:

> Capacity building as an objective corresponds to the goal of people wanting to learn and increase their options and choices. This applies similarly to institutions and societies as a whole. (Lopes and Theisohn 2003: 22)

Defining capacity building as something that developing countries will take the initiative to themselves, instead of something that is "controlled" by donors, means that the capacity building activity in itself is an *output*. Such activities will according to Ellerman (2002) lead to intrinsically motivated development in the developing countries:

> An intrinsically motivated activity is an activity carried out by individuals for its own sake. The activity is an end in itself, not an instrumental means to some other end (Ellerman 2002: 5).

Defining capacity building as an output and not an input is quite new in the development discourse. Earlier it was assumed that developing countries were *passive recipient* of development aid, while the definitions of capacity building above seems to assume that the developing countries are *active agents* in their own development. This implies that the role of the developing countries is different now than before, and assumes that a *process of change* has taken place within the developing countries. This supports Whyte's argument it is

valuable to distinguish between *exogenous* and *endogenous* capacity building. Endogenous capacity building could thus be seen as an output, and exogenous capacity building as an input. Transforming capacity building into endogenous process could be seen as a desired outcome of development aid, which makes the process of change an output in it self.

The process of change implies that the developing country has gained the needed abilities, which they did not possess before. This is also in line with the assumption that developing countries are not "recipients" any longer, but "partners": when developing countries – or local participants – actually go through a process of change, the developing countries could be termed as a "partner". From the definitions and discussions concerning capacity building presented above, it can be argue that exogenous capacity building processes will lead to something that is "something more", a situation where the capacity has been enhanced and where the developing countries have turned into another "phase" of their development. I will throughout this thesis refer to this process as "*capacity enhancement*". This concept implies that the individuals and institutions in developing countries have achieved something from the capacity building efforts, and that that capacity building has become an *output* in itself.

3.5 LOCAL AUTONOMY, OWNERSHIP AND THE ISSUE OF POWER IN CAPACITY BUILDING

While the previous section interrogated how the discourse surrounding capacity building has shifted from a "gap-filling" to an "autonomous" approach, and how this has affected the roles the donor and the developing country should play, this section looks into how the rhetoric of the new autonomous approach influences the *relationship* between the donor and developing country. Changing the roles from "expert" to "adviser" and from "recipients" to "partners" will consequently influence how the agents will interact with each other. This section discusses and problematizes issues concerning what kind of interaction should take place between donor and developing country in order for the capacity of the developing country to be enhanced.

In capacity building, the relationship between the donor and the developing country becomes particularly interesting when the question of *how* capacity could be built is raised. David Ellerman (2002) argues that the goal in modern development approaches is to make the donors facilitate autonomous development of the developing countries. In other words: to

help developing countries "help themselves" to autonomous development (Ellerman). However, if development is basically seen as autonomous self-development, then there is a subtle paradox in the whole concept of development assistance:

> How can the helpers "supply" help that actually furthers rather than overrides or undercuts the goal of the doers helping themselves. This is actually a paradox or conundrum; if the helpers are supplying help that is important to the doers, then how can the doers really be "helping themselves"? (Ellerman 2002: 1)

This paradox of "assisted autonomy" is the "fundamental conundrum of development", as autonomy cannot be externally supplied, Ellerman argue (Ellerman 2002: 1).

In the development discourse throughout the 1990s, there was a growing concern that the lack of national *"ownership"* over the development processes in the developing countries undermined the effectiveness of development aid (Lopes and Theisohn 2003: 29). The basic idea is that only when the relationship between the donor and developing country is based on an autonomous approach, and when the developing countries take the initiative, the developing countries will be the owners of their own development process. In order to achieve such an autonomous development process, it is necessary that the developing countries "need not only to participate but also to be in the "driver's seat" in order to make their actions and learning their own." (Ellerman 2002: 58). The concept of "ownership" is signaling that it has something to do with processes of *decision-making*, *influence* and *control* (Jerve 2002: 2), but is not always clearly defined in development projects and as a result it is often unclear what is meant by the term. Jerve (2002) defines ownership to be about *whom decides what* in the development process: Who initiates and identifies the needs? Who prioritize? Who plans and designs? Who makes procurement? Who implements? Who supervises? Who evaluates? (Jerve 2002: 5). In the gap-filling approach, the idea was that all that was "western" was desirable and good, and power was clearly ascribed to western development agents, defining capacity building to concern "transferring" western knowledge to "underdeveloped" countries. In the autonomous approach, on the other hand, local solutions for capacity building were embraced, and development was now seen as the responsibility of local governments in the developing countries. Within the new autonomous approach, the developing countries' *power to choose* their own development strategies has become a central attribute. That foreign development agents decides "what is best" for the development countries, belongs to the past – the gap-filling approach.

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However, Lopes and Theisohn (2003) points out that even in the modern approaches, capacity building are not, and can not be, power neutral. Development agencies have invented a jungle of rules, procedures and requirements that developing countries have been expected to adapt to (Lopes and Theisohn 2003: 8). Ellerman (2002) argues that even if donors have been addressing some of these problems, many of the fundamental issues remains, and development is often driven more by donor supply than demand from the developing country. For example, donors might have long-term visions of what they want to contribute to, whether it is to improve the health system or the education system etc. But due to their obligations for evaluations and results towards their government at home priority is often laid on small scale projects with quick and visible results. The governments in developing countries on the other hand, may sometimes disagree with donors in development priorities, but it is hard to reject an economical offer when the budget is under hard press and they may therefore want to stay conform to the donor. Government officials can also be reluctant to speak up against the system, instead the donors wishes is fulfilled. Donors also often want to supervise development projects to avoid inefficiency, incompetence and corruption. These are all factors that make the interplay between donor and developing country complicated, and challenges the balance of power between them.

In order for external donors to facilitate autonomous development in developing countries, the notion of the developing countries' *self-confidence* has gained increasing emphasis the recent years. While being used to working with foreign expatriates and experts of development through decades with technical assistance, many local agencies find it difficult to question the expert's advice, especially when it imposes systems that are managing recourses that may be too heavy to control (Lopes and Theisohn 2003). Enhancing the self-confidence of developing countries is therefore seen as an important element when helping developing countries "help themselves" (Ellerman 2002). Important in this understanding of autonomy and ownership, is that the developing countries has a *perception of possession*:

> The term 'ownership' is borrowed from the realm of private property over goods or land, where it generally has a well-defined legal meaning, but also involves a psychological aspect, a *perception of possession*. When transferred to policy programmes, the legal aspect, which underpins the concept in its normal use, disappears, and we are left with the psychological aspect. (Stewart and Wang 2003: 3).

A perception of possession is central in the understanding of how the self-confidence of people and institutions in developing countries could be enhanced, as ownership can be

perceived in various ways. Developing countries can easily find themselves locked into a cycle of dependency and conformity in their relationship with foreign donors, and a perception ownership is necessary in order to reverse this cycle. As Ellerman noted, autonomy can not be external supplied (Ellerman 2002). Development of an autonomous self-confidence must be located in existing *institutions*, *values* and *norms*. However, perception of possession is not sufficient to change the self-confidence without any change in underlying *realities* (Stewart and Wang 2003: 3). For example, governments or local project participants could be induced to believe they have ownership of an essentially unchanged reality, by changing processes, such as referring to the same processes with new rhetoric. But a genuine change in the underlying reality is likely to be required in order to bring about a lasting change in perceptions (Stewart and Wang 2003: 3). Only when the developing countries themselves have a feeling of "real" autonomy is it possible to speak of ownership over their own development.

One important consideration relevant to ownership is the manner and level in which the project participants are involved in development projects (Stewart and Wang 2003: 7). Ownership processes can be judged by both the intensity of participants' engagement and the degree of inclusion or exclusion of various groups, allowing participation to be assessed in terms of its "depth" and "breadth" (Stewart and Wang 2003: 7) [16]:

> Participation can be 'deep' if it involves a considerable amount of decision- making power. Yet, it can remain 'narrow' if only a handful of people, or particular interest groups, are involved. Similarly, broad-based processes involving a range of participants could be considered 'wide', but if their impact were limited to information sharing or consultation, then their participation would remain 'shallow'. (Stewart and Wang 2003: 7)

Deep and *wide* development processes will fall within the central objectives of the autonomous approach to development. A *shallow* and *narrow* process, on the other hand, will fall under the Gap-filling approach, as the developing countries' impact over the process are limited and few local people are involved. In theory, a "deep" and "wide" participatory process would be best, but could, according to Stewart and Wang, be difficult to achieve in practice (Stewart and Wang 2003: 7-8). A "shallow" and "narrow" participation can also result in what Jerve (2002) calls "weak partnership", in which the partners have no commitment to each other. This is a central characteristics within the "gap-filling approach",

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[16] Stewart and Wang refer to Farrington and Bebbington (1993), as the original authors of the concepts 'depth' and 'breadth'.

and is distinguishable from the rhetoric within the "autonomous approach" in which strong partnerships is the optimal solution.

Assessing participation and ownership critically also requires a consideration of *who* participates (Stewart and Wang 2003: 7). National ownership and empowerment will be greatly affected by the selection of groups, how representatives are chosen and how capable they are, as these considerations constitute important factors influencing the legitimacy and the effectiveness of the development process (Stewart and Wang 2003: 7). Participating in a development project can therefore be experienced differently by the participants involved, and participants will perceive aspects of ownership in different ways according to what role and power they have in the project (Stewart and Wang 2003: 8). Perceptions of what ownership is can thus have different implications for a project superior and a low-range project participant.

The perception of ownership will also be influenced by how much, and what kind of, contact the stakeholders have with the donor. What role and influence the donor have in a particular project may influence how the local participants perceive ownership over the process. Even if the "autonomous approach" is emphasizing that knowledge should come from the inside, that the role of the donor should be reduced and that local stakeholders should take the initiative, the involvement of an external donor is inevitable. This is what Ellerman suggests is the "fundamental conundrum of development":

> if the helpers are supplying help that is important to the doers, then how can the doers really be "helping themselves"? (Ellerman 2002: 1)

Central in the discourse of capacity building, is therefore the aspect of *who should define* what development is. The levels of control that capacity building projects in the past has offered for donors, is not necessarily absent even if the discourse now calls for "autonomy", "dialogue" and "partnership". The question is, however, how these aspects come to influence the relationship between the donor and local participants in modern capacity building projects, and what this has to say for the people in such projects.

3.6 Summary

The aim for this chapter has been to provide a background to different understandings of the concept of "*capacity building*". The first part of the chapter gave a historical overview of

important changes in the development discourse the recent years, and how the concept of capacity building has come to be understood in the contemporary development discourse. On the background of this presentation of literature, section 3.4 presented two analytical categories that I have developed: the "gap-filling approach" and the "autonomous approach" to capacity building. The changes between these approaches were summarized in four objectives:

- The gap-filling approach emphasizes that capacity building can happen by *transferring* knowledge from the west to "underdeveloped" countries; while the autonomous approach is emphasizing that capacity building must come from *inside* the developing countries, with existing capacity at the centre of the process.

- In a gap-filling approach, the donor has a high level of decision making power in the capacity building process and expatriate staff plays a central role as *experts*. In an autonomous approach, the donor's involvement in the capacity building process has been reduced and shall play the role of a facilitator or *adviser*, rather than an expert.

- While the gap-filling approach sees developing countries as *passive recipients* of the knowledge of the donors, the autonomous approach sees developing countries as *partners* in capacity building processes.

- The gap-filling approach defines capacity building to be about giving an *input* to the developing countries, and defines this as an adequate development goal in it self. The autonomous approach on the other side, defines capacity building more comprehensive by including that the capacity building activities should have lead to a *process of change* within the local participants. That local participants have actually gone through a process of change was defined in this chapter as a process of "*capacity enhancement*".

These four points will in the analysis of the Formative Research project represent an operationalization of the two analytical categories the "gap-filling approach" and the "autonomous approach". This thesis will draw on the operationalizations of capacity presented in this chapter, and look into how the capacity building processes in the Formative Research project could be categorized as "*gap-filling*" or "*autonomous*" processes. Using these operationalizations of the concept capacity building does not mean, however, that the participants in the Formative Research project use the same definitions. The purpose of distinguishing between gap-filling or autonomous processes in this thesis is to develop

analytical categories, through which the participants own experiences of capacity building can be interpreted.

While I have now presented the analytical categories in which the participants' own opinions will be interpreted, the next chapter presents sociological theories that make it possible to explain how the participants will identify themselves within the development discourse. The discourse around development has changed towards a "new architecture" of development and the roles of the local participants have changed from "recipients" to "partners". But how do the participants themselves experience this? Do they identify themselves as partners, or are they still "left" in the old discourse about recipients?

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: NEGOTIATING IDENTITY

From a sociological perspective, the aim for this chapter is to develop theoretical framework in which focusing on capacity building from the level of the individual will add valuable information about the epistemology of contemporary development. The choice of theoretical approach is based on the perception that individuals that are objects to capacity building strategies have not been given much attention in previous social science research.

In my analysis of the Nepalese participants in the Formative Research project the issue of *identity* is important to explore in order to understand the participants' interpretation of their own development, and their own role in such processes. In this perspective, identity is a significant issue that needs to be addressed and analyzed in order to understand social practices of capacity building, the notion of how processes of structural change take place in within capacity building is central in the understanding of identity relevant for this thesis.

I have been inspired by some of the sociological classics when deciding upon the theoretical framework for this study. Influenced by the theories of George H. Mead (1967), Berger and Luckman (1966) and C. Wright Mills (1959), I will in this section discuss central features that are relevant in the understanding of how participants in a capacity building negotiate their own role and identity within social processes of change. The basic anticipation is that individuals negotiate their identity within certain discourses where everyday experiences are interpreted. How local participants negotiate their identity within a capacity building project is, within this understanding, influenced by the discourse around capacity building. These discourses become visual in the project participants' verbal explanations of their experiences, the way it is expressed in their interviews with me. The analytical presentation in this thesis is organized in line with the assumption that negotiation of identity among project participants is related to discourses of capacity building, and I will seek to shed light over the individual experiences of the participants in the Formative Research project and to relate these experiences with the development discourse that are surrounding them.

4.1 THE ISSUE OF IDENTITY IN DEVELOPMENT AID

> Values, identity, self-esteem and creativity all nurture a vision for the future. It is by no means a given that there will be mutual understanding when different worlds of knowledge, ways of thinking and arguing, culture and values meet. This is often evident with external cooperation (Lopes and Theisohn 2003: 3).

This thesis seeks to explore the issue of identity, and to see what relevance this can have in a development context. The quote above has already given a hint about the complexity of development aid relations, and the meeting between "different worlds of knowledge". My analysis of the Nepalese participants in the Formative Research project starts with the assumption that the issue of identity, values and self-esteem is important in the understanding of the participants' interpretation of their own development, and their own role in such processes. Identity is about an individual's experience of self and other, over time and in different social settings. Identity is about social categorization in the form of perception of self, as well as attributes one is given from the surroundings. George H. Mead underlined that self-identification can not take place without also identifying oneself from the perspective of the social group one is part of (Mead 1967). Identity is thus not be said to be something established or unchangeable. Rather it is an interpretative process that is constituted through *internal-external dialectic*, in which identities is object of constant negotiation between self-definition and definitions offered by others (Jenkins 1996: 20).

Self identification must inevitably happen within a *context*, or a *discourse*[17]. In this thesis, the context in question is the context of development aid relations[18]. As accounted for in the previous chapter, the rhetoric around the roles of the involved agents in development aid has changed the recent years. Local participants are no longer perceived as "passive recipients", but "partners" in "development cooperation". Likewise, donors are no longer "donors", but "advisers" and facilitators. However, a shift in social roles is a complex process and it can not be assumed that people in poor countries can shift their role from a passive recipient to an active partner instantaneously. In a sociological perspective, shifting roles will inevitably involve a change in identity. Thus, when capacity building is defined as a process in which the local participants are "partners" and not "passive recipients" (which the autonomous approach to development does), this assumes that there has been a *change in the roles* of the

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[17] How identity is related to the concept of discourse will be discussed in an own section later in this chapter. See section 4.3, discourse, values and systems of meaning.

[18] Self identification does of course take place within numerous contexts, but this thesis does not address this complexity.

local participants. This thesis looks into how the Nepalese participants negotiate about their own identity and how this is connected with the role they are playing in connection to the relationship with the donor. Has the interaction lead to that the participants identity themselves as partners?

As outlined in the previous chapter, one of the four points that distinguishes the gap-filling approach and the autonomous approach from each other was the definition of capacity building as an *input* versus defining capacity building as an *output*. As we saw, newer theories of capacity building implies that in order to make development sustainable there is a need for a input (capacity building), which is meant to lead to a *process of change* in the developing countries. When such change takes place, the capacity building efforts will also have an output. I argued that this output could be called "*capacity enhancement*" as the output implies that a change has taken place and that the capacity of the developing country after the capacity building efforts not only has been build (through the exogenous involvement of a donor), but also *enhanced* (through endogenous processes within the developing country). This change must also involve a transformation in the way the participants negotiate about their own role. Do the participants identify themselves as *partners* now that the rhetoric has changed, or do they still identity themselves as *recipients*?

