Double Exposure in “New Nepal”

Rural, illiterate women constructed as “legless” in “two worlds”

Erlend Walseth

Masteroppgåve

Hausten 2010

Sosiologisk institutt, Universitetet i Bergen

Abstract

Nepal has gone through dramatic changes in recent times. In the 1950s the Rana oligarchy came to an end, and the subsequent Shah Monarchy legitimized its rule by introducing the notions of modernization and development, and thus introducing what I will relate to as the development discourse. This development discourse and the cultural politics inherent questions the traditional social construct and constructs new ideals and new ideal citizens, which I will claim in the end culminates in the overthrow of the Monarchy and the discourse of New Nepal.

I will focus on how my interviewees, predominately rural, illiterate women from "middle"- and "low"-castes get positioned and position themselves with relation to the discourse of New Nepal, which creates a new ideal citizen which functions as their significant Other. I will focus on re-iterations of the development discourse and its consequent constructions through a focus on recurrent descriptions, figures of speech and metaphor.

I will show that the discourse of New Nepal is both empowering and disempowering. Women and members of "low" castes get empowered to contest traditional domination linked to these social dimensions due to the cultural politics inherent in the notions of a New Nepal. I will also show that behind the reiteration of the discourse, discrimination still occurs, and through the "reincarnation questions" show that the women desired to be reborn as an urban and educated middle-caste male. Yet I will maintain that discrimination linked to caste and gender is a source of contempt and that the power hierarchy is contested. On the other hand the discourse of New Nepal introduces the symbolic power of the educated as a power hierarchy my interviewees do not contest.

I will claim that rural, illiterate women are under "double exposure": on the one hand from a contested, yet prevailing traditional social construct which entails caste- and gender discrimination, on the other hand from the new social power of New Nepal which creates new distinctions and a new mapping of society, which renders the rural, illiterate women as backwards and stuck in the past.[1]

[1] As required by "Veiledningshefte for masteroppgaven", I inform that the paper consists of 33018 words.

Table of contents

Abstract 1
Acknowledgements 4
Introduction 5
1. Background 5
1.1 Institutional changes and civil unrest in Nepal 5
1.2 Nation building: New Nepal and the discourse of development 7
1.2.1 *Bikas* as a nation building discourse: Historical background 8
1.2.2 Disadvantageous consequences of Bikas 9
1.2.3 "New Nepal" - the "logical conclusion" of Bikas 11
1.2.4 New Nepal as entailing a new social mapping: 'the city' and 'the village' 12
2.0 Theoretical framework 14
2.1 New Nepal: Cultural politics and identity 14
2.2 Theories of identity 15
2.3 Discourse and the regulation of identity 16
2.4 Metaphors: As a mode of understanding and as a source for constructions 18
2.5 Cultural politics 20
Summary 21
3.0 Methodological considerations. 24
3.1 Choosing a qualitative approach 24
3.2 Researching illiteracy and illiterate subjects 25
3.3 The Field 26
3.3.1 Choosing my sites: Two villages and a city 26
3.4 Sample 27
3.4.1 Sampling 27
3.4.2 My sample 28
3.5. Data collection 30
3.5.1 Interviews and positionalities 30
3.5.2 The interview situation 34
3.6 Ethics 37
4.0 All are equal: contestation of discrimination linked to caste and gender 39
4.1 The contestation of gender 39
4.2 The contestation of caste 41
4.2.1 Caste as man-made 42
4.3 "Discursive reality" vs. "social reality" 44
4.3.1 Gender 44
4.3.1.1 Break and continuation: The domestic sphere and work segregation 46
4.3.2 Caste 50
4.4 The "Reincarnation Questions" 53
4.4.1 Gender 53
4.4.2 Caste 55
Summary 57
5.0 The discourse of New Nepal as constraining 58
5.1 A new social and material logic 58
5.2 Education for a bright future 61
5.3 The Development discourse and the introduction of a new Power 63
5.3.1 The cultural production of the Educated Person and its Other 63
5.3.2 Education and awareness/consciousness 64

5.4 The rule of the Educated 66
5.4.1 The return of caste 67
5.4.2 The symbolic power of education 69
5.5 Exclusion: A perceived and attributed lack of awareness – and its consequences for participation in New Nepal 72
5.5.1 Going to the VDC 73
5.5.2 Being represented by Politicians 74
5.6 Center and periphery in New Nepal: Bikas and a new social mapping 75
5.6.1 'The village' and 'the city' 77
5.6.2 "The politicians care for the city people" 79
5.6.3 Being a "city woman" or "village woman" 80
5.7 Development and the spatial dimension – mobility and being stuck 82
5.8 Recurrent descriptions and metaphors 85
5.8.1 "The metaphors we live by" 86
5.8.2 Cultural politics: the state, discourse and identity 87
Conclusion 88
Appendix 92
References: 95

Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank all the people who made my fieldwork possible: you are my friends for life, and unfortunately to numerous to mention here. I thank you for your help, hospitality and the numerous conversations we engaged in. Some of you I might never see again, others I know I will see immediately as I arrive next time – I extend the same gratitude to you all. Even though I cannot mention your names, I extend a special gratitude to the women participating in this study, and I dedicate this paper to you all.

A deep and heartfelt gratitude and love to Keshari Maya Bholan, without you this paper would not have been written.

I have to give my deepest thanks and humble respect to my supervisor, Ann Elise Widding Isaksen. This paper might never have been finished without you.

I further have to thank Kristin Walseth, Sveinung Sandberg, Magnus Hattlebakk, Ole Borre, Ave Sazko and Annelies Ollieuz for taking the time to help me in different ways. I am extremely grateful for your help.

Further I have to especially thank Jorunn Mjøs for her help, and Kjetil G. Lundberg, Stine K. Olsen and Janne C. Johansen as well.

As always I owe my parents a lot of gratitude for support.

Introduction

This paper will focus on the discourse of New Nepal and how it is both empowering and disempowering for the rural, illiterate women I interviewed. How can one capture the lived experience of rural, illiterate women as they face the hegemonic discourses of New Nepal? How do they position themselves, and get positioned by these discourses which define the nation building of the New Nepal? I will show that the discourse of New Nepal entails a cultural politic that "allows" contestation of traditional yet prevailing sources for distinction and discrimination, while at the same time introducing new ideals and new sources for distinction, as the discourse of New Nepal creates a new *telos* for citizens and country. The new ideals introduces new significant Others and the symbolic power of the educated.

1. Background

The historical perspective matters as I want to avoid accounts of selves which are devoid of notions of history and power. As I will focus on what I deem as a political production of identities in a changing Nepal, I need to avoid a double essentialism of selves and cultures – removed from time, place and a state that produces ideals of citizenship and national identity. Inspired by Skinner, Pach III and Holland (1997) I need to consider power and history "crucial to analyses of culturally specific selves and the collective meaning systems that produced them." (Skinner et al 1997:5)

1.1 Institutional changes and civil unrest in Nepal

Nepal was unified in the latter half of the 18th century which marked the start of the Shah Dynasty. The *Muluki Ain*, or country code, brought the diverse groups of the new country under a single legal system. But it awarded different obligations and privileges to the different groups constituting the new country, for example by institutionalizing the caste system, and awarding different penalties for breaches of the moral and subsequent legal code, for example with regards to inter-caste marriage. The unification of the country was thus inherently

exclusionary for many castes, ethnic groups and also for divergent religions in what became a Hindu state, where the King was being looked upon as an incarnation of a Hindu God. The Shah monarchy was later replaced by the Rana Oligarchy. In the Shah-Rana era (1768-1951): "(T)he caste system and the patriarchal gender system of the dominant group were reinforced by the state. It was an era of consolidation of power and entrenchment of social inequity than can only occur in the absence of competing world-views" (Bennett et al. 2006:6).

Nepal's history has thus been dominated by monarchies and oligarchies, with a brief multi party democratic break in the 1950's, before King Mahendra made a coup and reinstated the Shah monarchy, though with cosmetic changes as a *Panchyat* democracy (1962-1990), where people could elect candidates chosen by the King and his elite (see Borre et al. 1994). But this democratic inclusion entailed exclusion as well. At the same time as King Mahendra intended to abolish the caste system, by taking away its legal framework in 1963, cultural diversity was seen as barriers to cultural unity. Assimilation politics emerged - linked to education fueled by foreign money supporting King Mahendra's education policies through development funds.

But the banned political parties resurfaced and succeeded as a coalition and pro-democracy movement to re-instate multiparty democracy through rallies in Nepal in the 90s – through what was called the "People's Movement". The constitution was re-written and elections were held the following year. The constitution noteworthy also pointed towards a more inclusive state. It described Nepal as "multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and democratic, and states that 'all citizens are equal irrespective of religion, race, gender, caste, tribe or ideology (Bennett 2005:7). Yet the mid-90s also marked the start of the Maoist insurgency and it's "People's War" (Freedomhouse 2007).

This conflict entailed a culmination where the King used his role as the institutional head of state to take the power back – once again Nepal had become a Monarchy in essence. This move angered both civilians and politicians alike – and brought the Maoists to the negotiation table with the democratic parties, which ended with the so called "12 point agreement" between the Maoists and the Seven Party Alliance. After civil unrest and massive demonstrations and *bandhas* (strikes, roadblocks etc.) the King was forced to step down in April 2006.

The Maoists and the SPA continued negotiating and a peace agreement was signed in November 2006. An interim government was established and elections were set to be held in June 2007. But the instability and frictions continued, and the election were postponed, and would not be held until April 10th 2008, which the Maoists won and "Prachanda" Dahal was instated as Prime Minister.

Thus far I have shown how Nepal has undergone dramatic political and institutional changes. I will go on to focus on the historical background for the development discourse, which I will claim culminates in the discourse of New Nepal. I will present the historical and contextual reasons for the justification of, *and* the analytical need for talking about, a discourse of New Nepal.

1.2 Nation building: New Nepal and the discourse of development

I will not claim that the discourse of New Nepal is one uniform discourse – rather it is composed of various discourses acknowledging the multiple voices involved in this project of defining the New Nepal – but I will still refer to it in a singular term. While on the one hand the discourse of New Nepal started with the King's justification of monarchy, it is also linked to the toppling of the monarchy, and the introduction of multi-party democracy and its long awaited constitution. It is also linked to the peace agreement and the end of the civil war, as well as gender rights and caste rights.[2] I will link and unify the discourse of New Nepal, while at the same time acknowledging the diverse aspirations and political plans of what New Nepal should contain. I will talk about it in singular terms as the multiple and heterogeneous discourses meet at the nodal point of "developing and modernizing Nepal". This entails a "leaving the past" through modernization – a questioning of "old ideas" and practices, and a gaze fixed towards the future. *Education* is the link between the development of the country and the development of a specific sort of consciousness – between nation-building and the new citizens.

[2] While the term abolishing of caste has been linked to the unification of Nepal under Brahmin values – which, as New Nepal is reflective of not just leaving the Ranas but the Shahs and its values as well, somewhat informs a return of caste in New Nepal: in the sense of protecting minorities and different cultural practices, which at the same time informs discussions of making the regions of the Federal Republic of Nepal along caste and ethnic lines.

1.2.1 *Bikas* as a nation building discourse: Historical background

In Nepal there has been a recurrent focus on development (or *bikas* which is the Nepali term) in “modern times”, which can be argued to have hit Nepal fairly late. The Rana regime, which ruled Nepal until 1951, saw it as an imperative to keep the people “down” or “in the dark” (to use contextually coined metaphors) to maintain their autocratic rule. They were weary of not just education in itself, but economic development in general.[3]

The Rana regime established a few western style universities for the elites in Kathmandu, but they strictly forbade education for the masses: “The Rana leaders feared that an educated citizenry would pose a threat to their despotic rule, raising the aspirations of youth who would demand basic human rights and be vanguard of a revolution” (Sharma 1990:4). It became a punishable offense to educate, by prison sentence or fine: “In the minds of the Ranas, as in the minds of contemporary Nepalis, to become educated was associated with becoming “conscious” ('cetana') or politically aware, a dangerous state for the repressed masses to attain” (Skinner & Holland 1996:275). At the end of 105 years of Rana rule, only 2 % of Nepal's population was literate and only 0.9 % of all 6-10 year old children were enrolled in school (Sharma 1990:6).

While it was a strategy for the Rana oligarchy to keep it's subjects unschooled, this changed with the restoration of the Shah monarchy in 1951: “While the Rana government considered it easier to control uneducated subjects, and so refused to provide public schools, the government under the Shah Kings wanted educated subjects who would work to “develop” Nepal” (Skinner & Holland 1996:273).