In order to identify if a shift from "passive recipient" to "partner" has really taken place, it is necessary to identify what key issues and circumstances that needs to be in place in order for such a shift to take place. What is identity? How is identity negotiated? How do identity relate to capacity building issues? How may local participants be influenced by their image of the donor in their interpretation of the development aid situation? How does this relationship affect their perception of self? This chapter seeks to explore a theoretical foundation that allows identifying such key issues and circumstances.

Mead (1934) argues that the identification of the *self* is a relationship between the "I" and the "me". In this understanding, the self cannot be understood as a "single" self, but as a plural self:

> The "I" reacts to the self which arises trough the taking of the attitudes of others. Through taking those attitudes we have introduced the "me" and we react to it as "I". … The "I" is the response of the organism to others: the "me" is the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes. (Mead 1934: 174, 175, in Jenkins 1996: 41)

Thus, self-identification involves both a personal and a social aspect: The "I" reflects the personal and "me" reflects the notion of the "other". Another theoretization of the importance of "the other" in self-perception is Cooley's theory of the "looking-glass-self". Cooley (1964) stressed that the self implies the presence of others: it is always a social self – similar or different to others:

> A self-idea of this sort seems to have three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgement of that appearance, and some sort of self feeling. (Cooley 1964: 184, in Jenkins 1996: 41)

The attitudes of others are important in the perception of own attitudes, where the attitudes and actions of individuals are forged from the relationships with other individuals or groups. All activities humans participate in will influence the construction of identity. Identity can be connected to almost all parts of social life, and is also shifting from one situation to another. Thus, identity is not something solid and unchangeable but rather a constant process of negotiation. In the context of a capacity building project, the project participants negotiate their identity according to their perception of own activities as well as the perception of activities of others. Thus the self-identifications relate to his perception of own performances as well as the relationship the person have to the donor and the other participants involved. Self-identification also relates to power and influence. A person with a lot of influence will identify himself different from a person with low influence over own tasks. A parallel can be drawn to Stewart and Wang (2002), who argues that participants of development project will perceive the aspect of ownership differently according to where in the project they operate. I will look at my respondents' construction of identity in relation to their role as participants in the Formative Research project. In order to understand how a change from recipient to partner can take place, the following sections introduces some central theoretical approaches to how individuals identify themselves within a social context.

4.2 IDENTITY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Conducting a sociological analysis of how the local participants in the Formative Research project talk and reflect about their own development, requires developing a conceptual framework that allows individuals to be understood in relation to social practice. The connection between external imposed capacity building strategies in developing countries and local participants' interpretation of their own life world within this context is central.

Within the sociological tradition, identity has been attached to the dialectic between *individual* and *society*. Implicit in such an understanding is that processes of self-identification must be understood in light of power relations and inequality. Social relations and identities are developed, exist and are interpreted within the frames of political and economical structures. Richard Jenkins writes about a *social identity*, referring to "the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities" (Jenkins 1996: 4). Jeffrey Seul writes about social identity:

> A group is a self-defining collection of individuals. Like an individual, a group could be said to have an identity of its own. That identity is borne and communicated by the group's members, but cannot be thought of as a composite of the members' respective individual identity, any more than an individual's identity can be conceived of merely as an composite of the identities of the various groups to which one belongs. (Seul 1999: 556)

Jenkins (1996) offers a pragmatic analysis of the concept, embracing the relationship between structural and individually dimensions, and argues that social identity must be seen as both individual and collective. Social identity is not only understood as a construction from the relation between individuals or groups, but also constructed in the relation the individual is situated in, between the subject's reality and social structures. Identity is, according to Berger and Luckmann, a key concept when it comes to understanding the subjective reality of individuals. On the other hand, all subjective reality stands in a dialectic relation to the society it is contextualized in (Berger and Luckmann 1966 [2000]: 200).

In accordance to a social constructivist perspective, what people experience as an "objective reality", is a social construction (Berger and Luckman 1966). The relations between individuals and the social world, and the individual and society, are in this perspective viewed as something that is constantly negotiated. This perspective on human behavior tells us that the individuals themselves participate in constructing what understandings they have of own development.

C. Wright Mills (1959) argued that the average person experience their lives as a series of "*personal troubles*" which is individual and personal experiences that occur within their immediate relations with others. However, these troubles can not be seen in isolation from what Mills calls "*public issues*", which have to do with the "organization of many such milieu into the institutions of an historical society as a whole, with the ways in which various milieus overlap and interpenetrate to form the larger structure of social and historical life." (Mills

1959: 8). Thus, personal troubles and public issues must be understood in a shifting and dependent relation to each other, creating meaning to people's daily lives. Public issues influence personal troubles, although troubles are often experienced in isolation from their wider social setting. According to Mills, it is not until troubles are understood as issues that a complete understanding of social life may be found. The challenge for a social researcher is thus to try look beyond these contradicting answers and seek to find the answer to why the respondents answer different on these questions. According to C.W. Mills, only the ones that possess the "sociological imagination" can look beyond these simple answers and investigate the complex interplay between the personal answer and the public issues, and thus look beyond the "taken for granted" inventions of daily life.

Mills' theory is suitable in an analysis of social processes within the frame of a development project, and his notion of "the sociological imagination" has been a source of inspiration when conducting the analysis of how the local participants in the Formative Research project relates themselves to capacity building. Employing a sociological imagination on the capacity building processes in the Formative Research project, allows the phenomenon of capacity building to be analyzed as a complex combination of individual actions and social structures. Applying Mills' perspective on the Formative Research Project includes an understanding in which Nepalese project participants are perceived as individuals concerned mostly by their personal troubles, and where the development strategy that is the foundation for the project are perceived as concerned with social issues. Additionally, Mills' concepts of how public issues must be seen in relation to the "*biography*" and "*history*" of the individual will be important in the analysis of capacity building in the Formative Research Project.

> We have come to know that every individual lives, from one generation to the next, in some society; that he lives out a biography, and that he lives it out within some historical sequence (Mills 1959: 6).

Being a participant in a development project in Nepal today, can not be separated from the experiences the participants has from development projects they have been participants in before. The experiences from development strategies that have been implemented in Nepal before will therefore influence the perception of the development strategies that are implemented in the Formative Research project.

As we saw in the previous chapter, there is a growing emphasis amongst donors about the widespread lack of self-esteem within the developing countries. While being used to working

with foreign expatriates and experts of development, many Nepalese agencies has hard to question the expert's advice, especially when it imposes systems that are managing recourses that may be too heavy to control. However, the processes of capacity building can become a means for negotiating identity and (re)defining attitudes, challenging earlier social order of inequality and powerlessness, and reconstructing roles and relationships for participants in capacity building projects. C. W. Mills (1959) discusses this dialectical interplay of action and reflection in his classic *The sociological imagination*, and argues that structural factors within a society shape the individual, as much as the individual contribute to the forming of the society by acting in it:

> By the fact of his living he contributes, however minutely, to shaping of this society and to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove (Mills 1959: 6).
>
> Thus, people lives within a combination of the history they share with the people from their own milieu and their own personal experience from this.

In this perspective, one might argue that "recipient" of aid is not something that people *is*, it is something that they *become*. Or in the words of a social constructivist; something that is constructed through social interaction. And especially the interaction with the donor – the agent that gives – will influence the construction of the self for the people that receives. The picture of a "recipient" can not exist without the donor. Developing countries are thus not only "recipients" in themselves, but they become "recipients" within their *relationship with the donor*.

4.3 DISCOURSE, VALUES AND SYSTEMS OF MEANING

"*Discourse*" is a concept which has been commonly used in social science the last decades. Hanne Svarstad (2001: 3) argues that discourse is poorly defined in social science literature and that the concept can have numerous meanings. The concept holds several diversities and contradictions and must therefore be clarified. Michel Foucault is often seen as the originator of the discourse concept, and is known to have used the concept frequently in his work. He defines the discourse as: "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault 1972: 131, in Neuman 2001: 17). In Foucault's understanding of the concept, meaning is constructed from social actions because of existing discourses.

For the purpose of this thesis, I choose to employ discourse as a *system of meanings*, as this approach holds several aspects which are relevant for my analysis. Discourse in the Formative Research project becomes a "way of thinking" for the participants in the project, about their own role in the project and the purpose for the project. Employing the concept of discourse is thus a suitable tool for understanding why the project participants think and act the way they do in the Formative Research project. Discourse has influence on communication between individuals and for construction of role-identities. Identity is constructed through interaction with others and this interaction is influences by the discourses. Because discourses imply a way to understand the social world, discourse will be visible in verbal communication and interaction. Discourse is a mean for individuals to categorize their life world and make unknown things familiar. Thus, individuals understand their life work through language, which can be both written and verbal. Discourse can also be viewed as a series of actions within in a field of discourses, meaning that discourse can include ideals, concepts and values which become visual in speech or writings.

Identity negotiation takes place within value-systems and discourse in the individuals' life-world. Wiener (1988) argues that central in the understanding of individuals behavior in institutions and organizations is the notion of what he calls "*shared values*". Values will exist in all social groups and institutions and are based on shared beliefs and expectations:

> When a number of key or pivotal values concerning organization-related behaviors and state-of-affairs are shared – across units and levels – by members of an organization, a central value system is said to exist (Wiener 1988: 535).

Values are viewed as forms of beliefs, and a major source of these values may be social expectations, particularly when they are shared. People experience their daily life as sets of meanings that people take for granted about the nature of society.

> values can be constructed as internalized normative beliefs; once established, they may act as built-in normative guides to behavior, independent from the effect of rewards and punishments as consequences of action (Wiener 1988: 535).

Common social discourses, when used of "everybody" within a community, are reproducing the "culturally normative pattern" (Laslett and Rapoport 1975: 973: in Cornwell 1984: 15). This "common sense" reproduces and legitimates assumptions that people take for granted. Some sorts of knowledge do not have to be spoken directly about, because "everybody" knows what the discourse is about. There is a common consensus that this makes out some form for common "truth" about the world. The participants in the Formative Research project

construct their identity within a discursive framework where meanings and experiences are created. Discourse can be seen as a pattern, in which ways of thinking are constructed, which means that a discourse can be a good indicator for what is felt as an experienced reality for the individuals involved. Identity is constructed within the established discourses, through interaction with other individuals and groups, and the members will share their experiences of reality because they interact within the same discourse.

However, interaction can take place between individuals who act within *different* discourses. In such cases, the experiences of reality will be different, and disagreement and differences of interests may be the result. Several discourses will occur within daily life, and the participants in the Formative Research project will most probably belong under many different discourses. It can for example be the case that different development discourses are apparent in a development project. For instance can the gap-filling approach and the autonomous approach to development, which can be seen as two different development discourses, both be present in a development project. This means that individuals can relate themselves to both discourses, even if the discourses are seen as incompatible.

By comparing the macro structural changes in capacity building discourses with the identification processes of the participants in a capacity building project, the aim is to see how participants in the Formative Research project negotiate about identity and how these are related to different discourses. Thus, I am interested in a bottom-up approach to exploring development practices in Nepal, and by that uncover important dimensions of larger events.

4.4 POWER AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

Capacity building is not a value-neutral set of processes. Capacity building is closely linked to different ideological positions and has political, cultural and socio-economic dimensions. The development discourse, however, tends to discuss capacity building as if it were something quite neutral. Inherent in the processes of capacity building is a deeper struggle over discourse and power. We must therefore continually be aware of the various ideological implications of capacity building processes and seek to make explicit our positions and actions within these. As shown in the previous chapter, the "autonomous approach" gives an impression of equality in the relationship between the donor and the developing country. Being a donor, nevertheless, must include some kind of superiority as it involves having something to give

that others do not have (Lopes and Theisohn 2003: 41). This logic often leads to the reinforcement of beliefs about developing countries having inadequate institutions and capacity, or the belief that developing countries are insincere and uninterested in their own development (ibid). This could be exemplified by the enormous attention notions capacity building attained in development strategies recent years, which reflects a "need" to help developing countries build up local institutions and capacities that are perceived as inadequate to handle own development. The initiation of a capacity building project implies that one part has capacities and skills that the other part does not. Agreeing to participate in capacity building activities also involves an acknowledgement of the fact that one has less capacities, and maybe also knowledge, than the other part. This could partly be explained by that the concept of capacity building has very positive connotations, and the meaning is often taken for granted.

4.5 SUMMARY

The choice of theories in this chapter is based on an attempt to develop a sociological approach to the understanding of capacity building. By interviewing Nepalese participants I have been able to make important observations about the nature of identity and the adequateness of capacity building discourses, as the influence of development discourses plays a complex role in the negotiation of identity. Inspired by Mills' notion of "the sociological imagination", this thesis will compare social processes of change in the Formative Research project with the participants' negotiation of identity, in order to investigate whether the participants define themselves as "recipients" or "partners".

The following figure explains how the process of identity negotiation is related to capacity building as input and output:

Figure 3: Negotiating identity: From recipient to partner

Input → Output

Recipient → Partner

Process of change

The identity of the recipient
has been changed from a
recipient to a partner
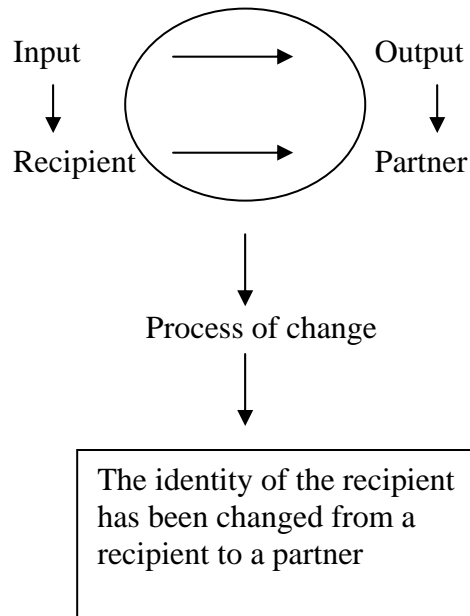
When the development rhetoric changes from defining capacity building as an "input" to capacity building as an "output", and the roles of the developing countries has changed from being a "recipient" to becoming a "partner", do the individuals that the rhetoric speaks about actually go through the same process of change? In order to go through such processes of change, the individual must also go through an *identity transformation*. In this change lies the assumption that the developing countries are no longer a "recipients" but "partners" in the development relationship with the donor. The analysis of this thesis will address this issue, and will compare the capacity building strategy in the Formative Research project with how the participants in the project identify themselves within this project.

5. THE FORMATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT: OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

As a first part of my analysis of theory and practice in the Formative Research project, this chapter gives an introduction to the objectives and strategies of the Formative Research project. The presentation will relates these objectives with the analytical categories developed in chapter 3, the "gap-filling approach" and the "autonomous approach", in order to interrogate if the Formative Research project belongs to the "new architecture" of development aid. The purpose is to provide a background for analyzing the social processes that takes place between the local participants in the Formative Research project, in order to later compare these with goals and strategies of the project.

First, I give a presentation of central objectives in the Formative Research project and discuss what capacity building strategies the project emphasized. Second, I discuss the collaboration between research and public administration in the project and how this was intended to lead to capacity building, before I move to discuss how the project could be seen as an international development partnership. Last, I discuss the issue of local autonomy in the project.

5.1 CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE FORMATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

The documents from the Norwegian Department for Education and Research (UFD), describing "Formative Research", argues that the Formative Research project was not actually a development project within the frame of "goal attainment thinking" in the sense that it had a concrete goal to be achieved within a certain timeframe. Rather, the Formative Research project was said to have a "*process focus*", which were expected to open up for "unintended – but positive – consequences" as the process in itself develops (UFD 2003). One such consequence was to enhance the capacity[19] of the stakeholders involved. According to UFD, applying a Formative Research model as a development strategy also includes the aspect of building up the developing countries' education sector and support "competence building" among local participants:

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[19] The donor uses the concept "competence" as a synonym for "capacity" in the documents about the Formative Research Project I have consulted. I will therefore use "competence" and "capacity" interchangeable throughout this chapter.

> Competence building implies developing knowledge and making that knowledge applicable to the situation at hand. In the case of formative research, it is a question of building the competence of all those involved not only in the research process but in the implementation as such – bureaucrats in the system on all levels, members of the advisory group, stakeholders as well as researchers.

Capacity building was thus intended to happen in all of the three groups of local participants; among *researchers* in the research institution in order to enhance their research skills, and among *policy makers* in the Ministry of Education (MOES) in order to "change the way of thinking" about research based policy making (CERID 2005: 33). And also among *implementers* in the Department of Education (DOE) in order to "raise the awareness of the positive role of research in implementation" (ibid).