Rather, as a new way to legitimize power and rule, King Mahendra, after abolishing a small term trial of democracy, used the notion of bikas as a reason and justification for putting the power back with the family dynasty of the Shahs, which signals the introduction of bikas as ‘the national project’ and as inherently linked to legitimization of rule:

> “(I)n contrast [to the Ranas], the Panchyat regime had to portray itself as totally committed to bikas, as King Mahendra had justified his 1959 takeover as providing Nepal a better opportunity for progress than would have been possible under the parliamentary system” (Hoftun et al 1999:223).

[3]“(A) member of the [Rana] family writing a report on industrial development in the 1930's cautioned that ' we cannot possibly take steps which in any way may be subversive to our autocratic authority'” (Hoftun et al 1999: 223).

Money started to flow into the country, and especially its urban population started to experience a “new world” after centuries of containment: Nepal was opening up to the world. It was a material revolution with TVs and coke signs appearing in Kathmandu. These changes would escalate the material contrast between the urban and rural parts of Nepal.

King Mahendra would under a program lead by his son, the then Crown Prince Birendra, start an expansion with regards to education and public schooling: “In 1942 the literacy rate in Nepal was only 0.7 %. By the late 80's it had reached close to 40%. During that same period the population of Nepal had leaped from 8m to 20m and yet schooling had more than kept pace with this colossal increase” (Ibid:220).

In the classrooms this view of education as linked to modernity and development were reified by textbooks underlining this project, furthermore focusing on that educated people were able to do “good works” for their country through being educated (Skinner and Holland 1996). “The new Nepali” was an educated one, who would be able to do his national duty and help the country modernize. There was a construction of the educated person being defined in the schools, and its Other was constructed as a consequence.

From the beginning this process of universal education was linked to discourses of social and economic development, modernization and national identity, while at the same time being strategies for rule, and functioning somewhat exclusionary for certain social categories. But there is no doubt that “key to the legitimization of Panchyat rule was the doctrine of development – *bikas*- as '*the* national project'” (Tamang 2002:163).

I will look upon this as a new way to represent Nepal – culminating in the notion of New Nepal – its needs and goals and thus a new ideal citizen.

1.2.2 Disadvantageous consequences of Bikas

Education and development was central to the legitimacy of rule. The monarchy further tried to integrate the Nepali population, heterogeneous as it is, with regards to ethnicity, language and religions, through a standardized national curriculum. This cultural diversity was now seen as barriers to national unity: “Cultural unity was projected as essential to nation-building

and the maintenance of independence" (Bennett 2005:7). In a culturally diverse country as Nepal this created barriers, and it became an exclusionary inclusion for many groups – so called "minorities". Nepali was fronted as the main language and cultural unison was promoted by making the Hindu "high caste" ideals hegemonic. People of different native languages now had to follow the education in Nepali, and through the education Brahmin ideals and values were disseminated to people of different cultural outlook and practices. But while the curriculum disadvantaged "minorities", the notion of state sanctioned and foreign fuelled development also had disadvantageous consequences, especially, I will claim, for citizens embodying the intersecting identity of rural, "middle-" and "lower caste" illiterate women.

Tamang (2002) links the construction of the "Nepali woman" not just to homogenization project of the Shahs, but argues its creation is also intertwined with the global project for development through the intersecting *telos* of national and global development witnessed in Nepal:

> "For, at the very time that the Panchayat government was seeking to impose its definition of 'the Nepali', the international project of development had set itself the task of developing 'the Nepali woman'. (...)The creation of 'the Nepali woman' was as much the work of development agencies in search of the 'the Nepali woman' to develop as it was the result of active dissemination of state-sponsored ideology. The patriarchically oppressed, uniformly disadvantaged and Hindu 'Nepali woman' as a category did not pre-exist the development project. (..)The fiction of 'the Nepali mahila' was thus an effect rather than a discovery of the institutions, practices and discourses of international development and bikas." (Tamang 2002:164)

While the heterogeneity of women's lived experience was put under pressure by efforts to spread "high caste" values, there is also a sense in which development have been "successful" along caste lines. While poverty declined between 1996 and 2004, from 42% to 31%, and it was reduced "across all regions, quintiles, rural/urban and caste and ethnic groups" it decreased most significantly in the Brahmin/Chhetri groups[4] (46%), while for Dalits[5] the decrease was 21% and for Janajatis[6] it decreased by about half the national average (10%) (Bennett et al. 2006:20). This is strengthening Tamang's argument that "bikas has compounded the structured inequalities relating to class and ethnicity" as well as it "has erased the heterogeneity of women's lived lives" (Tamang 2002:161).

[4] "High castes".
[5] "Low castes".
[6] "Middle castes".

There are thus reasons to claim that both education (through a certain curriculum) and development (through a certain way of representing subjects as well as compounding structural inequalities) has had disadvantageous consequences for certain groups and categories of people. The discourse of development, of bikas, has been an integral part of what constitutes Nepali nation building since the late 1950s. It has been part of its goals and also part of a rhetoric regarding what a citizen of Nepal should be, informing the understanding of both New Nepal and its ideal citizen. One way of saying this, is that the discourse of development has been hegemonic in Nepal, from The Shah dynasty's focus on it as a part of legitimizing its rule to the discourse of New Nepal today.

1.2.3 "New Nepal" - the "logical conclusion" of Bikas

New Nepal is a term which is circulating a lot in Nepal these days, defining the new project which is currently unfolding. Different political actors try to embody this notion, justifying personal or party salience in the fact that they are the means or in part an end of this project, an entirely modernizing project which can be understood from the term itself; crowning the earlier monarchical project, and taking it to its 'logical conclusion'. New Nepal is a modern Nepal, a Nepal that has taken a final break with its past, where the end of monarchy is emblematic for the change it signifies, as stated by this text in celebration of New Nepal:

> "The end of monarchy signified and was a powerful historical acknowledgment that political, economic and cultural roles, including leadership roles, could not be inherited completely or even largely and run through the family, clan, caste and other ascription-based structures and rules. It was also an acknowledgment that modern, diverse, differentiated and plural states and citizens cannot be ruled without their assent. Further, it represented a claim by the citizens that they had politically matured enough to rule themselves without the intervention of a 'divine' monarchy: The citizens could see through the halo of the King and the ideological mystification of monarchy. (..) For a new, democratic, prosperous and just state of Nepal to be born, the first task is to prepare and implement the principal rules of the game (...)." (Mishra 2008:1) [7]

This "New Nepal" is a Nepal that throws away its shackles of the past, either related to the notions of kinship, caste or other ascription-based structures and rules: mystifications or superstitions that blur out the modern agency of the New Nepalis and which is set in the past, and condemned as backwards. There are now new rules to the game being constructed. The New Nepal is looking forward. The discourse of the New Nepal is situated within the all powerful discourse of bikas.

[7] This text was part of a special issue of the Nepali newspaper *Gorakhapatra* called "New Nepal and New Nepalis" (May 6th 2008).

The celebrative text also says that its new citizens (finally) could see through the halo of the King; they had reach the level of consciousness related to education, the 'cetana', which both for the Ranas *and* for contemporary Nepalis is linked to political awareness. Thus the text reiterates the construction of the educated person, and his role in developing the nation, now also beyond the monarchy.

1.2.4 New Nepal as entailing a new social mapping: 'the city' and 'the village'

But as the monarchy was overthrown by the masses in the cities, predominately Kathmandu, the picture of a unified Nepali mass movement was stirred. Some people were surprised that a controlled society such as Nepal, with rigid power structures and a caste system - which anthropologically speaking was the main factor of stability – could stem out into a revolution: "The stereotype many had entertained did, indeed, have some validity in parts of rural Nepal, though even here it was an over-simplification. In the more politically conscious areas, above all in the towns, it was grossly inaccurate"(Hoftun et al. 1999:220). These people were the same people who had initially benefitted from the development, which heightened the contrast between the urban and rural areas at the start of bikas. And even though these people were a tiny fraction of the Nepalis, it was precisely this percentage that was close to the center of Nepalese political life:

> "These were the people who had the dynamism and ability to translate their aspirations and ambitions into action. These people found that their material lifestyle had been improved, but might still feel themselves disadvantaged in comparison with others who had done even better." (Ibid:223)

The people who took to the streets in Kathmandu were predominately the urban middle class, at least in the beginning. Later a wider specter of social life, though within the Valley participated. Yet: "It still has to be remembered that the inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley, whatever their social class, can be seen as an elite vis-a-vis the inhabitants of the poorer regions of the country" (Ibid:342). In recent years this relationship between center and periphery, or urban and rural, have deepened, and changed through the valorization of the urban:

> "The level of interaction between the urban and the rural – in terms of commodity, labor and even financial markets, remittance, and aspirations – is becoming expansive and dense. Essentially, the urban generally sets the values and the norms (…) – and the rural and existing agrarian regimes are increasingly adapting and acceding to their secondary role." (Mishra 2008:2)

Pigg (1992, 1996) further claims that development in Nepal has changed the *perception* of 'the village' more than the actual villages themselves.

I have shown that the discourse of development has been a fundamental part of political life in Nepal, all the way from its goals and aspirations, its *telos*, to claims of political legitimacy. This focus on the educated person marks a clear cut break with the traditional life nurtured under the Ranas. At the same time as education and bikas were introduced, the Shahs also banned another integral part of rule and domination during the Rana era, and perhaps Nepal's until then strongest social institution, the caste system. Even though it did definitely not disappear over night, it lost legal legitimacy, and a slow process to erode its power had started. But at the same time the construction of the educated person introduced a new way of exercising power, as the caste system slowly started to lose symbolic power a new power emerged – for power abhors vacuum.

2.0 Theoretical framework

2.1 New Nepal: Cultural politics and identity

In order to try and frame the empirical richness and explain it adequately I have needed to relate to the data on two fundamental levels. *On the one hand* I deal with large-scale processes which thus become the macro level of analysis. On this level I deal with the nation-state and particularly the nation-building process of New Nepal, which I have already argued is a culmination of the development discourse. *On the other hand*, I deal with a micro level of analysis as well, which is particularly linked to gender, intersecting identities and (socially produced) agency in order to explain the following research questions: How can one capture the lived experience of rural, illiterate women as they face the hegemonic discourses of New Nepal? What does it mean to them? How do they position themselves, and get positioned by these discourses which define the nation building of the New Nepal?[8]

In order to integrate the two levels I will mainly focus on language and meaning. Identity is created through and within language, and I will deal with the importance of language both on the macro- and micro level: through discourses (macro) and recurrent descriptions and metaphors inherent in the construction of significant Others (micro). I will thus deal with discourse and power, as well as cognition and perception, combined with elements of symbolic interaction, as I need to integrate the two levels as I explain the production *and* construction of identity. Importantly, I will link the two through the symbolic power of education in New Nepal – as an instance and result of cultural politics – which thus stands at the meso level of analysis; and thus linking state sanctioned symbolic power with discourse and significant Others.

[8] First of all: I have no interest to perpetuate this intersecting identity of "rural, illiterate women" – but I will still need to analytically relate to this category of intersecting identity, which some argue has been afforded to them by the development discourse of Nepal (see Tamang 2002), and which is being alluded to throughout my data.

2.2 Theories of identity

I will avoid essentialised notions of self – which do not see history or power as powerful creators of selves. Rather I will deal with selves in the sense of "subjectivity and identity as cultural constructions to which language is central" (Barker & Galasinksi 2001:28):

> "Identity […] is not best understood as an entity but as an emotionally charged description of ourselves. Rather than being a timeless essence, what is said to be a person is plastic and changeable being specific to particular social and cultural conjectures. In particular subjectivity and identity mark the composition of persons in language and culture." (Ibid.)

Language does not mirror the world: "Language 'makes', rather than 'finds'; representation does not 'picture' the world, but constitute it" (Ibid:29). The concept of subjectivity stresses the anti-essentialised notions of self and highlights identity as something that is produced:

> "The anti-essentialist position stresses that identity is **a process of *becoming* built from points of similarity and difference.** There is no essence of identity to be discovered, rather, **cultural identity is continually being produced within the vectors of resemblance and distinction**. Cultural identity is not an essence but a continually shifting description of ourselves. The meaning of identity categories Britishness, Blackness, masculinity etc. – are held to be subject to continual deferral through the never-ending processes of supplementarity or difference (Derrida, 1976). Since meaning is never finished or completed, identity represents a 'cut' or a snap shot of unfolding meanings, a strategic positioning which makes meaning possible. The anti-essentialist position points to the political nature of identity as 'production' (…)." (Ibid:30)

These notions are important aspects in my analytical work. First and foremost: language and meaning is not private – meaning and identity is produced in a social and cultural fashion. My respondents' thoughts, metaphors and constructions no matter how private they might appear are *social* in nature. Their production of selves and identities, though relating to powerful discourses, are also aspects of inner thought and metaphorical thought, whereby they through resemblance and distinction create a sense of self which relates to a significant Other, in my case an "ideal citizen" and thus a focus on state sanctioned and disseminated discourses – *the political nature of 'identity' as 'production'*. That cultural concepts and the cultural construction of concepts are held to be subject to continual deferral, relates to the cultural politics of New Nepal where there are new accounts of caste, gender and citizenship – a break with tradition, but where deferral is yet perceived as momentarily fixed.