Capacity building was also intended to happen on both the level of the *individual*, and at an *institutional* level[20]. At the individual level, researchers and public administration staff is in particular seen as subjects for competence building in the Formative Research project. At the institutional level, the "management" of the education sector was seen as important to build up. According to UFD, a crucial element in development cooperation is how to help develop "what is found to be fairly weak public sector management and a lack of government management capacity." (UFD 2003: 11). As the Formative Research model relies on a proactive ministry to be successful, does

> increasing the administrative competence of the ministry staff itself – including its analytical and planning capacity – therefore [become] an important aspect when deciding how to organize a formative research program (UFD 2003: 11).

Formative Research is also seen as a tool to enhance the capacity of researchers and research institutions. In the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)'s "Development Cooperation Manual", a section about Formative Research explains that wherever Formative Research is applied in NORAD's development programs, it is expected to:

> contribute to enhanced competence and strengthened research capacity of research institutions to carry out applied action oriented research, relevant to future development challenges, both in the Partner country and in Norway. (NORAD 2002a: 31).

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[20] See Fukuda-Parr (2002).

5.2 BRIDGING RESEARCH AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN NEPAL: ENDOGENOUS CAPACITY BUILDING

UFD is vague in describing how such "competence building" should be carried out in practice, but from various documents connected to the Formative Research project one gets the impression that *frequent interaction* between the researchers, implementers and policy makers in the Formative Research project was intended to be a means to enhance the researchers' and public administration staff's level of capacity. The main objective of the Formative Research project was that researchers should bring forth information to MOES about the Basic and Primary Education program (BPEP II), and that this information should be used to make informed changes in the implementation of the BPEP II. This was an effort to develop a cooperative relationship between the research milieu in education research in Nepal, and the public administration who is concerned with implementing education policies, in this case the Ministry of Education (MOES) and the Department of Education (DOE). It was argued that bringing more "research-based information" into MOES would be positive in order to enhance competence in the Nepalese education sector (UFD 2003: 12).

One important feature of the Formative Research project, was that public administrative staff in MOES and DOE should be included and given responsibility in the research process, by taking part in developing research question in cooperation with the research team, based on their own need for information on reform activities (UFD 2003: 11-12). Ministry staff was also expected to share and discuss information and experience with other practitioners and implementers and to use research based information as a guide to the daily activities of the ministry. To have an open discussion between the researchers and public administration staff was thus seen as important:

> An open discussion on the "division of labor" between the researchers and practitioners when it comes to how to handle the relevance of different kinds of knowledge – practical, administrative and research based – is a very important aspect in the process of competence building of the researchers. (UFD 2003: 12).

Also the researchers should take part in the frequent interaction between the Nepalese stakeholders in the Formative Research project before, under and after the collection of research data (UFD 2003). The researchers were expected to involve "laymen" in the research process, as policy practitioners and implementers should be involved in formulating research questions on the basis of an actual need for information for the MOES (UFD 2003: 11-12). They were also expected to be involved in the process of formulating advice for

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implementation in DOE, with the possibility of having to defend the research based advice given against opposition from practitioners, bureaucrats and implementers (UFD 2003: 12). These were situations that most researchers were unfamiliar with from earlier research experience. This dialogue between the researchers, implementers and policy makers was expected to help enhance the level of knowledge, and thus participating in the project itself was supposed to enhance the capacity of the practitioners.

Reimers and McGinn (1997) analyses education reforms in several development countries around the world, and argues that the researchers and policy makers within a certain sector, for example the education sector, could be seen as respectively *producers of knowledge* and *consumers of knowledge*. They argue that the relationship between these parties can either take a form where policy makers are critical, or even reluctant to the research process. Or on the other hand, policy makers can participate in the research process by selecting which products of research they will consume, and help the researchers frame the problems to be investigated so research can be most useful for policy (Reimers and McGinn 1997). What form of relationship the research process will create depends on what kind of *dialogue* that exists between the producers and consumers of knowledge. Situations where policy makers are critical agents in the research process can arise because of the "difference in culture" between researchers and decision makers (Reimers and McGinn 1997: 72). Research results do not automatically result in policy changes, and failure in communication, for example ineffective dissemination of the research result to the policy makers, is often used to explain the mismatch between policy and research.

The expectation that capacity building should happen both among researchers and bureaucracy through participating in *endogenous* processes, is something that characterize the description of capacity building as an outcome presented in chapter 3.

However, the project documents also envision that direct interaction with the *donor* should help enhance the capacity among the participants involved in the project. Capacity building was for example anticipated to happen from the interaction between the staff in MOES and UFD:

> Dealing with the question of ministry-to-ministry co-operation, we thus run into the question of not only how a foreign ministry may give advice, but also of how to support competence building within the bureaucracy of the receiving country (UFD 2003: 11).

The Formative Research project was part of the "technical assistance" scheme of the donor, where the donor was appointed to an *advisor* for the Nepalese participants in the project in order to support "competence building" among researchers and administrative staff in the education sector. Thus, capacity building among researchers and bureaucrats was not only something that was expected to happen trough more frequent interaction between the Nepalese stakeholders in it self, but also trough interaction with the donor.

The question of how much the donor should be involved in the project and what activities it should be included in, thus becomes a relevant issue. UFD points out that:

> The role of the donor agency in establishing the Formative program is central to the question of how implementers will perceive it: as something demanded by the donors or as an instrument chosen with national interests in mind with the potential of being useful in daily governance. It is only in the last instances that we may speak of the formative model being a success. (UFD 2003: 12)

Thus, the project documents assumes that only when the project is defined as *endogenous* that the project will be a success. From the donor's point of view, the Formative Research project was not supposed to be "donor-provided" but a tool which the Nepalese government should make use of voluntarily:

> Norway as a donor has thus concentrated on the visionary and facilitator aspects of the role, leaving the operational and controlling activities to national bodies who have been given that responsibility (UFD 2003: 17).

It was argued that the donor representatives would have to "work in a team with the [Nepalese] co-ordinator and those responsible in the national ministry in order to develop the kind of mutual understanding and respect which is crucial for the whole process of competence building involved in the Formative Research process." (UFD 2003: 14). The Formative Research strategy also presupposed that capacity building activities was something that the Nepalese government *wanted* themselves, and not something that was imposed on them. These aspects follow the description of the autonomous approach presented in chapter 3.

5.3 TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

The framework for the ministry-to-ministry cooperation between MOES and UFD was based on one core document, a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU). According to the MoU document, it was anticipated that

> the ministry of Education, Norway shall be *partner institution* to the Ministry of Education, Nepal regarding Formative Research on the implementation of the [BPEP II] programme. (MoU 2000: 1, my emphasis).

According to the MoU, UFD would "act as a consultant to the Ministry of Education, Nepal" (MoU 2000: 2). The role of the donor in the Formative Research project is supplementary explained in the MoU like this:

> **The MOE, Norway** [UFD] will have an **advisory role** in relation to the MOE, Nepal within the framework of FRP [Formative Research project] as stated in the MoU between the two ministries. This will be within the field of **research as well as in administration**, on questions pertaining to **planning**, **implementation** and **summing up of activities.** (MoU 2000, annex 1: II, original emphasis)

Norway will give advice in the areas of planning, implementation and summing up, and should thus be involved in the project from the beginning to the end. They should also be involved amongst the two parts of the project: in the research execution part as well as the administration and policy part. Furthermore, UFD should coordinate the services it provides by appointing a Norwegian *research advisor* to perform this function.

> The Norwegian Ministry of Education will appoint a **research advisor** to assist and advice the MOE, Nepal. MOE, Norway will set up a Norwegian network which will function as a *consultancy network* for MOE, Norway and the research advisor on all steps in the FR [Formative Research] process in Nepal. The Norwegian assistance may also include study tours and seminars on the design and experiences of formative research in the two countries. (MoU 2000, annex 1: iv)

Thus, the donor was according to the MoU supposed to have the role as an advisor, which fits into the autonomous approach to development. A central feature with the autonomous approach is that the donor should be an *advisor* for the developing country, and not an *expert*, which is common within the gap-filling approach.

In the MoU, the ministry-to-ministry cooperation is defined as a partnership where the responsibility of the project lies in the hands of the Nepalese partner.

> The Ministry of Education, Nepal has the overall responsibility for all activities connected to the Project (MoU 2000: 2)

The project was not to be donor-driven and all donor involvement should be trough an advisor, which had no juridical influence. The two partners were also assigned different tasks to perform in the project. This seems similar to the notion of "shared responsibility", which Alf Morten Jerve (2002) defines as an important factor in his concept of "*strong partnership*" in development aid relations. A strong partnership is defined by Jerve as "a contractual relationship that specifies joint responsibilities […] in the form of an agreed program of actions and long-term financial commitments" (Jerve 2002: 2). This relationship between the partners seems to be equal to what Jerve considers as a necessary division between the responsibilities of the donor and the developing country (ibid). The responsibilities of the recipient, Jerve claims, ought to be filled with a "commitment to certain key objectives of development" (ibid). Jerve (2002) argues that in order for the partnership to be strong, the donor's responsibilities in development aid should include long-term commitments, greater flexibility, transparency in its own decision making and sensitivity to the local context. All of these points can be found in the MoU; according to the MoU, the project should continue over 4 years, with the possibility of further continuation, where the donor should give advice rather than demand, and where decisions were to be taken by Nepalese agents.

The idea about the role of the donor and the developing country in the Formative Research project seems to be in line with the description of the "autonomous approach" to capacity building. The donor is described as an adviser, and the developing country is described as a partner, actively taking responsibility over their own development. This is in contrast to a "gap-filling approach" to capacity building, where development projects are highly donor-driven and the developing countries are seen as passive recipient of aid.

5.4 LOCAL AUTONOMY

With the exception of the few donor representatives that was involved in the Formative Research project, all stakeholders involved in the project should be *Nepalese*. The donor argued that "Formative Research" could be useful for implementers of a reform because it offers "national ownership over the research process" (UFD 2003: 4). UFD emphasis the importance of ownership:

> the Formative Research model depart from the notion of [the Nepalese] government taking a leading role, with national and local ownership at the heart of the process. (UFD 2003: 8).

Involvement of stakeholders at various stages in the process is viewed as important for the success of the project, and the broad involvement of Nepalese stakeholders is also thought to make the feeling of national ownership stronger:

> The formative model assigns a central role to the national agency/ministry in declining key questions and focus for the research as well as what actions should be taken following advice from the advisory group. Also the central role played by a national research institution and its researchers strengthens national focus and national ownership. Furthermore, collecting data according to the administrative needs of local bureaucracy and the ministry rather than according to the interest of the various donor countries and their administrative routines, will ensure a more relevant set of information – given that the main challenge is on how to deal with a national and local implementation of a reform. It creates national ownership to the data and research findings, thereby increasing the possibility of them being used for future planning purposes – even becoming part of national databanks and registers (UFD 2003: 9).

The relevance of the project being founded within a Nepalese framework is also underlined in the MoU:

> The main consideration behind the organizational model of the FRP is to anchor the project activities within a **Nepalese context**: the **policy and planning part** in the MOE, Nepal and the **research execution part** in a national research institution[21] (MoU 2000, annex 1: II)

By also locating the responsibility for conducting all project activities within these institutions, and not involving expatriates and foreign "experts", much is in place for national ownership to be secured;

> The Project is part of the BPEP II and thus an element in HMG [His Majesties Government] educational policy implementation. The Project therefore falls within the domain of the Ministry of Education, Nepal (MoU 2000: 2).

> The MOE, Nepal is responsible for all activities with the execution of the FRP as stated in the MoU between the Parties." (MoU 2000, annex 1: II).

Thus, the responsibility, and the ownership over the project, is placed within the Nepalese government, in this case the Ministry of Education. According to Stewart and Wang (2003), as introduced in chapter 3, an important consideration relevant to ownership lies in the manner and *level of participation* by the participants in the process. Stewart and Wang uses the concepts "deep", "narrow", "wide" or "shallow" to separate between different levels of participation[22]. Drawing on these terms, the Formative Research Project aimed at having a "deep" participation as it should involve a considerable amount of Nepalese decision-making

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[21] Original emphasis
[22] See section 3.5 for a presentation and discussion of Stewart and Wang's concepts

power. The project set up to include various participants and interest groups and can thus not be considered as 'narrow'. The MoU also envisioned a broad-based process which should involve a range of practitioners and stakeholders at different levels, and could thus be considered as 'wide'. Finally, the participant's impact was not supposed to be limited to information-sharing or consultation, but should be an object for discussion and learning, and thus their participation would not be 'shallow'. Hence, it appears that the MoU envisions the participation of Nepalese practitioners, stakeholders and researchers to be a '*deep*' process, where the participants should be able to 'influence' and 'control' policymaking, agenda-setting and implementation. The MoU also seems to envision the process as '*wide*' and *inclusive*, encompassing broad sectors of domestic practitioners and stakeholders.

5.5 SUMMARY

The purpose of this section has been to introduce the objectives and strategies of the Formative Research project, and relate these objectives with the analytical categories developed in chapter 3, the "gap-filling approach" and the "autonomous approach". The discussion showed that capacity building should happen in all three groups of participants in the project; *researchers*, *implementers* and *policy makers*. Capacity building was also intended to happen at both the level of the *individual* (among researchers and public a staff) and at an *institutional level* (to build capacity in MOES and DOE).

Capacity building was intended to happen through endogenous processes, by calling upon a cooperation between the research milieu in education research in Nepal and public administration concerned with implementing education policies. By emphasizing that it is the existing institutions, the bureaucracy in MOES and local researchers that are in focus for the project, the project documents also emphasis that the project will build on existing capacity. The Formative Research project was described as a partnership between UFD and MOES, in which the responsibility of the project lays in the hands MOES. National ownership is sought to be achieve by engaging only Nepalese participants, and defining the donor as an adviser. The project was not to be donor-driven and all donor involvement should be trough an advisor, which had no juridical influence. Hence, the Formative Research project seems to be described as belonging to the "*autonomous approach*" to capacity building. The capacity building efforts in the Formative Research project documents are thus counterparts to the objectives of the gap-filling approach of development, in which development projects tend to

be donor-driven, use of expatriates is common, and decision making lies in the hands of the donor and not the developing country. The Formative Research project can thus be said to belong to the "new architecture" of development aid.

The purpose of a document analysis of the goals and objectives in the Formative Research project has been to provide a background for analyzing the social processes that takes place between the local participants in this project. The next two chapters compares these theoretical assumptions about what capacity building should be in the Formative Research project, with the practical experiences of the participants involved in the project.

6. UNDERSTANDINGS OF CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE FORMATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

As presented in the previous chapter, the objectives and strategies of the Formative Research project strongly indicated that it belongs within the rhetoric of the "new" way of capacity building. The project thus represented an "autonomous approach" for capacity building and not the "gap-filling approach" as many other capacity building projects still do. This chapter gives a presentation of how the project participants understand and describe capacity building and how these understandings could be related to the gap-filling -and autonomous approaches to capacity building. The main focus for this chapter is whether there are any differences in the three groups of participants in the Formative Research project when it comes to how they understand capacity building, and how they describe capacity building activities in the project. The main objective is to see how the participants' descriptions fit together with the goals for capacity building in the Formative Research project, as presented in chapter 5. This section will also discuss whether the participants describe capacity building as an input or an output when talking about capacity in the Formative Research project.

To shed light over these questions, I will start this chapter by giving extracts from interviews with the three groups of participants in the Formative Research project. I then move on to presenting what was a very interesting finding in my material; the respondents seemed to shift their opinion according to how "personal" the topic for the conversation was. This resulted in that they sometimes described capacity building as an *input* and sometimes as an *output*. The last sections discuss central aspects in the participants' understanding of capacity building.

6.1 DEFINING "CAPACITY BUILDING"

This section is composed of extracts from interviews with the participants in the Formative Research project, where they describe what they understand with "capacity" and the processes in which capacity building takes place. The section is divided in three parts; the first part investigates how *researchers* talk about capacity, the second part how the *project superiors* talk about capacity, and in the last part I look into how the *implementers* in the Department of Education (DOE) talk about capacity, as there was a difference in the opinions of these three groups of participants.