2.3 Discourse and the regulation of identity

Barker and Galasinski (2001) argue that while language generates meaning through a series of unstable and relational differences, "it is also regulated within discourses that define, construct and produce their objects of knowledge" (Ibid:31) and "thereby governing the ways topics are talked about and practices conducted" (Ibid:12). For while meaning "may formally proliferate endlessly in the rarified world of texts, this is not so in social practice where meaning is regulated and stabilized for pragmatic purposes" (Ibid.). While I do not want to conceive of my informants as "mere docile bodies", but as actors with a certain degree of socially produced agency, Foucault is still useful:

> "When we want to understand the way the social order is constituted by discourses of power that produce subjects who fit into, constitute and reproduce that order. Foucault is at his most valuable when exploring the concept of governmentality, understood as the regulation or 'policing' of societies by which a population becomes subjects to bureaucratic regimes and modes of discipline. (…)The concept of governmentality emphasizes that processes of social regulation do not so much stand over and against the individual but are constitutive of self-reflective modes of conduct, ethical competencies and social movements." (Ibid:13)

This mode of reasoning is incremental to my analysis, as most of my respondents share the positionalities of the "rural, illiterate woman" – a problem for development and thus a target of "aid". While Tamang (2002) argues that the 'Nepali Mahila', uniformly backwards, oppressed and illiterate, is a fiction that is the *effect* of the development, Pigg (1992,1996) argues that development discourse has entailed the construction of a generic village and a generic villager. The intersecting identities of being a "rural, illiterate woman" are alluded to throughout my data, and I will argue, is the main source of pain, informing a sense of second class citizenship. This is linked to the notion noted earlier that representation does not mirror the world, but constitute it.

While Foucault is useful when it comes to understanding the social order, and the reproduction of it, he is at his least useful when relating to the utterances and actions of speaking subjects: "In his hands, the authority of discourse can appear to be external to persons and disconnected from utterances as if it were an anonymous power lurking behind us with its fingers wrapped around the puppet's strings. A form of functionalism dressed up in attractive packaging" (Ibid:14). To preserve agency, which I still do hold to be socially produced, one has to avoid turning language and discourse into a "thing":

> "Writers as diverse as Saussure, Barthes, Foucault and Derrida all have a tendency to reify language or discourse into a 'thing'. However, if we give up the idea that the job for the marks and noises we call language is to generate such an entity called 'representational meaning' then there is no problem of instability. *Nor would we treat discourse as a hidden presence but would take it as a metaphor suggesting the regulation and patterning of human marks and noises* [my italics]." (Ibid.)

Power is of course a central part of discourse. While meaning is given a degree of stability by way of social conventions and practice, and I choose to view discourse as resembling a metaphor – regulating meaning and momentarily fixing the continual deferral – this does not mean I underplay the notion of power. I will link these discourses to state sanctioned and foreign fuelled education – bikas has been an integral part of legitimizing rule since the Shahs and are now taken for granted and informs understandings of self and Others and justifies social difference and lack of representation as well. Power I will link to ideology, and as Barker and Galasinski, as something akin to Foucault's conception of power/knowledge:

> "We hold ideology to be forms of power/knowledge used to justify the actions of persons or groups and which have specific consequences for relations of power. As such ideology is not counterpoised to truth. Ideologies are structures of signification that constitute social relations in and through power. (…)Power is not simply the glue that holds the social together or the coercive force which subordinates one set of people to another, though it certainly is this, but the processes that generate and enable any form of social action." (Ibid:25)

The ideology or power I will present, is not "just" a power as a coercive force that subordinates one set of people to another, and who holds the social together by naturalizing power and hierarchy, and by justifying social difference. It is also *productive* and generates for example certain strategies for social climbing – in this case for ones children or as wishes for a desired next life. Ideology is thus understood as a 'world-view':

> "If meaning is fluid – a question of difference and deferral – then ideology can be understood as the attempt to fix meaning for specific purposes. Ideologies are discourses which give meaning to material objects and social practices, they define and produce the acceptable and intelligible way of understanding the world while excluding other ways of reasoning as unintelligible. Ideologies provide people with rules of practical conduct and moral behavior and are thus equivalent 'to a religion understood in the secular sense of a unity of faith between a conception of the world and a corresponding norm of conduct'." (Ibid:66)

I will look upon language and meaning as social, and discourse is not viewed as a hidden presence, but more like a metaphor suggesting the regulation of meaning: language is unstable, but the availability of meaning and constructions are somewhat regulated and temporarily fixed by discourse, informing a world-view which cannot be counterpoised to truth and which is permeated by power and gives meaning to social practices.

2.4 Metaphors: As a mode of understanding and as a source for constructions

The relevance of my analytical view is centered on my approach to understand their constructions, not just as related to discourse and power as "docile bodies" but as meaning-generating and reflexive individuals making sense of New Nepal and what it contains – for them and their Others. But our constructions, just like our language, are social by nature: "Our constructs, however personal we may imagine them to be, are not simply matters of individual interpretation since they are always already a part of the wider cultural repertoire of discursive explanations, resources and maps of meaning available to members of cultures." (Ibid:35)

This leads Potter and Wetherell (1987) to suggest that "we need to examine the rhetorical organization of the linguistic and cultural repertoires, made up of the figures of speech, recurrent descriptions and metaphors, by which we construct specific accounts of ourselves and the world"(Ibid.).

I will focus on how my interviewees represents themselves and constructs their significant Others with relation to important subject positions afforded to them by the development discourse of New Nepal, through powerful and recurrent descriptions of selves and Others. These recurrent descriptions are social by nature given the maps of meaning available by hegemonic accounts of *telos* for self and country. Through metaphor, figures of speech and recurrent descriptions they continually suggest that they are relating to significant Others, from whom they feel they differ dramatically with respect to certain positionalities – which are deemed more "up" and "forwards" in New Nepal.