POLICY MAKERS

Policy maker nr 2, works in a high position in MOES. He tells me that "capacity" is not a new concept in development projects in Nepal, and that Denmark has been doing "*capacity building*" of ministry personnel in the education sector for years. One capacity building effort has been to offer ministry staff to take masters and PhD degrees in Danish universities. This was all part of "*the capacity building program*" he explains to me. This type of capacity building seems to be similar to the one of the gap-filling approach, where transferring knowledge from the West is seen as applicable. He also tells me that he has got his PhD abroad too, in the USA. But capacity building in the Formative Research project is different from this, he claims:

> We are not giving certificates. It's not linked to giving certificates. The Danish Capacity building program in the BPEP II was devoted to academic qualifications. And therefore they [ministry personnel] got exams from Denmark. It was under the Capacity building program. But, Capacity building, I feel, is a never ending process. One can not be perfect. So, all trough your life you can develop your Capacity (Policy maker nr. 2)

This statement might imply that he feels that "capacity" is about something more than just "giving exams", something that needs to be worked with and developed in a never ending process. This bears a similarity to the process that is used to describe capacity building as an output, referred to in chapter 3. Furthermore, he is asked to describe what capacity building efforts have taken place within the Formative Research project:

> I: What capacity building efforts, if any, has been done in the Formative Research?
>
> R: Ah… first of all, we select researchers for the Formative Research project. And then there are other experts in the relevant areas involved. So we tie them up with the researchers. So even though the researchers may not be senior researchers, the experts that are linked to that project are the senior persons. So that way they gain benefit from the senior persons. Advice, counseling and other things. So they give that all through the research project. This means that the person working as a researcher and an associate has the opportunity to work with senior persons all through the year. So that way their capacity, I feel, has been developed. So the researchers involved… so the person will learn… will develop two different kind of capacity. One is to conduct research… with lot of inputs from the experts and other people including the coordinator. And then the person will also be learning more about the formal education. So that way their capacity is definitely being developed, that is what I feel. And the same researchers were selected to conduct research in the very first year. So they are continuing and up to the third year. So the person has an opportunity to work with a senior person. This learning … that really develop the capacity of the people. This is what we can see. (Policy maker nr. 2)

This person describes capacity building among the researchers in the Formative Research project as something that is a consequence of cooperation between different people in the

project. By "*tying up*" regular researchers with senior researchers and other experts in that specific area, the researchers have had the opportunity to learn from the seniors, and by that enhance their capacity. This is the case amongst other stakeholders also, he claims. People in MOES and DOE also have enhanced their capacity, because of the frequent interaction of various agents:

> I feel… certainly Formative Research have developed the capacity, not only of the researchers, but even the people implementing the program. So that is the new thing. The uniqueness of the Formative Research project. That is what I feel. (Policy maker nr. 2)

By involving the Ministry of Education and the Department of Education in the research process – when they decide the research topics – people in the ministry and department will also enhance their capacity.

> From the very beginning of the research work, the research topics and the key questions comes from the ministry and department. And they [the people in the ministry and department] work in different units, different areas. Some of them may be working teacher training, some of them may be working in management in school, some of them may be working early childhood development. They have their own regular work there. But they also give us the research questions. Topic for us to conduct research. So, from the very beginning of the research activities, that is undertaken of the Formative Research Project, they are involved in a way. Because they know what sort of research is being done, because they give the questions. (Policy maker nr. 2)

For example, people in the ministry and department have raised their awareness about what research "is":

> And now they have been more cautious about the research in itself; how valid is the research, what is the sample size, and all those questions that have been raised these days. But I can see, these changes… among these people working at the ministry and department. (Policy maker nr. 2)

Thus, through interaction between regular researchers, senior researchers and other experts, the researchers have enhanced their capacity. And by interaction between the researchers and people working in MOES and DOE, the implementers has raised their capacity, this respondent allege. These descriptions of capacity building follow the idea of capacity building being an *endogenous* process. None of my respondents in MOES or among project supervisors mentioned the donor when speaking about capacity building. They did not seem to think that the donor had to be involved at all, in order to achieve capacity building in the project. Thus, by analyzing these statements in light of the literature presented in chapter 4, this respondent is claiming that endogenous capacity building processes has taken place, as

capacity building has been achieved by processes at the local level with no involvement of a donor.

Thus, policy makers meant that it was positive that various agents in the Formative Research project had the opportunity to cooperate with each other – on cross of different institutions in the project. This, they claimed, made it possible for all involved agents to learn from other, and by this enhance their capacity. This is in coherence with the Formative Research project's goals about a process focus, where cooperation between researchers and bureaucratic staff in the project would lead to capacity building in it self.

RESEARCHERS

Researcher nr 1, who is working at the Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID), feels that the capacity among the researchers has been enhanced because of the Formative Research project:

> R: Because many people are involved in this type of activities. Some are novices, some are experts. Not only as researchers, but capacity from some resource persons, some experts, some advisers, like that. And I think it has made significant contribution to the research capacity in the country (Researcher nr. 1).

He felt that the interaction between various people (novices- and expert-researchers, other recourse persons, experts and advisors) has been a very positive experience, and has contributed to enhance the capacity among the researchers in the project. Interestingly, he is also referring to the Formative Research project as "*the process*", which is in coherence with the project documents presented in chapter 5, which emphasized that the Formative Research project would have a "process focus", avoiding "goal attainment" thinking. The remark from this respondent may thus support the project plan in being a "process" rather than "goal-attainment project".

Researcher nr 2, is a researcher from Tribhuvan University, and has been involved in the Formative Research project as a researcher for 9 months. He does not mention "capacity building" activities in the Formative Research project directly, but he was eager to tell me what he thinks is the strength and the "*good parts*" of the Formative Research project:

> I: How do you feel about this Formative Research? Is it different from other types of research you have done from the university?

R: This is completely different.

I: But what do you think about it?

R: It is good. It is good because eh… We spend a lot of time thinking about it, and people provide a lot of inputs… academics provide input. And policy makers also provide input. And that is the good thing. The essays are often finally read by many people and the… we recommend suggestions to the policy implementers. This is good. (Researcher nr 2).

The way the research is done in the Formative Research project is very good, because various people can provide inputs. In this case, both academics and policy makers provide input in the research process. This, he tells me, is helping to "*secure the quality of the research*". It is also helping to make the implementation of education policies better he says, because the implementers have the chance to get "*field-based findings*" now. He regards this as very positive for the policy makers and implementers, as they also have a chance to learn about this type of research. He tells me that the Formative Research project has benefited because of more interaction between the different actors in the education system, and between these and the researchers.

R: Academic research is completely different [from the Formative Research]. We use very "big words" (in academic research). We want to show our officials personally… because there is a competition between the researchers. This is the first thing. And the second thing is that, the academic research is eh… eh… actually it is best for intellectuals because… it has very little meaning for the policy maker, because the policy maker do not have so much sound academic background. They can easily… Formative Research will be the room to use this research easily. So, academic research… academic articles differs completely.

I: So this Formative Research is…

R: (interrupting) …Formative Research is better… because there are interaction between different actors. Formative is different because there is group discussion, there is meeting with the people, talk with the people, and all these things… It is more reliable. (Researcher nr 2).

Most of the researchers I spoke to was emphasizing the same thing: that interaction with other researchers and also other stakeholders was something new about the Formative Research Project, and they all seemed to feel that this was *positive*, as they had the opportunity to *learn new things* from it.

He also feels that the Formative Research project has also benefited to raise the awareness about research and what he calls "*the research way*", and in the future this will continue to benefit even more:

> R: I think it has benefited. I think it has benefited. And in the long run it will benefit much.

> I: You think so?

> R: Yea!

> I: How will it benefit?

> R: Because these findings are field-based. And it has gone through a rigorous process. So eh… the ultimate landing places is to use this findings. Everyone thinks that now… even the district education office, the central office, and the local stakeholders. Because we meet all these people. So… this is the only solution. Because people wants this to work. Because this is the *research way*, and it passes through several doors. And we collect every opinion. So that… this is the only…only and best solution. (Researcher nr 2, my emphasis).

The "*research way*" is something that will work, he claims, because there is interaction between many people and every opinion is collected. Thus, through this interaction, people are able to learn more about the research way, and this is considered as something that has benefited positively to the community in Nepal.

Researcher nr 4 feels that sharing the research results with other stakeholder as an positive element in the Formative Research project. That their research results could be of use for the ministry also made them proud and happy. When the researchers disseminated their research results, there were representatives from the ministry and department present, as well as other researchers and members of the Formative research Advisory Group (FRAG). And it gave them a feeling of worthiness to present their findings in front of all these people. This researcher tells me about his experience of disseminating the research results in front of people from ministry and FRAG:

> Because… traditionally what we used to do is like… we go collect data, prepare the report and then give it back to who we were told to do research for you know. But in this one [the Formative Research project], participation of ministry people, and the FRAG members… you have to defend your findings. You know, in front of them. And it goes so many times. So that's kind of very specific findings we should produce. Research findings you know. It's kind of your defending your self. Answering their questions, and going to field again. (Researcher nr 4)

It makes him happy that his research could be of use, he tells me. And it makes him feel good; "*like… like your work is worth*". Most of the researchers expressed enthusiasm to their research results being used by the ministry for implementation. Many others stressed the point that they are now able to follow their research findings trough the process, and that the ministry hearing about the findings creates motivation for doing good research. Many of the

researchers also feel that the quality of their research is better now. The openness in the structure of the project, where findings are disseminated along the way creates better reliability in the research, they claim.

These researchers claim that they have indeed enhanced their capacity from participating in the Formative Research project. They feel that they have enhanced their personal research capacity. They also feels that it is positive that the policy makers also had the opportunity to learn more about "*the research way*". What is common for all these descriptions is that the capacity has been enhanced because of *interaction* between various agents in the project. Thus, by only participating in the project, the agents have raised their capacity. This is in line with the project documents presented in chapter 5, claiming that the cooperation between stakeholders at different levels would be a means to capacity building in itself, among the participants in the Formative Research project. Thus, the researchers seem to be describing capacity building as an *output* when they talk about capacity building in the project.

IMPLEMENTERS

While the researchers and the project superiors meant that the participants in the Formative Research project had enhanced their capacity because of cooperation across institutions, the implementers I spoke to did not share the same feeling. Rather, they claimed that they had not learned anything new and not enhanced their capacity in particular by participating in this project. Here is an extract from an interview with an implementer working in DOE:

> I: Have you felt that you have learned anything from this project?
>
> R: Eh… neeh… only we feel that it [the education sector] is necessary to improve… (Implementer nr 3).

This respondent do not feel that he has learned anything particularly different by participating in the Formative Research project and can think very few actual changes in capacity due to the Formative Research project. The only thing is that he feels that they have learned that Formative Research is a good source of information:

> The need for research, has come trough this type of research also [Formative Research]. Before that we don't feel that this type of research is needed. But now we feel that Formative research is needed. […] And also we learned how to get information… these things we learn. (Implementer nr. 3)

This opinion was also shared by many of the other respondents on DOE; that they were doing the same as they always had, but one small change had come: more "*openness*" for what positive role research base information could play for the ministry and department. Still, many of the respondents in DOE often told me about things they felt had *not* worked according to the plan in the Formative Research project. The following extract is from the same respondent in DOE:

> I: But has there been any changes done in the department in the way of doing things?[after the Formative Research project]
>
> R: You mean that [Formative] research changed department of education? I don't feel so.
>
> I: It is the same?
>
> R: Yes. I am doing… same as before
>
> I: In ministry also? You think it is the same also?
>
> R: Maybe… I don't know… haha […] Maybe… but in this section we are doing in same way. Some way there is a little change has come, but it is very, very nominal. But I don't know if it is due to research or due to other things, I don't know that.
>
> I: What kind of changes are they?
>
> R: Eh… previously many people are very much negative in research, but now… by Formative Research many people think research is necessary to improve and for development
>
> I: Not all, but many?
>
> R: Many yea, not all. That is changed. The thinking aspect is change. But practically we have to still wait (Implementer nr. 3)

This extract from an interview with an implementer in DOE indicates that there might have been a small change in what he calls the "*thinking aspect*"; that the many people in the department are more positive to the role research can have in improvement of the education sector. Thus the "*research way*", that one of the researchers above argued had been commonly known, is also recognized by this respondent in DOE.

As we remember from chapter 5, one of the objectives for the Formative Research project was to create a "change in mindset" about what research based knowledge could be used to in the education sector in Nepal. According to this respondent, there had been some small changes regarding this in the ministry and the department. However, this respondent also says that this is the only change. No other changes have occurred. Thus, the Formative Research project

seems to have succeeded in opening up for somewhat more positive attitudes concerning what research based knowledge can be used to among people working with implementation of education policies in the education sector in Nepal. However, the objective of enhancing the individual capacity of all levels of participants' in the project does not fit together with the descriptions of the project the implementers have, as they do not feel that their capacity has been enhanced in any form. This might imply that the capacity building processes the researchers and project superiors claimed had occurred trough participating in the project in it self, have not taken place among the implementers. Building capacity from the level of the individual seems to have been successful only among the researchers and policy makers. At least the people I talked to in DOE, claimed that the institutional capacity had not been raised among implementers.

Thus, while the researchers and the project superiors in MOES felt that participants in the Formative Research project in it self, and thus local processes, had contributed to *capacity building* of various people, the implementers, on the other hand, did not feel that their capacity in the project had increased just by participating in the project. They replied that they did not feel that the capacity had been built in any noticeable way, and felt that they were doing the same things in the same way as they did before. They had also had very little contact with the donor, and the donor had not been involved in any capacity building activities among Implementers in DOE.

6.2 ENCOUNTERING THE FIELD: EXPLAINING GENERAL AND PERSONAL DISCOURSES

The participants in the Formative Research project (except the implementers) described the capacity building activities in line with the descriptions in the project documents presented in chapter 5. Thus, so far, the analysis of the capacity building in the Formative Research project has presented a picture of a project that worked in coherence to the "plans". However, in the interviews with the participants in the Formative Research project, their opinions and experiences from "capacity building" did not appear as neither clear nor belonging to one particular category. Rather, the participants seemed rather ambiguous and had several opinions that contradicted each other.

As I had chosen a "grounded" methodological approach to my fieldwork, I did not have any specific research questions I wanted to illuminate or any theory I wanted to test. This opened up for data-collecting methods which had to be evaluated and reconsidered along the way. I started out asking the project participants to describe their personal experience with capacity building in the project. However, I experienced that they were rather uninterested to talk about this. It seemed like the participants did not see it as very relevant to try to describe how capacity building could work in *practice*. It became a methodological obstacle to get my respondents to talk about their personal experience from the project, as they continued to answer my questions by describing quite general experiences. When I realized that the participants did not tell me about personal experiences, I found it necessary to reconsider the interview guide I had been using and try to approach the topic from a different angle. I therefore asked the respondent to describe specific situations in which they felt that they had learnt something and capacity building had taken place.

At a first glance, the participants gave the impression that they had nothing but positive experiences from the project, and that it had been a unique possibility for them to learn about "Formative Research" and to enhance their capacity. They never mentioned the donor as particularly involved in the project, but emphasized how good it is that Nepalese researchers could cooperate with the Ministry of Education (MOES) about question concerning the education sector. However, when conducting the interviews, a feeling emerged that there was something that was "lacking" in the participants' descriptions of capacity building in the project. I realized that the descriptions the participants gave about capacity building activities in the project were somewhat rather *general*. The respondent's comments about capacity in the Formative Research project seldom referred to their *personal experience* from the project. They all referred to quite general statements, concerning that "*the researchers*" and "*people in the ministry*" had increased their capacity by participating in the Formative Research project. None of these descriptions contained any specific example where this had happened.

The point of departure and the key to understanding how the participants in the Formative Research project think about their own development is thus to be found within the inconsistency between their *general* and *personal* descriptions of the project. When I turned the distinction between general and personal descriptions into the point of departure for further analysis, new findings appeared from the data material that contributed to the emergence of a more nuanced image of how the respondents understand capacity building.

In the "general" discourse about the cooperation between the bureaucrats and the researchers, the impression was that the cooperation was very successful and had resulted in that participants in all levels of the Formative Research project had enhances their capacity just by participating in the project in itself. However, the more "*personal*" version expresses that the researchers did not meet with the bureaucrats were often, they did not know if the reports was of any use and many also felt that the researchers questions MOES formulated for them was "old" and of no use. The bureaucrats also told me that they did not know how to use the research reports, because the researchers (or the FRAG group) did not suggest this in their action steps. Thus, it can seem that the "personal" versions reveal some tensions about the cooperation between the groups of participants in the Formative Research project that the general versions do not.

For example we saw that the researchers are proud that their research reports could be of use for the policy makers and the implementers, and they felt that their research was a good contribution to making policy changes. However, when I asked direct questions to the researchers, some answered that they did not actually know what happened to the research reports after they had finished writing them:

> I: After you finish the research report, you give it to the ministry of education?
>
> R: Yes
>
> I: Do they read it?
>
> R: Eh… I don't know! We give to them, but then we are finished… We don't hear anything more from the ministry. Maybe they read it, maybe they through it in the garbage bin, I don't know. (Researcher nr 8).

Thus, there seem to be a gap between the general version of the processes in the Formative Research project, where the reports are of big use for the policy makers, and the "personal" versions of the respondents, who tell me that the reports are perhaps not used the way it was intended after all.

During my field work I got the impression that people were often asking for actions in the project that actually were meant to be there. This could prove as an illustration for the *lack of* interaction in the Formative Research project. Several people did for example think that there should be an extra "committee" consisting of researchers, experts in the field, policy makers

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and implementers. This group should be in charge of making suggestions for changes in the education policies, on the basis of the researcher's findings in order to make the education better in the schools. Several people suggested this. What is interesting is that this "committee" seems to look very much like the "FRAG-group", introduced in chapter 5, who should be in charge of "give policy relevant advice, based on the research findings in combination with practical knowledge of the process […] The group will thus be an arena for analysis and interpretation of the implementation" (UFD 2003: 6). When I asked them if it was the FRAG group they meant, and if they could tell me more about this group, they had heard about it, but did not know what it did or what its role was.