This will lead my analysis along two dependent and supporting lines; first, as a view that identity is constructed negatively – as constructed according to someone you are not – and on the other side a view of metaphor, along Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) reasoning, as something "we live by". Secondly I will relate to the notions of intersecting identities.

I will look upon the formation, or rather performance, of identity to be relational. Identity is linked to negation: "What we think of as our identity is dependent on what we think we are *not* (Ibid:123). The accounts of my interviewees of what and who they are not, is also a tale

about what they are. Their accounts of significant Others, either in the form of "politicians", "the educated" or "city women", are at the same time informative of who they construct and perceive *themselves* to be. Identity is linked to a *becoming*, and created through *distinction* and *resemblance*. While talking about their significant Others, there are recurrent descriptions of what their life and capabilities entails – recurrent descriptions and powerful constructions as well as they are talking in a generic sense. These descriptions are essentially what my interviewees are perceiving and constructing themselves *not* to be. But these descriptions are often *metaphorical*: while describing their Others, and thus positioning themselves at the same time, *there are some recurrent descriptions and metaphors that describe their perceived difference*.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) started to criticize the Western conception of meaning in Philosophy and Linguistics; that meaning in these traditions had very little relevance with what people found *meaningful* in their lives:

> "(…) Metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought and language. (...)We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature." (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:3)

Metaphor is not just a playwright's play with language, or part of a poet's rhapsody, but an intrinsic aspect of human understanding and reasoning as informed by concepts that fix and structure the flow of information and impressions we face:

> "The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. Our concepts structure, what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way that we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor." (Ibid.)

Lakoff and Johnson argue that this is something of which we are not aware: we just simply act and think automatically along certain lines, and the essence of metaphor is that we experience and understand one kind of thing in terms of another. I will show how my interviewees understand themselves through a negation of "who they are not" through their representation of the Other, which entails not just "factual" descriptions, but metaphors as well.

2.5 Cultural politics

Within my notion of nonessential selves and the focus on change presented by the discourse of New Nepal, there is an emphasis on the *possibilities* of change; personal, cultural and political. I have shown how institutional changes have dramatically changed Nepal, and that these changes have been linked to a "new consciousness" – which further has resulted in new ways of talking about and representing Nepal, culminating in talk of a "New Nepal" – framed as a definitive break with the past. Skinner and Holland (1996) have shown how the school as site is a paradoxical tool for the state, at best, as it was used to counter the culture and state of the Shahs. But some constructions being made in the school site, as they collected their data in the 80s and early 90s, were found in my data material outside of the school – and among villagers never entering that site. There is a hegemonic representation of reality creating a new language informing re-articulation of 'self and others' – through new metaphors and recurrent descriptions. Thus, Barker and Galasinski (2001) argue that cultural politics is about:

- the power to name
- the power to represent common sense
- the power to create official versions
- the power to represent the legitimate social world (Ibid:56)

I will use a concept of the state which understand the state as Bourdieu did: as a field where different actors compete for power, thus in some sense being a "transmitter" and somewhat reflective of the groups and interests that (temporarily) occupy it (Ritzer et al. 2008: 532), and at the same time as the holder of not just the monopoly of physical violence, but also, above all, the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence:

> "The educational system is the major institution through which symbolic violence is practiced on people. (…)The language, the meanings, the symbolic system of those in power are imposed on the rest of the population. This serves to buttress the position of those in power by, among other things, obscuring what they are doing from the rest of society and getting "the dominated [to] accept as legitimate their own condition of domination"." (Ritzer et al. 2008:533)

I have shown that the same people who initially benefitted from bikas were the ones who, through demonstrations in the center, Kathmandu, sought to dismantle the very same political system legitimizing its rule through bikas and education – who sought the "logical conclusion" of bikas through attaining 'cetana'.[9] I will claim that the struggles in the political field have had the consequence of spawning a new elite – embodying the characteristics of the

[9] Denoting both 'consciousness' and (political) 'awareness'.

New Nepali. They are now in a position where their language, meanings and symbolic system are imposed on the rest of the population, which buttresses their position in power by "among other things, obscuring what they are doing from the rest of the society and getting the dominated to accept as legitimate their own conditions of domination" (Ibid.).

North (1990) has a conception of institution which includes codes of conduct, norms of behavior and conventions, as the "formal rules of the game in a society, or the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction" (North in Bennett 2005:11), the same "new principal rules of the game [for New Nepal]" that Mishra (2008) is pointing to. This concept of institution overlaps "to a significant degree with at least certain concepts of culture" (Ibid.), but institutions are thus both formal and informal, where "formal institutions have written rules encoded in law and thus are ultimately backed by the power of the state" (Ibid:12). I have shown how institutions and state practices have been involved in shaping the representation of New Nepal. This dual aspect of institution is also implicit in this account of a nation state and national identity:

> "The nation-state is a political concept that refers to an administrative apparatus deemed to have sovereignty over a specific space or territory within the nation-state system. By contrast, national-identity is a form of imaginative identification with the symbols and discourses of the nation-state. Thus, nations are not simply political formations but systems of cultural representation through which national identity is continually reproduced as discursive action." (Barker & Galasinski 2001:124)

Hegemonic accounts of country and citizens are dispersed creating New Nepal as a *becoming* – something that started during the Shahs, but which yet is not fully realized. There is a representation of New Nepal which creates new modes of self-understanding and new significant Others to relate to; new significant categories to negate and thus somehow new social identities reflecting the symbolic power of those who occupy the political field and whose values are being dispersed through the education system.

Summary

I will focus on the macro level, and thus state disseminated discourses on development culminating in the discourse of New Nepal. The discourses represent powerful closures of meaning and produce a new ideal citizen and its Other. I will link this discourse to a new symbolic power reflecting a new elite. At the same time the cultural politics inherent in the

notion of New Nepal informs a socially produced agency to contest discrimination linked to caste and gender.

On the other hand I will see how the women position themselves with regard to this discourse, and how the development discourse affects their notion of selves. I will focus on how identities are constructed within language and representation, i.e. the power of the discourses of New Nepal and the cultural politics inherent which points back to macro level phenomena and also state power. But I will see the necessity to include notions of cognition and perception as identity is also created relationally through significant Others and thus a focus on recurrent descriptions and metaphor to show how they position themselves within a cultural context – and thus the necessity to take the micro level of analysis into consideration as well, yet combining it with a view of discourse resembling a metaphor and metaphor as a inherent part of the human conceptual system.

I will link the macro and micro levels of analysis by seeing education as a meso level of analysis. As noted earlier Bourdieu sees schools as the primary mean by which the symbolic power of the dominant is imposed on the dominated – and importantly, Pigg (1992), sees schools as the primary institutions of bikas.

Importantly, this will lead to the necessity of talking about a specific sort of womanhood and thus intersecting identities. I will claim that the rural, illiterate women are under double exposure: to the traditional discrimination of Old Nepal which they contest, and the symbolic violence of New Nepal which is naturalized.

There is a sense that in Nepal a view that the marginalized lack capabilities prevails – a representation of the poor which have been disseminated by the development discourse and reiterated in the school sites. While one could introduce the notion of *habitus* as an explanatory factor of social exclusion in “developing” societies, I will focus on the *representation* of the poor – their perceived lack of capabilities or as not apt to fit into the kind of rationality that prevails which then, unfortunately, frames their understanding of self through significant Others.

What happens when you, to paraphrase Bourdieu (1986), “reduce the world to a game of roulette” – where the acquirement of certain capabilities is the lucky number – “and therefore

of changing one's social status quasi-instantaneously"(Bourdieu 1986:241)? What happens when you equate poverty with capability failure? How does not having these capabilities affect your self-understanding when poverty and social exclusion is linked not to "accumulated history" – but to your failure to realize some certain and valued capabilities?

I will show how my interviewees questions power and hierarchy through gender and caste, while not questioning the symbolic power of education: neither the hierarchy erected upon it, nor their position within it – they blame themselves, and if they were to understand it as oppression they would sound crazy – *even to themselves.*

3.0 Methodological considerations.

3.1 Choosing a qualitative approach

I decided to conduct the study using qualitative methods as it was best suited for my research questions. Having been influenced by The World Bank and DFID's major joint project "*Nepal Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment*" (GSEA) (Bennett et al. 2006), I decided to do a study about rural and illiterate Nepali woman and their perceptions about democracy and political participation, and how they talk about exclusionary features of Nepali society. The GSEA highlights caste, gender, education as important exclusionary barriers, and the differences between urban and rural Nepal as a geographical exclusion. I wanted to find out how rural illiterate woman from middle to lower castes talk about and represent themselves with regard to democratic participation in New Nepal, and their perceived impact of caste and gender.

I left for Nepal with loosely defined research questions, hoping it would provide me flexibility, and with a focus to let me being guided by my data. I followed this up in the interview situation by having core questions created by influence of already existing literature, and then let the "created" situation guide follow up questions, giving it a more open-ended nature. I was thus theory -ladden in one respect, but loosely grounded with a hope to let the field tell its tales:

> "The use of qualitative methods is often associated with the adoption of an unstructured and flexible approach to the conduct of research. There is an unwillingness to impose concepts and their relationships on any part of the social world in advance to an open investigation of it."
> (Blakie 2005:252)

But this does not mean that I traveled *tabula rasa*, neither as a person, nor as an aspiring scientist:

> "Reflexive science sets out from a dialogue between us and them, between social scientists and the people we study. It does not spring from an Archimedean point outside time and space; it does not create knowledge or theory tabula rasa. It starts from a stock of academic theory on the one side and existent folk theory or indigenous narratives on the other. Both sides begin their interaction on real locations." (Burawoy 1998:7)

I do not claim to have undertaken an extended case method as advocated by Burawoy, but would rather just like to underline that even though your research questions are formed rather loosely, it does not mean that you are traveling down with a complete expectation that the field will tell you all the tales; the tales are being structured through a dialogue between what is being said there and the theories one has read and studied in advance. Qualitative research is in one respect contrasted from quantitative research by the fact that analysis is being done at the same time as that of the data collection, and you are forced to reflect as you go along. The way these women talked about caste and gender was a surprise to me. I had to change my approach, and the flexibility of qualitative research was of benefit to me in this respect, by allowing me to doing analyze at the same time as collecting data. As I had to extend out of the field, I started to focus on the discourse of New Nepal and reaching modernity through development.

According to Tove Thagaard (2004), the objective of qualitative methods is to capture the reality the way it is perceived by the people that is the object for the research, which suited my aspirations well. But: there is a question whether this goal is at all attainable, which I will discuss later with regards to differences between mine and my informants' positionalities. It is also a basic question of whether it is ever possible to gain access to someone's real self *under any condition*, but because of my theoretical scope and inclinations what I am looking for is not some real essential self, but a representation of a self being performed in a social setting by an actor which draws on cultural resources and available discourses.

3.2 Researching illiteracy and illiterate subjects

Even though quantitative research traditionally have been the preferred way of doing research on illiteracy and illiterate subjects, there have more recently been a change where qualitative methods have gained ground methodologically for these purposes (see Robinson Pant et al. 2004). Some may also argue that given my positional differences compared to my research-subjects (dealt with in length later), it would methodologically be less problematic to do the research quantitatively, compared to doing it qualitatively. But one could claim, as Fielding and Fielding (1986), that: "the most advanced survey procedures themselves only manipulate data that had to be gained at some point by asking people" (Fielding and Fielding 1986:12). There has also been criticism towards Sociology for being too "Euro-centric" (Hjelde 2006).

This criticism juxtaposed with Silvermann's (2005) concern about how a "dependence on purely quantitative methods may neglect the social and cultural construction of the 'variables' which quantitative research seek to correlate" (Silvermann 2005:29), made me skeptical about using quantitative methods in a far away field for data collection. It is not my intention to make general claims about the nature or benefits and drawbacks between these two approaches, rather to highlight the reasoning behind my choices. It must also be stressed that I felt giving voice to someone who might initially appear as voiceless was an important initial aspect of my study, and that this ethical position also partly informed my initial preference for doing interviews.

I also saw the benefit of using a qualitative approach since the tales I had received as a traveler before, regarding caste and gender, could be summed up as ambiguous. Even though the GSEA study rightly highlights a gender- and caste gap in Nepal, the way people talk about these two dimensions makes them not appear as clear cut and accepted as one might have expected from an historical, yet also quantitative view given the GSEA study's results. I had a lingering sense that the content of caste and gender were ambiguous and contested, and that the recent dramatic social changes in Nepal might have influenced another understanding of the terms than the strictly traditional one, as Nepal is undergoing modernization and change with a national gaze fixed at the future. To try and penetrate what this ambiguity is all about, to talk about and discover their perceptions and representations also entails an argument for a qualitative approach.[10]

3.3 The Field

3.3.1 Choosing my sites: Two villages and a city

I gathered my data in three separate locations, two villages and one city. One village and the city are so called "Hill-locations", while the other village was in Terai, and thus a "Plains-village".