Another common misunderstanding between research and implementers concerned who was in charge of writing the "action steps". In the project documents, the FRAG group was supposed to discuss and write the action steps. But the researchers told me that, in reality, it was the researchers themselves that wrote the action steps, with no help from the FRAG group. However, many researchers felt that they were not capable to write the action steps because they had little experience in practicalities in actually implementing such actions steps. The implementers did not seem to know much about the FRAG-group either. They felt that it was the *researchers* that should contribute more in describing the action steps.

Thus, the role of the FRAG group was commonly misunderstood by the project participants, leading to underlying conflicts between the implementers and researchers. While the researchers told me that they felt that they did not have the right competence to suggest *how* the action steps could be set into practice, the implementers wanted to know more information about how the action steps should be *implemented*. They argued that the researchers were the ones with the experience from the schools in the district, as they had never themselves been to these schools. Implementer 3, in DOE, feels that the researchers are doing too little to suggest what, and how, implementation activities could be improved:

> Actually right now they (the researchers) could not suggest us on the "how-part". They are very weak in how-part. They are just saying: this is happening, you should do like this, like that. It's a list of recommendations. But we are suggested them to find *why* it is not happening.

He expresses that it is a problem that he does not know how to make implementations in order to make actual changes in the school. And he blames the researchers for this: "*They just dig out the problems. They don't answer why things is not happening in the schools. They do not*

successfully identify what kind of intervention is needed to fulfill that gap, or to make the program better in the schools".

> I: So they [the researchers] should not only provide the research or the fact, but also how to implement it?
>
> R: Yea.
>
> I: Is that a problem that it's difficult to implement these results?
>
> R: Sometimes it is difficult (Implementer nr. 3)

He further outlines that "there should be some implementation mechanism also. Only the action plan is not very workable. The action plan is just for the paper now. But it should be implementation also" (Implementer nr. 2). This implies that he does not know how to improve and change things in the schools based on the research results. That people in DOE has problems in how to actually implement the results from the research are emphasized by several others in the department also:

> So the researchers groups should go to the school and do some assessment. On the base of assessment they should analyze why it is not happening, why it is happening, when it should happen. Like that they should analyze. […] Then it should be given to us. Then it would be able to be much practical. (Implementer nr. 2)

The staff in DOE seems to feel that the researchers should have been doing a better effort to help them implement. My impression was that MOES and DOE worked hard to make the reform improve education in the schools, but they did not always have the knowledge to decide what the best initiatives to make such a change were. This, they claimed was the researchers job to find out of, as they were the ones that actually had the opportunity to see in practice how the implementation were running.

6.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LOCAL CAPACITY: EXTERNAL OR LOCAL KNOWLEDGE?

The question of building capacity in developing countries poses new questions about *how* this should be done. As seen in chapter 3, the gap-filling approach and the autonomous approach focuses on different aspects in their definitions of how capacity should be built, and the main difference was that of the role of *external* or *existing local* knowledge was in the centre of the process. What knowledge, and whose knowledge is considered as the most "right" is not easy to answer. However, during fieldwork, I got the feeling that the local participants were not

confident that their own knowledge was "good enough". As I have discussed in the methodology chapter, the respondents might have assigned me a closer connection to NORAD than what was actually the case, something that might even have influenced how they describe capacity building the Formative Research Project. Another thing that might have influenced their answers was me being a *foreigner*. The fact that I came from a university in "the West" seemed to impress many of my respondents, and I had the feeling that they assigned me knowledge that I was not in the possession of. Even if I explained to them that I was just a student, and that I had little knowledge about both the Formative Research Project and development in such, many asked me for advice on how for example capacity problems could be solved. The following extract is from an interview with Researcher nr 6:

> I: What does Capacity really mean?
>
> R: Capacity… What I feel is that… if he or she continues to work with Formative Research, certainly then his or her Capacity will be developed in terms of conducting research, Capacity in terms of knowledge, Capacity in terms of skills. I think all that counts. I feel…
>
> I: Yes, ok.
>
> R: What do you think yourself?
>
> I: Aahh… I… I'm here to learn about the Formative Research Project. That's why I'm here… (laughter)

Actually, many of my interviews ended in this situation when the topic *capacity* and *knowledge* was brought up. Strikingly many of my respondents asked me for ideas and comments, when they were insecure of their own answers. As in this example, my respondent first lists what he understand with the concepts of capacity. He seems, however, to be feeling a bit insecure about his answer, and asks me what I think about this.

However, it must be noted that not all of my respondents asked me for "advice" or assigned me the role as a "foreign expert". As I explained in the methodology chapter, many of the researchers regarded me more as a "novice", as they were quite experienced researchers and I was out on my first field work. This lead me being met with sympathy and much patience from many of my research respondents. However, the trend that many of my respondents asked me for advice, and seemed to think that I actually did have knowledge that they did not, is too noticeable to be neglected as a finding.

It was just as many respondents from the policy makers and implementers who asked me for "advice", as it was researchers. The policy makers and implementers are also the two groups of respondents that have been most used to interaction with various *donors* in the past. Thus, it might seem to be a connection between how much interaction the respondents are used to having with foreign representatives from donors, and how they interacted with and towards me.

6.4 "GAP-FILLING" OR "AUTONOMOUS" CAPACITY BUILDING

This section explores how the participants' descriptions of capacity building fits with the two different approaches for capacity building presented in chapter four. As we saw, that the *Gap-filling approach* and the *Autonomous approach* for capacity building represents very different ideas and values concerning what processed that are needed in order to build the capacity of "developing countries". The Gap-filling approach assumes that knowledge and capacity can be "transferred" through technical assistance and defines capacity building as an input where external know-how is central. The Autonomous on the other hand, is forging local ownership and emphasis that "endogenous systems and project processes as are the appropriate entry points for development assistance" (Lavergne 2005), and defines capacity building as an output. The two models thus make a distinction between capacity building as processes that are *locally founded* and *external efforts* to promote those processes.

The researchers was the respondents that strongest expressed that they had experienced a specifically building in their capacity because of the activities they had been involved in the Formative Research project. When using the "public" discourse they expressed – in line with the project documents – that the interaction between various local stakeholders had been positive and had contributed to enhance their capacity. When using a more "personal" discourse the statements was more or less the same. They had many examples of how their capacity had been increased, although the focus now was more directed to how the other researchers had helped them to enhance their capacity, and they could not give me concrete examples of how the interaction with the policy makers and implementers had contributed to capacity building. All of these elements fit into the *Autonomous approach* for capacity building. Also the donor was also frequently mentioned by the researchers as a source for their increased capacity. Especially the Norwegian advisor was frequently mentioned in their examples of capacity building. But what is interesting is that the donor was there only to

support, and not to tell them what to do. This is also in line with the descriptions of the donor-receiver relationship that is described as the ideal under the *Autonomous approach*.

The policy makers also emphasized the positive sides of cooperation between bureaucrats and the researchers, and how this had contributed to bureaucrats learning more about the "research way" and how research based knowledge could be of use in policy making. Their descriptions were limited to the "public" discourse however, and they could not give me examples of how this was set out in practice. However, the public descriptions they used fit with the *Autonomous approach* for capacity building, however. They emphasized that *local processes* had been at the center for the capacity building activities, and that the existing knowledge of local experts was being used in order to enhance capacity. This is very central in the *Autonomous approach* for capacity building, where "local knowledge and experiences" should be the point of departure for capacity building activates. None of the policy makers mentioned that the donor had to be involved in order to build capacity.

The implementers did, as shown, not feel that capacity building had taken place at all. They felt that the policies were the same as before, and that the research that was done was of no use for them. They did not feel that the interaction with the researchers and the policy makers had contributed significantly to neither capacity building, nor better implementation of education policies.

6.5 HOW TO MEASURE CAPACITY BUILDING?

The important question of how capacity building actually can be *measured* needs to be addressed, as this can also be an explanation to why many of my respondents had difficulties giving concrete examples of how capacity actually had been increased in the project. Measuring the outcome this might have had for the actual capacity building of the participants is difficult, however. Without drawing any conclusions at this point, the fact that participants in a capacity building tend to stick to the *language of development* can in it self make it difficult to measure capacity building efforts. The reason can be as easy as: they can not measure the outcome in numbers or quantify it, and this makes it difficult to "prove" or give a concrete example of whether there has taken place an actual change in the capacity level or not. Capacity is about knowledge, and knowledge can not be quantified like other

development project can, like for example building a bridge. One of my respondents also talks about this:

> Now, this is very difficult to measure in terms of what Capacity has been built in this Formative Research Project. I don't think it would be easy to measure. Ah… it is like expanding the horizon, and how do you measure expansion of horizon? It is very difficult yes. (Researcher nr. 5)

Jerve (2002) also emphasizes that it is hard to measure any concrete outcomes of capacity building efforts. He argues that as long as capacity building is about raising the capacity of individuals, it is hard to actually measure what consequences it has that the skills of people is improved:

> The aggregate effect of all these new individual skills and experiences is impossible to measure, and depends largely on political and institutional conditions over which the aid has little influence (Jerve 2002: 21)

Capacity building is in Ellerman's (2002, 2005) words, an "*indirect*" way to achieve development, and the way to get there is not necessarily easy. It has been claimed that this could one reason for the difficulties for many development projects to actually follow up in reality what it claims to do in theory (Ellerman 2002: 46).

6.6 Summary

Through the examples presented in this chapter, I have tried to demonstrate how the local participant's think and reflect about "capacity" and about "capacity building" in the Formative Research project. Even if most of my respondents claimed that the capacity of the participants had been built, many of the people I interviewed had problems in identifying specific things that had actually improved during the project period. They all spoke in quite general terms. Only when the conversation turned into a more "personal" tone, did some of my respondents share specific examples of capacity building in the Formative Research project. And interestingly, when speaking more personally they actually often told me about things they felt had *not* worked according to plan after all. When I then started looking more carefully into their descriptions, I found that there was a clear inconsistency between the general descriptions the participants gave of the project and the explanations they gave of their practical experiences from the project. The general descriptions defined "capacity building" in the Formative Research project as something that were based on existing capacity and where capacity building took place because of interaction between local agents,

all elements that clearly belong to the "autonomous approach". The personal descriptions, on the other hand, often revealed that the interaction that was described in the general version often did not take place in practice at all and the participants did not seem to emphasize that local capacity was "good enough" in order to achieve development. It is also interesting that it was among the group that had most contact with the donor through direct training, the researchers, which these contradictions were most clear, or at least easiest to observe. However, the observation was consistent for all the groups of informants. These are aspects that seem to fit more into the "gap-filling approach" than the autonomous approach. Their experiences from being participants in the project can thus not be placed into one specific category, and these tensions are all aspects that contribute to making the participants' descriptions of "capacity building" in the Formative Research project diffuse and ambiguous.

Why do the local participants interpret the project into both gap-filling and autonomous? To answer this question I find it relevant to look further into the meeting between the donor and the local participants, and to see how the participants interpret the relationship they have with the donor. The next chapter will look into whether it is possible that tensions can occur in the meeting with the donor and the local participants, which reproduce gap-filling values rather than embracing autonomous values.

7. NEGOTIATING IDENTITY:
RECIPIENT OR PARTNER?

This chapter presents the challenges the participants in the Formative Research project meets in their daily work, and analyzes how the participants negotiate their identity within the discoursive frames of capacity building. The constant identity struggles the participants in the Formative Research project is undertaking is reflected in their interpretations of their *own role* in the project. This chapter looks into the meeting between the donor and the local participants in the Formative Research project in to order to see how the participants interpret their own role in the relationship with the donor. Do they belong to the "autonomous approach" to capacity building and identity themselves as "partners" or do they identify themselves within the "gap-filling approach", as "recipients"?

7.1 PUBLIC DISCOURSES AND THE UNSPOKEN PERSONAL TROUBLES

As seen in the last section, the participants in the Formative Research project defines the cooperation between bureaucrats and researchers differently when they speak generally about it, and when they speak about their personal experiences. When speaking generally about what capacity is, the participants in the Formative Research project was usually in agreement with definitions and understandings from national literature and studies on the field (as presented in chapter 3), and also with the project goals and objectives (as presented in chapter 5). However, when speaking about more personal experiences from their own work in the project, they do not use the same descriptions. When talking about practical and self-experienced situations in relation to the Formative Research project, the respondents use a different "language" than when explaining about the general principle of the project. These differences can be understood as an expression that they use two different "discourses"; when they are talking about things that do not concern them directly, they will "stick to the norm" – what just about everybody could say represents some kind of public "truth". When the same people talk about topics that do concern them personally, however, people sometimes redefines this public "truth", and often this ends up with inconsistent or contradictory opinions. They seem to shift between a *public discourse* and *personal troubles* of their

experiences of the practice of capacity building[23].

My respondents used the public discourse when being asked to describe capacity building in the Formative Research project. While the more personal aspects of it – their personal experiences with capacity building – was something that was *not spoken about*. As elaborated in the methodology chapter, making the respondents talk about more personal issues regarding the project was not very easy. It seems like the "public discourse" is quite strong among the project participants. And this discourse is emphasizing more or less the same objectives as the project documents do. However, the "personal discourse" the participants used revealed that the objectives in the Formative Research project was not working in the same way in *practice* as it did in the project documents. This could also be seen as an expression for that what the donor suggests is highly respected and that the local participants do not object to what the norm "should be". Interestingly, when speaking generally, the participants used more or less the exact same definitions as the project documents on what capacity is and how capacity could be enhanced in the project. They did neither have any own definitions of what capacity is, nor reflections on other ways capacity could be enhanced in the project than the ones provided in the project plans. It can actually seem like they described blue-prints of the project documents, something that bears a likeness to central attributes within the Gap-filling approach to development, which forged projects that was blue-prints of the donor's strategies. What does it mean that they use the exact same definitions as the donor? In my study of the Formative Research project, the analysis situation was quite special because all agents involved in a development will be influenced by the *language of development*. The language of development can not be said to be endogenous or Nepalese, neither belonging to the donor. It is part of an international language of development, which has its own concepts and connotations. This language, even if reflecting equality and respect, is invented by the donors of development aid, and not the developing country. In this explanation, the personal troubles of the researchers and implementers are something that is not *spoken of*. When I asked them if they had ever told anybody about these problems, they usually responded that they had not because "*this is the project*", indicating that the thing were the way it was supposed to. Thus, there is a tension between the "public discourse" of the Formative Research project and the "personal troubles" of the participants in the project.

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[23] The terms "public discourse" and "personal trouble" is inspired by C. Wright Mills' (1959) concepts of "public issue" and "personal trouble".

7.2 NORWAY AS "ADVISOR" OR "EXPERT"?

This section gives a presentation of how my respondents interpret the relation they have to the donor in the project. As we saw in chapter 3, the "*autonomous approach*" for capacity building describes the role that the donor should have in capacity building project quite differently from the "*gap-filling approach*". The following quote summarize the role of the donor in accordance to the values of capacity building within the "*autonomous approach*":

> […] the role for donors should be reduced. They should not take the lead in CD [capacity development] processes. They should stick to the analysis needed for their own decisions about whether or not to support what must essentially be domestically lead processes. Donors may support such processes with technical and process expertise, but the support should be acquired and managed by the domestic partners, not by the donors themselves. [24] (European Commission 2005: 27)

As the Formative Research project documents showed, the donor should provide *advisory* activities in order to enhance existing capacity among the bureaucrats in MOES and DOE, as well as the researchers.

When asked to describe the relationship with the donor in the project, many mentioned the Norwegian advisor, Trygve[25], as an important person. Especially the researchers did this, and the descriptions the researchers gave of their relationship to the donor were also more practical than the ones of policy makers, project superiors and implementers. While the other two groups gave descriptions that were rather general, the researchers were much more concerned by the parts of the project concerning the research activities only. Therefore, their descriptions of the donor are mostly related to the specific advisory activities the donor was involved in. In contrast to the other two groups of respondents, who never mentioned the donor unless I asked specific questions about it, most of the researchers mentioned the donor frequently and especially the Norwegian advisor.

The researchers seemed to look at the Norwegian advisor as especially important for the success of the project. One of the senior researchers explains to me that his contribution

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[24] This quote is also presented in section 3.4 in chapter 3, outlining how the role of the donor has changed from the gap-filling approach to the autonomous approach.

[25] "Trygve" has been given a pseudonym, and this is thus not the authentic name of this person. See section 2.2 about anonymization of the data material.

involves revising research reports, mostly through e-mail. He also visits two-three times a year, and then he holds meetings, seminars and work-shops with the researchers and the ministry staff. In short: "he is here to provide us technical support" (Researcher 6). Some of the researchers mentioned that they had had quite a lot of contact with the donor. In particular, the Norwegian research advisor had been to Nepal many times to guide and advise them. Researcher nr 3 tells me about how he feels that his "*research capacity*" has been increased because of the Formative Research project:

> And we had also opportunity to learn from people like Trygve. And some Norwegian researchers also used to come and we had interaction and discussion. That was also an opportunity to learn. So… this was the activities which were able to… increase Capacity in the researchers. (Researcher nr 3)

Other researchers emphasized the same. Researcher nr 2 tells me that the "*technical assistance*" they got from the Norwegian research advisor was very helpful for them:

> Trygve was our technical assistance. He also provides… he also is a lot of help, during the work (Researcher nr 2)

These researchers seem to put the donor in a very central position of the project, with Trygve as a person they have strong believe in. Some even expresses that the knowledge Trygve has is more "useful" than their own:

> I: So you come to him with your ideas and does he look at them?
>
> R: Yes. Every 6 month he comes and he… all the researchers… he looks reports, and progress and everything. He individually talks with every researcher. Including the coordinator. And if needed, he will invite ministry people. And in this way he gives the inputs and interaction. […] Like… if he doesn't understand something or he understood in a different way, then we have to make it clear. And if he is convinced, he will give the suggestion. If not he will say no, this will not work. (Researcher 4)

Trygve will decide if the reports will "work" or not. This may indicate that they feel that Trygve has some kind of knowledge that the researchers do not have. This researcher expresses that they need inputs from the outside to secure the quality of their reports. Norway and the Norwegian advisor were seen as an invaluable source of information in the project. They had experience from doing such type of research in their own country, and none had objections against that Norway could and should teach them about this research.

The researchers also mention the donor in some of their descriptions about capacity building. In these descriptions, the role of the donor is seen as important – but not necessary – in order to make capacity building happen. As the donor should just be supporting, and not telling

them what to do, the capacity building activities that involved the donor was not "donor-driven" and thus activities based on exogenous knowledge. This is in line with the objectives about capacity building in the Formative Research project as presented in the project documents and plans.

However, my respondents also told me that it more meetings was conducted among the ministry people and researchers when Trygve were visiting, and not so many meetings as it was supposed to be when he was not there (Researchers 7). Trygve thus was a premise for carry out the meetings as planned. He was also very much involved in the FRAG group, many researchers told me. He came to meetings and gave suggestions and was strongly involved in their activities. As one of my respondents put it: "*He was more than a regular member of the FRAG*" (Researcher 7). The Norwegian advisor is viewed as a directly representative for the donor, and the research participants emphasis the role of this person as more important than the Nepalese government.

One respondent seems to have a clear picture of what the role of the donor should be in the Formative Research project: a provider of know-how. He tells me that he feels that there has been lacking input of "*know-how*" in the project, and that the donor should share their knowledge with them. The assumption seems to be that the donor has valuable knowledge that the project participants does not.

> I: And should also Norway share more of their experience?
>
> R: Yes, if they have such type of experiences. Because in our context… right now we don't have such practices. We are not doing… in my knowledge… I am not sure… somebody is doing such type of research, in our Nepalese context. So in some areas… if they are doing… I heard that in Sri Lanka same type of practice is happening. Why not sharing such practices? This is… maybe it work good. Why not sharing this? And why not try to implement such a modality in research. Action research. So technically also we need some "know-how". Only the financial is not enough.
>
> I: Yes. So maybe that should be changes in the next phase? That Norway provides some know-how?
>
> R: Know how also. And some technical support. (Implementer 2)

During this discussion it becomes clear that the Norwegian advisor is looked upon as very central in the project, and even central for the *outcome* of the project.

7.3 SELF-CONFIDENCE

Some of the Nepalese participants' opinions of capacity building in the Formative Research Project were very positive. One impression I got when analyzing the interviews with the participants in the Formative Research project was that they trusted what the donor "taught" them as a knowledge that was better than "Nepalese" produced knowledge. Further, Policy maker nr. 1 tells me that representatives from Norway were active in the beginning in teaching them what "Formative Research" was:

> In the beginning, during the second phase of BPEP II program, someone from… some advisor suggested that this way of doing things or… following their BPEP II Program through Formative Research would be a nice way to… do things. And then we try to understand that and then we said well, yes this seams very good and we seam to adapt it.

Thus, the project was an initiative from Norway, where some representative from Norway suggested how to "do" things, and the donor was very much involved in the beginning he further tells me:

> So we linked ourselves with the ministry of education in Norway. And the ministry arrive here? Other consultants like [Trygve]. And in the beginning I think one or two also came to see us, and advisors and the research centre went to your place, no?

Some advisors and consultants came to Nepal to "se us". Here the same person shares some experiences from the involvement of the donor:

> R: first they come and they see what we are doing and then if they have any questions… if they think that the way we are doing is different from what it should have been done then they first check with us, and why we do like this ok? And then, after some discussion… talk… if we both come to realize what we are doing are ok, then ok. If not then…
>
> I: And then you make change?
>
> R: Yes. (Policy maker nr 1).

This implies that he feels that there is one way of performing the Formative Research project that is more "right" than other ways. One person in MOES is of the opinion that: "the support we got from Norway was very, very useful for us." (Policy maker nr 1). He did not express any feeling that this could be done in any other way than the way the donor provides.

They wish that Norway shall continue to support them, because they trust that Norway have valuable knowledge. The participants seem to have rather low self-confidence when it comes to administrating the Formative Research project. As presented in chapter 5, one of the

objectives in the MoU is to ensure national ownership. In accordance to this plan, the Norwegian consultant's involvement should be reduced when the project enters its second phase, I was told, and more responsibility should be assigned to Nepalese agents. The project documents assume that if the project participants have an expressed wish to claim a real ownership over the project, they have real possibility to actually do this. The question is, however, if they have such a wish. One of my respondents, who worked with research, makes this comment:

> R: He [the Norwegian advisor] was very much involved in the Formative Research Project. All trough this project. But, now he also feels that… in the second phase he was saying: maybe you don't need me for the next phase. You might have gained the needed capacity. So… he may not be visiting... you know… involved to that extend that he was involved in last phase.
>
> I: Ok, why is that?
>
> R: Because of the Capacity Building I mean. […] Ah…so, he feels that it may not be… be required. (Researchers 6).

The Norwegian advisor have expressed that he might not be involved as much in phase two of the Formative Research project, and this is because the Nepalese participants should have gained "*the needed capacity*". But my respondent seems not to be satisfied with this decision, because after this remark there is a pause in the monolog, before he continues:

> But we are proposing to involve him, to continue his support. But certainly his involvement will be reduced. He may not be visiting that much. (Project superior 2).

He does not seem to want the Norwegian advisor to reduce his involvement in the project. This feeling is supported by expressions from many others of my respondents, especially amongst the researchers. This might be understood as they do not think that they are ready to go on with the project in the same way if they do not have the Norwegian advisor there. This might also indicate that he do not have an expressed wish to take over the responsibility in the project, if the donor decides to leave more responsibility to the project superiors.

The "completion report" for the Formative Research project, written by delegates from MOES, CERID and UFD also touches upon this:

> At the outset the impression was that the MOES was uncertain about what role they were expected to play vis-à-vis the Norwegian ministry. […] They were waiting for advice from Norway on focus as well as for formulating key questions (CERID 2005: 33).

This may indicate that they were actually expecting Norway to take a leading role in the project. One problem seems to be that the general principles for the Formative Research project is used as *blue-prints*, and not as suggestions for actions to be taken. The authority the developing country is giving to the donor, seems thus not to have changed following the autonomy approach. One of the NORAD staff I spoke with also gave me the impression that the execution of the project was difficult to accomplish according to the idea of the Nepalese authorities taking control of project tasks. Rather, the Nepalese participants emphasized that they needed technical assistance from Norway in order to initiate the project and learn more on how to implement effectively. They seemed to be habituated on old models of transfer of knowledge.

Many of the participants seemed to have the opinion that the project would lead to very positive consequences for them.

> R: We can do in next 5 year, better and more practicable and more implementable. And maybe some 10% of our school is changed. That is good, through Formative Research. We can't change 100% within 5 years. But we can change 10% or 20%, it is very small. Then this 20% may change another 20%. Again there is a spiral. Then this 20% change another group.
>
> I: You seem very positive in the future…?
>
> R: Yea!
>
> I: Yea? That is good. You think there will be more and more and more change?
>
> R: Yea yea yea. Because we are doing… we are working here for change. Positive change
>
> (Implementer 2)

He also feels that the project in it self represents a positive change:

> Because we are doing… we are working here for change. Positive change. […] And Formative is here for some change. That's why the Formative Research could help to change the schools behavior, the teacher's behavior, the School management committee's behavior. (Implementer 2).

Their focus was on what could be achieved with the project, was very positive. It was interesting that none of my respondents mentioned what consequences this project leads to here and now. Only when I asked them direct questions if they saw any direct consequences now, in the middle of the project, did they mention any thing. They seem to think of the Formative Research project as something that will bring about something.

7.4 CHANGING THE ROLES

Even if the participants in the Formative Research project expressed that they sometimes looked upon the donor as an expert rather than adviser, the participants also had opinions about the donor that was opposing to these. For example, Policy maker nr 1 works in the Ministry of Education and is of the opinion that the relationship with the donor is different now than what it was before. When I ask him if he feels that the donor was much involved he tells me that the ministry accepted that it was Norway that came with this idea, and not Nepal, but that this is not an ideal way of doing development:

> I: Does it happen often that the donors want you to do some program or…
>
> R: It was some time ago. Not now.
>
> I: Not now?
>
> R: No.
>
> I: Why did this change?
>
> R: What I should say is that… experience matures and is based on learning. So we learned that just borrowing the idea from others is no good for us. We should our self be able find out what we need to do. So this is how we learn things. All the time we can rely on others, all the time ask for some new ideas from others. It is no good for us. We realized that this is no good. We should try to fix our problem our self. And fix means… we must define our own reforms. And then look for the donors to help. Not that the donor come and they advice us to do this or to do that. That way… when they are here they see everything, then they go back and then everything...
>
> I: And it doesn't work?
>
> R: No it doesn't work so… (Policy maker nr 1)

This respondent is of the opinion that there seems to have been a change in the relationship between donor and developing country. Now, he explains, they have realized that they can not just "borrow" ideas from others, but have to define their own reforms. This change seems to be equal to the shift in development strategies that occurred in the early 1990s, where there was an ideal shift from donor-driven project to more emphasis on local autonomy. The vocabulary of this respondent are also very much in coherence with the rhetoric used in the project documents, presented in the previous chapter. The project documents, emphasizing that the initiative for the project must come from within and that the project must be founded in a Nepalese context, matches the opinions of this respondent.

Several others emphasized that the roles in development aid had been changing the last years. Implementer 1 has also been involved in the Formative Research project through his job in DOE, although not for the whole project period.

> R: The Nepalese ministry and Department ministry of education, and CERID are responsible. And sometimes while… for the selection of topic, some stakeholders… outsiders, NGO's and other stakeholders, they were also invited for choosing this topic.
>
> I: So donors they don't interfere?
>
> R: Eh… I don't think that they really interfere… No.
>
> I: Do you think maybe there has been some change in how to be a donor?
>
> R: Yes, yes (enthusiastic). Eh… in the beginning it is… the donor provides… and it was donor control. But later… now they realize it is our project. This is for our… to us. If we need… if we felt this is needed, why then donor is interfering. So now it is more participated here.
>
> I: Do you think this is better now?
>
> R: Yes, participate is better.
>
> I: So you don't feel that the donor is controlling?
>
> R: No… in case of Formative Research, donor is not controlling. I don't think so. It is purely participatory and stakeholders need and demand. (Implementer 1)

This respondent refers to that the relationship between donor and developing country in development aid has changed during the recent time. He indicates there has taken place a shift and that the donor is not controlling now, that it is more participation now than before, that it is Nepalese stakeholders that are in charge of the project without interference of the donor. All these factors are central in the discourse around the autonomous model of development aid, and thus this respondent's suggestions can indicate that he has adopted an "autonomous discourse" to explain the context of the Formative Research project.

Thus, the opinions of the participants in the Formative Research project seems be contradictory, emphasizing both that they "need to the learned" and that there is a change ongoing in the roles of agents involved in development aid.

7.5 INSTITUTIONALIZED "GAP-FILLING VALUES"

The values and interests of the project participants do not seem to cohere with the intentions of the Formative Research project at all points. The Formative Research project presupposed

that responsibility is something attractive to the project participants. This contradiction could raise the question about what values the project participants possess. Does it exists a value system among the project participants, where more responsibility over the project is viewed as something negative, or at least something unwanted? In such case, this can lead to an asymmetry in the intentions of the donor and the interests of the developing country, and thus we can speak of two contradictory value systems? The donor obviously places themselves within the autonomous approach to capacity building. The question however, is whether the Nepalese project participants place themselves within the same value system.

In NORAD's strategy for capacity building lays an assumption that autonomy is something that the developing countries *want* themselves, and thus that they will *claim* it. However, my respondents did not express to me that they claimed ownership over the project. When talking in general terms, some of the project participants described the relationship with the donor as autonomous and the project as locally owned. But when talking in more specific and practical parts of the project, they did not express opinions of responsibility and ownership. This supports the assumption that the project participants sometimes use the public discourse of development when they speak of own development, but that this discourse does not necessarily fit into the reality of their development situation. Rather, to describe the reality of their development situation they describe values that belongs more to a "gap-filling approach" to capacity building. The strategy for capacity building in the Formative Research project does not automatically cohere with the value system of the people the strategy was developed for. The value-system (discourse) among the project participants that contradicts the value-system Formative Research project has in their development strategies. The values that the participants in the Formative Research project treasure are different from the donors'. Thus, the presumption that the developing countries in development aid should claim ownership is not fulfilled, and the basis for the development strategy is thus lacking.

The practices among project participants could be understood as *habits* – internalized from years with "gap-filling" development practices. According to Berger and Luckman's classic *The social construction of reality* (1966), all humans are creators of habits, and routinization of behavior is the precursor of institutionalization. Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that the routines and actions of daily life will become *institutionalized* when it becomes common. These daily routines and actions (and the discourse around these routines) will influence

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negotiation of identity, and identity is thus something that is externalized and objectified from the interaction that takes place within a group. As Richard Jenkins also note,

> When a number of people begin to share the same habitualised pattern of activity, that possess some sense that they are doing it, and to communicate with each other in the same terms about what they are doing, that is the beginning of institutionalisation. (Jenkins 1996: 128).

Patterns of behavior can thus become "the way things are done" and an institutionalized "taken-for-granted feature of the social landscape" (Jenkins 1996: 128). In Berger and Luckman's terms, "the way things are" is the primary form of social control. Doing things otherwise is simply difficult to imagine (Berger and Luckman 1966). Thus, the logical influence institutionalized habits possess derives not only from their own organization but is imposed by the reflective consciousness of the individuals that acts in these habits. They interpret them as logical, and therefore they appear as logical. "Language – discourse – is the pre-eminent source of this superimposed order, in the form of ritualized speech, rules and laws, written records, narratives etc." (Jenkins 1996: 129). This could be one reason that project participants negotiate their identity influenced by "old" capacity building discourses. If you repeatedly hear that something is true, it becomes true. This could be said to be particularly relevant in for the participants in the Formative Research project, as they (as shown in chapter 5) belongs to a culture in which patriarchy, authority and loyalty are common values.

Hence, we could say that the participants in the Formative Research project negotiate their identity as recipients because of their own definitions of the development situation they are in, and because of the values and expectations this situation creates. The issue of local norms and values thus becomes important to be aware of in a development context. One cannot simply assume that local participants will adapt to the newest development discourse, as already existing values and norms is institutionalized in their daily routines. One example on how local norms and values may have contributed to making the participants identify themselves within a "gap-filling discourse" is due to the bureaucratic culture. The bureaucratic context in which the two partner-ministries UFD and MOES work, in are quite different. While the Norwegian bureaucracy is based on corporatism, high autonomy among civil servants and employment based on specific qualifications (Østerud 1991), the Nepalese bureaucracy is based on patronage, favoritism and loyalty (Skar and Cederroth 1997). It is not unlikely that local norms and values within the Nepalese bureaucracy can create a milieu for bureaucratic

interaction that might give fairly weak foundation for implementing a development project based on ideas of *cooperation* and *sharing*, such as the Formative Research project.

7.6 A RECIPIENT IDENTITY

> Cultural identity is not something that already exists, transcending place, time or history. Identity is about being positioned and investing in a particular (subject) position. This positioning cannot be understood outside discourse and power (Baaz 2001: 5).

It is interesting that most of my respondents identify themselves as autonomous participants in their relation with the donor, and at the same time give the impression that the donor is more a teacher and facilitator in the project than their partner. What is interesting, however, is that the staff did not see a contradiction between having ownership over the project and that Norway helped them with "know-how" on how to execute the project. Being a participant in the Formative Research project is in the project documents and plan described as being a *partner* in a development relationship with Norway. However, as the previous chapters have shown, this is not always the case in practice. Rather, the daily life for the participants in the project consisted of a constant *negotiation of roles and identities*. As we have seen, the gap-filling value system is valued very high for almost all of my respondents, at the same time as "autonomous values" are cherished by the same people.

According to the MoU the relationship between donor and developing country should take form as a partnership. The utterances from the researchers engaged in the Formative Research project, do not express a partner-relationship, the way I see it. Rather it expresses a strong belief in the help of an outsider, which in some cases even could be interpreted as dependence. As the researchers emphasis the great importance the donor has for the project, their opinions are thus not easy to place within an autonomous model of development, which the MoU claims the project to have. Rather, the researchers have opinions more similar to the gap-filling approach when it comes to describing how they experience the relationship with the donor in the project.

This constant shift in self-identification leads to that the participants in the Formative Research project identify themselves in different, and even contradictory, ways. In some cases the participants identifying themselves as autonomous *partners,* with a shared responsibility

with the donor – something that bears a likeness to what Alf Morten Jerve calls a "strong partnership". In this construction they seem to define themselves as what David Ellerman (2002) calls *active recipients*. In other cases they construct an identity within a discourse where they have very low confidence and donor "should teach us". In these cases, the participants identity themselves as *passive recipients* (Ellerman 2002), in the aid relation they have with NORAD. Not only is capacities something they inhabit themselves and that could be further developed, but capacity is also something that the donor could *give* to the project participants.

Sociopolitical and "pseudo-scientific" constructs from earlier decades, concerning the "need" for developed countries to help the "underdeveloped", continues into the modern-day development situation in the form of biases and prejudges about *what a recipient is, and should be*. And as this thesis interestingly has demonstrated, it is not necessarily the actors that traditionally are in the positions of power in a development relationship – the donor – that reproduces these values, but rather it is the developing country themselves. This becomes evident in the constant identity struggles the participants in the Formative Research project is undertaking, shifting from the self-identification as a "partner" to a "recipient" in the aid relationship.

7.7 EQUAL PARTNERS?

The Formative Research project was introduced in Nepal in 2000, after positive experiences with a similar project model in Norway. The project was thus more or less the same but the context was different. The implementation of a capacity building project, such as the Formative Research project, is subject to a series of contextual factors; political, economic, global, the interests of Nepalese authorities and the donor and also the relational affiliation between the two authorities. These factors can cause a great effect on the intensity, the level and the quality of the relationships between various agents in the project.

The two ministries are equal in the sense that they both are modern ministries of education, built up around a bureaucracy that is seemingly similar. However, as we saw, UFD and MOES are dissimilar when it comes to one point; while Norway has a bureaucracy built on the notion of corporatism, did MOES still have structures that imposed "uncooperative" values (Acharya 2002: 50). These differences in organizational structure, and also

organizational values, must be taken into consideration when analyzing the translational partnership between Norway and Nepal, as it might have something to say for the outcome of the partnership. The Formative Research Project was meant to be a project where both partners could learn something from each other. Additionally, the partnership was meant to be part of a capacity building strategy, where participating in the project in it self could enhance capacity in the Nepalese part. However, the two ministries operate in very different contexts, and this makes the point of departure for a partnership based on equality, difficult.

As we saw above, the participants in DOE did not feel that they had enhanced their capacity during the Formative Research project, and one of the tentative explanations for this was that they had not participated in the cooperation between the different groups in the project, as was implied that they should in the project objectives. One of the reasons for *why* they did not involve in such cooperation could be that there is in fact no culture for sharing knowledge information and cooperative involvement in the Nepalese bureaucracy.

As the people working in UFD and MOES also have different routines for their daily work, it is not unnatural to assume that this can also influence the cooperation between these institutions. The Formative Research project was originally initiated in the Norwegian bureaucratic context, but went through some changes in order to adapt to the Nepalese context. However, one can assume that the representatives from Norway, working as consultants and advisors, can experience some difficulties in cooperating with people with their background in a completely different context as the Nepalese bureaucracy. Thus, when comparing UFD and MOES it becomes clear that MOES lacks some of the administrative capacity that is needed in order to both run the education sector, but also to contribute as a *partner* in a partnership based on equality. This was also what the Formative Research project set out to do something with; to enhance the capacity amongst bureaucrats in the education sector. Thus, that UFD and MOES should be partner based on equality is possibly only true on the paper, and is not cohering with reality. Already at the starting point for the Formative Research project, the "partnership" is hard to define as an "authentic partnership" (Brehm). However, it might not even be the case that the Formative Research project sought to be an authentic partnership. The project documents and reports never defines how the partnership should look like, but it development agents like NORAD knows that the most difficult gap to address is the fundamental inequality in the aid situation. Thus, it is likely to assume that the partnership was not the *goal-* or *end* in it self in the Formative Research project. Rather it is

likely that the partnership in fact was a *mean* in the capacity building strategies of the Formative Research project.

7.8 SUMMARY

As seen throughout this chapter, the descriptions of the relationship between the participants in the Formative Research Project and the donor are complex and can not be placed within one category. Rather than presenting a singular understanding, my respondents present different descriptions. Many of the participants feel that there has been a change in relationship between donor and developing country during the last decade and many have interpretations of the Formative Research project that matches the descriptions of the Autonomous approach of development, as presented in chapter 3. However, the project participants also have opinions and values that matches the gap-filling approach of development. This may indicate that they do not see the autonomous approach and capacity building as contradictory. Rather they emphasis that they need the technical assistance from Norway in order to initiate the project (MOES) and learn more on how to implement effectively (DOE).

Why do the local participants interpret the project into both gap-filling and autonomous frames for development, instead of only the autonomous frames the Formative Research project seems to embrace? I have argued throughout this chapter, that one of the explanations for this is that the participants negotiate their own role and identity within different discourse. Sometimes the use a "public" discourse, encompassing a uniform "language of development", and sometimes they speak in more "personal" discourses. It is when my respondents spoke in the latter case, that it is possible to interrogate the personal troubles of every day life of development project participants. The project participants goes through a constant negotiation of identity, which means that they identify themselves *both* as a "partner" and a "recipient". The constant shifting in roles and identities can be seen in relation to the widespread changes in the development discourse the last decades. Moving from a "gap-filling approach" to an "autonomous approach", the development discourse is constantly changing, and the developing countries is meet with new challenges in the way they negotiate their identity in relation to the donor and to project objectives.

8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The landscape of strategies for development aid has changed over the past decades, and the strategy of "*capacity building*" has become to be an established development strategy. This observation was the point of departure for this thesis, which has sought to explore the content of such changes and how the people in development countries that are objects for these strategies are affected by it. This chapter draws a line between the different chapters of this thesis and summarizes the main findings. I will start by shortly summing up and discussing the main findings from the analysis. I then suggest some practical and theoretical implications deriving from the findings. In the end, I discuss the understanding and the essence of "capacity building" strategies in general and the effect of such strategies for sustainable development.

8.1 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Chapter 3 mapped out some central historical trends of development, in order to say something about the "new architecture" and the background for current capacity building strategies. By tracing the history of development I found that the rhetoric has changed, and these changes proved as a foundation for developing two analytical categories: the "*gap-filling approach*" and the "*autonomous approach*" to capacity building. The changes from one approach to the other were operationalized into four objectives. The development rhetoric has changed from:

- Filling the *knowledge-gap* to building on *existing* capacity
- Donors being *experts* to becoming *advisors*
- Developing countries being *passive recipients* to becoming *partners*
- Defining capacity building as an *input* to defining it as an *output*

These analytical categories was in chapter 4 related with the issue of *identity*, in order to give a sociological account for how individuals goes through a process of identity negotiation as participants in a capacity building project.

Chapter 5 analyzed the objectives and goals of the Formative Research project in light of the two analytical categories developed in chapter 3, and identified the Formative Research

project to place itself within the "autonomous approach" to capacity building. The Formative Research project thus belongs to the "new architecture" of development aid in the implementation of capacity building strategies. The intension of the Formative Research project was also to build capacity at two levels:

- the level of the individual (among researchers), and
- at an institutional level (among bureaucrats and practitioners in MOES and DOE)

The latter level included two aspects: First, to "change the way of thinking" among *bureaucrats* in the Ministry of Education in Nepal (MOES). And second, to "raise the awareness of the positive role of research in implementation" among *implementers* in DOE (CERID 2005: 33). This analysis provided a background to comparing the development strategy in the Formative Research project the way it was theoretically presented in project documents, with the practical experiences of the local participants in project.

Chapter 6 gave a presentation of how the project participants understood and described capacity building. The main focus for this chapter was to interrogate whether there was any differences in the three groups of participants in the Formative Research project when it comes to how they understand capacity building, and how they describe capacity building activities in the project. It turned out that the three different groups of participants had different experiences of capacity building in the project, and these differences was analyzed through the lenses of Fukuda-Parr et al's (2002) distinction between capacity building at the level of the *individual* and at an *institutional* level. The *researchers* defined capacity building to be about the building capacity among individuals. This was also in line with the objectives of the Formative Research project, presented in chapter 5. The implementers and bureaucrats in MOES and DOE, however, could not point out some particular changes in institutional capacity. From this, a conclusion was drawn, that capacity building activities had happened according to plan and strategies at the *individual* level, but not at the *institutional* level.

The analysis of how the participants define capacity building also illuminated that the participants in the Formative Research project used two different discourses when they defined capacity building. The first was a general discourse, connoting the "*public discourse*" of development. When using this discourse to explain capacity building efforts in the Formative Research project, the participants told me that they had learned a lot, and that capacity had been built. However, when they talked about their *personal experiences* from

capacity building, they often shifted their opinions. By analyzing the individuals through the lenses of a "general" and "personal" discourse I found that the participants defined capacity building both in terms that was found in the gap-filling -and autonomous approach. This thesis emphasized the importance to investigate aid relations from the perspective of the individuals, and have framed the understanding of the Nepalese project participants' experiences in the context of the capacity building strategy because the effect of fluctuations in the discourses around such strategies implicitly affects the participants understanding of their own development and their negotiation of identity within a development context. The question I sought to answer was if the participants identify themselves within the "new architecture" of development - as a "partner", or in the "earlier" rhetoric – as "recipient". The relation between the capacity building strategies' discursive organization on the one hand and the Nepalese participants' social orientation within their daily development context on the other hand, was the focus for chapter 7.

8.2 THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE FORMATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

A starting point of this thesis was the aim to explore the changes in the development discourse and how strategies of development influence the people that are object for these strategies. "*Capacity building*" has come to be one of the most popular phrases in recent development strategies. With inspiration from C. Wright Mills' (1959) concept of "the sociological imagination" this thesis has sought to explore different understandings and meanings with the concept capacity building and to provide the concept with meaning throughout the thesis by analyzing how the concept relates to processes of change, and what consequences such changes has for the individuals. This has been done by analyzing how the local participants in the Formative Research project negotiate their identity through local norms and values, as such issues may be a challenge for the outcome of capacity building.

The project documents in the Formative Research project emphasis that the capacity of the Nepalese participants should be built, and that it is inevitable important that the capacity is built on local premises. But I argue that because the practical implementation of the Formative Research project does not take into account how local culture, values and norms affect the process of capacity building, the participants does not take the step into defining themselves as a "partner". Instead, what happens is that local values, structures and norms are

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reproducing an identity as "*recipient*". This points out that that it is significant to include the *local context* in capacity building projects, and to include the *biography* and *history* of the local participants (Mills 1959).

As presented in chapter 3, capacity building could be defined both as an *input* and an *output*. Within the autonomous approach to development, capacity building is usually defined as an output. After conducting an analysis of the experiences from capacity building of the participants in the Formative Research project, I have detected a chain of actions in which social processes of capacity building can be understood. The following chain illustrates the process where the recipient goes from being presented capacity building as an input, which makes him go through an identity transformation, and where the output is that he has become a *partner*. Identifying himself as a partner implies that his capacity has been *enhanced*. The following figure illustrates this process:

Figure 4: Capacity building in practice in the Formative Research project
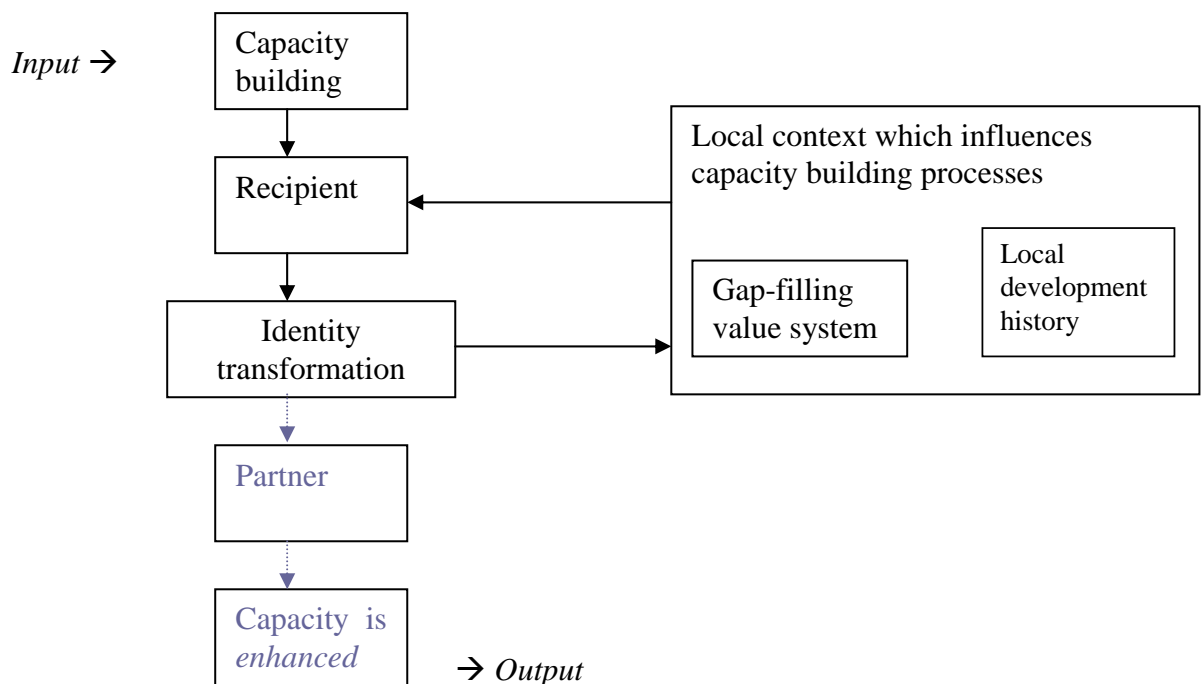
The findings of this thesis suggest that local norms and values are in fact hindering the project participants to define themselves as partners. The identity transformation does not take place, and the project participants do not finish the chain and becomes a "partner".

This thesis has shown that the development discourse that is used officially in the project documents is mostly concerned with what Mills calls *public issues*. The discourse is concerned about processes that are supposed to happen between the individuals in the Formative Research project, but do not address how such processes can take place in detail. As the analysis of this thesis has shown, the participants experienced far more challenges in their compiling of daily tasks within the project than what the donor had anticipated in their project documents. The lack of addressing the *history* and *biography* of the participants has thus contributed to making the Formative Research project less effective than it was assumed to be.

8.3 FURTHER ISSUES

The "new architecture" of development embraces the idea that developing countries need to be helped in accordance to the notion of autonomy and local ownership. But such ideas are not easy to implement in practice, as autonomy is not something that could be given or transferred, but must be *claimed* (Ellerman 2002, 2005). As interrogated in this thesis, the participants in the Formative Research project did not claim ownership over the project. The detection of a "gap-filling value system" and a "recipient identity" are findings that makes it possible to understand why the project participants do not want the donor to reduce their technical assistance in the project and why they experience the Formative Research project as something exceptionally positive. Recognizing that such systems do in fact exist in developing countries is necessary to develop capacity in people and institutions in order for making sustainable development possible. However, the capacity building strategy in the Formative Research project in does not recognize this aspect. Autonomy is a Western constructed concept, reflecting western ideas of individualism and liberalism. The conception of individuals as autonomous, self-reliant and independent agents, are not always a correct image of the practice in development aid relation.

My final conclusion regards the essence of capacity building and its adequateness for sustainable development. Emphasizing *partnership* in capacity building strategies are important – and maybe also a step in the right direction – but not sufficient to make the strategy effective. New aspects must be included, which recognize that individuals interact within social systems which do not necessarily cohere with the discourse of the donor.

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APPENDIX A: NEPAL

MAP OVER NEPAL

Source: Wikipedia (http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal)

POLITICAL CONTEXT AND HISTORY IN NEPAL

Nepal's history is marked by its powerful King-dynasties, and for centuries has been led by powerful families. Under the rigid and aristocratic Rana family, the country's boarders had been closed for foreign influence and the king had absolute power. King Tribhuvan assumed power in 1951, with promise of changes which would lead towards democracy and people's participation in governance (Upadhya 2004): 39. After some years with political instability, the first election in Nepal was held in 1959. However much of the political disturbances remained the same, and in 1962 the king announced a non-party system, known as the Panchayat system. This condition, with practically absolute power to the king, also colored the next decades in Nepal until the first democratic election was held in 1991, after the king was forced to surrender some of his great power and to legalize political parties. During the 1990s the political situation in Nepal was characterized by disturbances, instability and frequent shifts in governments. Nepal is claimed to have a limited and weak democracy and Political parties could be described by immatureness. The many changes in Prime minister the last ten years as well as the rebellion in the royal family in 2002, where the crown prince killed both the king and queen as well as many other family member before killing himself, have given root to further politically instability in the country. In the 1990s we saw the emergence of a Mao-influenced guerrilla-group seeking a communist revolution, and are using violent methods like blockades and bomb-attack to reach their goals. There has been a continuously conflict going on between the guerrilla and the government army since 1996. After a break down in peace talks in 2003 the conflict has worsened and now represents a big hazard for the people of Nepal. In February 2005 did Nepal again experience a political crisis, when the king deposed the government and in reality set himself in a state of absolute power in an attempt to resolve what he considered too poor attempts by the government to fight the Maoist riot. In time of writing it still remains to see how this conflict will develop and how it will affect political and social arenas in Nepal in the future.

DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Nepal was not opened up for foreigners before in the 1950s. It was then a "new democratic" country, reaching out to the world beyond. After the political change in 1951, where the rigid Rana regime was overthrown, the new Nepalese leadership wanted to bring about change and development – called *bikas* in Nepali (Sharma 2002: xxvii). This was from now on the

connection between Nepal and the rest of the world (Sharma 2002: xxvii). Nepal had avoided the colonial experience and was therefore blessed with the absence of the emotional scars that colonial rule almost always generated (Mihaly 2002: viii). But at the same time, this had also left Nepal "cursed with the absence of the administrative and physical infrastructure that some, not all, colonial powers left behind" (Mihaly 2002: viii). According to Mihaly, it was the latter, in combination with Nepal's strategic location, which "drew in the donors" (Mihaly 2002: viii).

USA was the first western nation to enter Nepal with their development assistance, in 1951[26]. At that time, American aid was founded in the Point Four Program, which strongly emphasized that helping underdeveloped countries change and develop could be done by focusing on "know-how" and "show-how" (Sharma 2002: xxi). By the early 1960s, a wide range of nations were involved in development activities in Nepal, like India, China, the Soviet Union, Israel, Switzerland, West Germany, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, the Nations and the Ford Foundation (Sharma 2002: xxi). Mihaly argues that with a few significant exceptions, did the nations and agencies that were involved in economic aid to Nepal, fail to meet their goals (Sharma 2002: xxiii). This was due to two "flaws in conceptions", Mihaly argues; the first was the assumption that Nepal was *ready* for social and political change (Sharma 2002: xxiv). According to Mihaly, this premise was not true because most Nepalese people were simply unaware of a way of life different from their own, and those who were either "refused to believe change was possible or had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo" (Sharma 2002: xxiv). Status quo was reinforced by religious attitudes, rules for conduct and morality and by social institutions such as the inheritance system (Sharma 2002: xxiv). Most donors failed to understand this reality and took for granted that the Nepalese people would easily adopt new techniques and methods (Sharma 2002: xxiv). The second "flaw" was a belief that the government of Nepal was *able and willing* to administer development projects, and that existing "defects" could easily be cured through training (Sharma 2002: xxiv). The fact was, Mihaly says, that the government lacked both the administrative capacity and the political will to govern (Sharma 2002: xxiv). These mistakes lead to that economic aid in Nepal in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s was neither able to hasten democratization of society, encourage political stability, promote gradual social revolution,

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[26] The USA provided US$ 2000 to Nepal in January 1951, just one month before the Rana regime collapsed (Sharma 2002: xxv). The Chinese takeover of Tibet is said to be the formally cited reason for the early American involvement in development in Nepal in the 1950s (Sharma 2002: xxvi).

nor was it able to boost Nepalese economy (Sharma 2002: xxiv). In fact, it was counter-productive and actually hindered growth and led to resentment on the behalf of the Nepalese people (Sharma 2002: xxiv). This lead people resistant against implementation of aid activities, and it also made them detrimental to the donor's immediate foreign policy objectives (Sharma 2002: xxiv). Mihaly argues that the issue was not that people lacked skills or capacity, rather it was structural – primary due to landownership, taxation rules and administration. Foreign aid, by providing support to the government, ironically, served to "frustrate the very reforms that most donors were working to push trough" (Sharma 2002: xxv).

During the 1950 and 1960s development aid to Nepal was usually grants, but in the late 1960s grants decreased while loans went up, something that preceded all up to today (Sharma 2002: xxvii). The sectored focus for development in Nepal also changed over time. The sectors that was most laid emphasis on was – from the earliest providers in the 1950s up to the late 1990s - agriculture and rural development, basic infrastructure, industry, education, basic health and administrative reforms (Sharma 2002: xxx-xxxii). Issues like education, health and drinking water was also emphasized, but did not receive the kind of money as provided to power and transport (Sharma 2002: xxxii). The Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's), which popped up in the 1990s, was concerned with these issues, and also worked with marginalized issues like democracy, good governance, rule of law, human rights, gender etc. (Sharma 2002: xxxii). During the 1990s, "small" nations like Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and Finland emerged in Nepal as important sourced of aid (Sharma 2002: xxx). Nepal became a "priority development cooperation country" for Norway in 1996.

The physical achievements of foreign aid in Nepal are obvious: more schools, hospitals, telecommunication facilities, improved infrastructure and irrigated land (Sharma 2002: xxxiii). What this aid has not been able to achieve, however, is growth in economic activities. Out of a population of 23 million in Nepal, 9 million are living in extreme poverty (MFA 2002: 26). Moreover, throughout 2002, Nepal was affected by the armed conflict between the Maoist rebel movement and the government, which entailed the mobilization of security forces. A cease-fire agreement was signed in January 2003. The conflict hampered local development activities in 2002 and reduced economic growth and access to funding for development projects. The human rights situation deteriorated due to abuses committed by both the military forces and the Maoists. (MFA 2002: 26).

EDUCATION IN NEPAL: HISTORICAL, GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Landlocked between two of the world's grand nations, India and China, Nepal has a forceful history, which is reflected in the many religions and ethnic groups we can see in Nepal today. This diversity is no less apparent in political, economical and social structures, as Nepal is a country of great social differences. Before the Nepalese revolution in 1950-51[27], education was a benefit reserved for the very few of the royal family and ruling classes in the country (Skar and Cederroth 1997: 77). The education system was formally centralized and a curriculum was for the first time developed in 1971. But it was not before Nepal endorsed the Jomptien Declaration[28] in 1990 that education formally became a common good (ibid). Having agreed that from now on the goal should be "education for all", the first *National Education Plan* was drawn up that year (ibid). The school education system today comprises of five years primary education (5-10 years), three years lower secondary education (grades 6-8, 11-13 years), two years for secondary education (grades 9-10, 13-15 years). As an extension of secondary school, two years for higher secondary education (grades 10-12, 16-17 years) is also running. (MOES 2003: 4).

However, many people do still not have access to education in Nepal today. School enrolment rates are low, and of those actually enrolled, there are a substantial number who do not complete the 5-year primary school, making the education level in Nepal very low. The UNDP report *Millennium Development Goals Progress Report 2002*, affirm that Nepal experiences heavy challenges in developing the education sector and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)[29] in education:

> Given the current rate of progress in enrolment in primary education, it is unlikely that Nepal will achieve universal access to primary education by 2015. The average annual rate of growth in primary enrolment between 1990 and 1999 was only 1,3 percent. If

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[27] The rigid and aristocratic Rana family was overthrown in 1951 and the country did for the first time in many years take a step towards a more open and modern society. Under the rigid rule of the Rana family, the country's boarders had been closed for foreign influence and the king had absolute power. King Tribhuvan assumed power in 1951, with promise of changes which would lead the country towards democracy and people's participation in governance (Upadhya 2004: 39).
[28] On the Bangkok World Conference on Education
[29] In September 2000, 189 member countries of the United Nations (UN) obligated to fulfill 8 ambiguous goals to reduce the poverty in the world. These were the Millennium Development Goals and the target year was set to 2015. The second Millennium Development Goal aims for all boys and girls to complete primary schooling by 2015.

> this trend continues about 89 percent of all appropriate-age children will enjoy access to primary schooling in 2015 (UNDP 2002: 13).

Nepal's problems of primary education must be seen in relation to its geographical context. Geographically Nepal ranges from the snow topped Himalaya in the north, which hosts many of the world's highest peaks, to the lowland jungle in the south. Settlements go from rural mountain villages, where people live without running water or electricity in their homes, to the more crowded Kathmandu valley, which is the political and financial centre of Nepal. The Himalayan and high mountain district is home for many small communities but are usually very sparsely populated, while the low-land terrain of the Terai districts have a high density of population, which means that the per capita cost for facilities such as schools and hospitals is much higher for the Himalayan areas than for the more central areas. Due to these factors, the government and external donors build more schools in the highly populated areas (Acharya 2002: 43). The mountainous terrain also isolates rural people because of poor infrastructure, which make transport costs extremely high. About one third of the Nepali population lives in areas inaccessible by road (Skar and Cederroth 1997), and this makes it difficult for children to attend school.

Nepal's ethnic, linguistic and cultural plurality also poses a challenge for developing the education system in Nepal. More than 36 languages and 66 dialects are said to be spoken in Nepal, and almost forty percent speak another language than Nepali as their mothers tongue (Acharya 2002: 44). This is a hinder for the classroom teaching as the education language is either Nepali or English. Nepal is a land of extreme diversity, not only in respect to its famous landscape, but also in its culture, people and uneven distribution of material goods. The people in Nepal are socially segmented along the lines of cast, hierarchical systems, ethnicity and patriarchic culture, which preludes the people of the lowest social hierarchy from education, usually low-cast children and women (Acharya 2002: 45). "Social structure and associated values restrict their access to good quality education. Thus one can see a vicious circle of poverty, illiteracy and indifference" (Acharya 2002: 45). Only 26,4% of adult female, and 46% of younger female is literate (Human Development Report 2004[30]. This shows that there is still a great difference in the literacy rate of men and women, a strong indicator that access to school is not equal for everybody. The education sector is also facing

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[30] All numbers from 2002.

many other problems, for instance unskilled teachers, two many students per teacher, lack of school equipment etc.

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, NEPAL (MOES)

The education sector is run by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) and education policies follows 5-year educational plans. The Minister of Education is the head of the Ministry and is assisted by the State/Assistant Minister, which together provide the political leadership in the Ministry (MOES' Homepage). The MOES comprises four divisions[31], each headed by a Joint Secretary. Additionally, the "Department of Education" (DOE)[32] was basically established in 1999, under the Ministry of Education and Sports, and is headed by the Director General. The Department consists of four divisions[33], each headed by a Director. Prior to the establishment, DOE, the MOES was responsible for overall implementation, supervision and monitoring of the formal and non-formal education programs in Nepal (MOES' Homepage). According to the MOES homepage, the Department of Education was established in order to "institutionalize and regularize" the activities connected to the Basic and Primary Education Project II (BPEP II), with implementing activities related to basic and primary education in the country (MOES' Homepage). With the establishment of the Department of Education, most of the BPEP II activities carried out by the MOES were shifted to the Department (MOES' Homepage). Due to such legacy, basic and primary education related activities carried out by the Department are also referred as BPEP II activities (MOES' Homepage). At the present, the Department, with its direct line of command with the regional and district offices and with full administrative and financial authority holds the responsibility of implementing and monitoring educational programs in Nepal (MOES' Homepage). As we understand, the organizational structure in MOES is quite new, and has also gone through many changes and reorganizations the last years. Most of these reorganizations has been encouraged by and paid for by external donors.

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[31] The divisions are: the Administration and Sports Division, the Higher Education and Educational Management Division, the Planning Division and the Monitoring, Evaluation and Inspection Division.

[32] The main objectives of the DOE are to: Prepare plans, budget and programs related to basic and primary, lower secondary, secondary and higher secondary education, Implement primary and secondary education programs, Oversee, supervise and Coordinate the program implementation, Prepare staff development plans, They are also involved in establishing and managing resource centers at the district levels.

[33] The divisions are: the Administration Division, the Educational Management Division, the Planning and Monitoring Division and the Regional Education Directorate.

Nepal is said to be characterized by an unstable and undemocratic rule. Usha Acharya (2002) argues that there has been many attempts to change the bureaucratic structures and systems in Nepal, but that the system is still characterized by an "preceding" bureaucracy, developed by the old rulers; the rigid Ranas. Their bureaucratic system was a "mechanism of rights of control but not of responsibilities", Acharya claims (Acharya 2002: 50). It was a hierarchical system of loyal workers, mostly comprised from elite groups, which was supposed to maintain the status quo and thus never needed to be creative. By maintaining the system the way it was, power stayed within the ruling classes and the people of Nepal never became recipients of goods and services from the State (Acharya 2002: 50). This has contributed to the bureaucracy today being characterized by "lack of effectiveness and initiative, and poor sense of responsibility in service delivery" Acharya argues (Acharya 2002: 50). For example is employment of the workforce not announced, rather is employment still often seen as a reward for loyalty to a particular political leader or the immediate boss (Acharya 2002: 50).

The main source of social division in the Nepal, the caste system, is very significant in the Nepali culture, and still has influence on the political system. Although abandoned in 1960, the caste system is highly alive and practiced in today's Nepal. Political and financial power stays within the higher castes and within certain families, and is legitimized with the caste system. According to Skar and Cederroth (1997) does not performance necessarily count in official relations, as long as you belong to the "correct" religion, caste, ethnic group or party. Favoritism and patronage has always been the most important means of securing posts and achieving promotion in the civil service, and most civil servants come from the upper castes (Skar and Cederroth 1997: 118). The dominating ethnic groups in Nepal are Brahmans, Chhetris and Newars, and 80%[34] of the posts in civil service, army and the police was held by the Brahmans and Chhetris (Skar and Cederroth 1997: 24).

Education policies – either it is short- or long-term, micro or macro – are made by the national Education Commissions or consultants often without consulting the people for whom the policies and programs are designed (Acharya 2002: 50). Furthermore, policies and programs are designed, implemented, and monitored under the guiding of administrators who are not involved in the policy formulations (Acharya 2002: 50). For example does many teachers in the district experience it as a problem that the education policies and programs are designed in

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[34] Numbers from 1991 (Skar and Cederroth 1997: 24)

Kathmandu, without any consultation with people at the district level. For example is the beginning and end of the academic school year regulated from Kathmandu, without taking into consideration that the main source of livelihood for people in rural areas is farming, and that most children of farming families are needed at home for the planting and harvest seasons around in the district (Acharya 2002: 47).

APPENDIX B: RESPONDENTS

RESEARCHERS

Researcher 1 works as a researcher at CERID, and has been affiliated with the Formative Research project during the whole project period. He has some research experience.

Researcher 2 is a researcher from Tribhuvan University, and has been associated with the Formative Research project as a researcher for 9 months. He has some research experience, but is not a senior researcher.

Researcher 3 has been affiliated with the Formative Research project from the very beginning (together three years). He is a senior researcher and is the team leader for his research team. He has one associate researcher and two or three assistant researchers, depending on the amount of research.

Researcher 4 works as a researcher at CERID, and has been a leader for one of the researcher teams. He has been affiliated with the Formative Research project from the very beginning (together three years).

Researcher 5 is working at CERID. He is a research senior and has high rank, and is assigned a high degree of responsibility in the project. He has been involved trough the whole project period, and has much contact with the researchers in the Formative Research project.

Researcher 6 is working at CERID. He is a research senior and is assigned much responsibility in the project. He has been involved in both research activities and advising the younger researchers.

Researcher 7 is a research senior and is working at CERID. He has been involved trough the whole project period, and has been doing both research activities and advising activities of the younger researchers.

Researcher 8 works as a researcher at CERID, and has been affiliated with the Formative Research project from the very beginning (together three years). He has some years of research experience.

IMPLEMENTERS

Implementer 1 works has worked in DOE for almost 20 years and is the leader of one of the offices.

Implementer 2 has been involved in the Formative Research project through his job in DOE, although not for the whole project period. Before starting to work in DOE, he had already worked for 19 years in the education sector.

Implementer 3 has been involved in most parts of the Formative Research project, but not for the whole project period. He works with implementation of incentives in the schools in the districts. He has worked in DOE for many years, but came to the section he works now 2 years ago.

POLICY MAKERS

Policy maker 1 works in a high position in MOES, and has much contact with people at several levels in the Formative Research project.

Policy maker 2 is also a high rank official in the Ministry of Education (MOES)