[10] It must also be underlined that my initial scope, regarding patron-client relationships as an exclusionary dimension in Nepali democracy influenced my choice of methodological approach. I left this scope partly due to the recurrent descriptions and answers that did not meet my expectations, yet also due to ethical reasons.

I chose these sites due to the fact that earlier works on exclusion and inclusion in Nepal stresses that there traditionally has been a difference between the Hill dwellers and the Plain dwellers, and that the latter have been dominated structurally and symbolically by the former (Bennett et al. 2006: 5). This exclusion is thus both historical and geographical. Also today with regards to development activities, Hill areas are more likely to have group-based development activities than the Terai region (Ibid: 88).

Another aspect of geographical or physical exclusion has been the differences between rural and urban sites, not only with regards to "differences in markets, services, information and political influence" (Ibid:5), but also with regards to benefiting of the material and social transformations linked to development. I thus chose a city as well, for conducting supplementary data, because of the urban-rural dimension which is believed to influence a subjects' feeling of inclusion and exclusion. As in many developing countries there is a huge difference between the modern life of the cities and the everyday life in the villages, which goes a long in its own quiet pace – *from an outsider's point of view*. It is though not my intention to reproduce this essentialised and romanticized picture, but rather show how this lack of integration into the project of New Nepal through development is a source for discomfort and pain, and a sense of being stuck in the past – of being "backwards". I expected there to be differences in felt inclusion between urban and rural women.

I have thus gathered data predominately in the two villages, one in the Hills and one in the Plains, and supplemented these data with data based on interviews with inhabitants of a city.

3.4 Sample

3.4.1 Sampling

My sample consists of 22 people from three different places in Nepal, two rural and one urban site. With regards to the sites, I was sampling for *diversity*. I was expecting there to be differences, not just between the city and villages, but also between the two different villages given Hill peoples historically and symbolically dominance over the Plains people. I also expected there to be differences in felt inclusion between the urban and rural sites.

I also chose respondents based on the findings of the GSEA study. The GSEA's main findings in its "Composite Empowerment and Social inclusion Index" (CEI) was that the ranking of social groups broadly reflects the traditional caste hierarchy, and that in all social groups men have consistently higher CEI scores than women. But if one checks only female scores, the caste system reappears.[11] Caste/ethnic identity and gender together explained 33% of the variation in the CEI index, where caste is a stronger predictor than gender: it explains 26% of the variation of CEI scores, while gender explained 7%. Ten years of education was associated with a 19% increase in CEI scores (Bennett et al. 2006:37-38).

I wanted to have most of my respondents from the middle and lower castes, and I wanted to study particularly women with low levels of to no education; soft and hard illiterates. Reflecting the GSEA study one could call this an *extreme case*, dealing (mostly) with subjects who inhabit different positionalities that are of societal disadvantage, creating a sense of felt exclusion.

I expected people of different castes to feel different levels of inclusion in the modern state construction according to their position within the caste system. So while I was collecting informants "naturally", applying the snowball method, I would still keep track of my informants' caste, gender and educational background to assure diversity in the sample with regards to these, for my study, basic dimensions. But I did not need to take any measures for establishing diversity in my sample.

3.4.2 My sample

I conducted and taped 22 interviews. My respondents consist of 19 younger to elderly women, as well as three elderly men.

My respondents may also be divided into two "high caste" Brahmins, eleven from the "middle castes" or Janajati, and nine "lower caste" Dalits, formerly rendered "Untouchables".

[11] Quite notable, as this is a reversal from Acharya and Bennett's 1981 study, where Dalit women scored higher than their Brahmin counterparts (see Ibid.).

15 of my respondents are living in villages, while seven of them are living in Pokhara, though only two of them have been living in a city their whole life; the rest are internal migrants searching for jobs and a better life in the city – leaving their villages behind.

I interviewed three men, two Dalits and one Brahmin. One was living in the Hill village, while the other two were residing in Pokhara, yet both of them had not grown up there. The man from the Hill-village was a Dalit and had finished the 7th class. In Pokhara the other Dalit male had no education, while the Brahmin male was the highest educated in my sample, having a bachelor's degree.

The women were of varying caste, age and educational background. In the Hill village I conducted five interviews with women, their age varied from 22 to 48 years, and their education varied from none (3 persons) to completion of the 7th class. I interviewed one Brahmin, one Janajati and three female Dalits in addition to the one Dalit male.

In the Plains village I conducted nine interviews. All nine were female and their age varied from 20 to 60 years. Eight in my sample were Janajati and one was Dalit. In this village seven were uneducated and illiterate, while one had gone to the 2nd class, and the other educated had gone all the way up to the 10th class, yet not receiving SLC (School Leaving Certificate).

In Pokhara, I interviewed seven people, and as already noted this included two men. Two of these interviews were with people originating from my two other sites, one from the village in the Hills, and one from the Plains village, I will categorize both as resources for my study. Being far away from the villages, they both spoke differently about discrimination and village politics. I interviewed two female Dalits and one Dalit man, three Janajatis and one Brahmin male. Only one woman in the Pokhara sample was uneducated and illiterate, the same person originating from the Plains village. Also the Dalit male was illiterate. The other had from 5th to 10th class, yet none had passed the SLC examination. The exception was the noted Brahmin male.

I have thus focused on rural women, and especially from "lower-" to "middle castes", with little or no education.

3.5. Data collection

3.5.1 Interviews and positionalities

The main sources of data are the qualitative interviews I gathered while being in Nepal. I did 22 interviews, ranging in time from 20 to over 60 minutes. I kept the sound files on my personal computer, and in addition I stored them in a personal USB- memory stick as a back up.

Traditionally, there has been a focus in Sociology regarding a researchers positioning vis-a-vis his research subjects, regarding his or hers role as an outsider or insider. Carby (1997) talks about the problems of a member of an outsider (majority group) doing research on a minority group. Even though I traveled abroad there are power dimensions whose similarities might make this viewpoint relevant for my study as well. Also, Ball (1990), is one of what one might call "categoricalists", who maintain that one can only do research on people belonging to the same category as oneself. But there has been a move away from the "totality of position" as either an outsider or an insider. One could say this is a more flexible approach where one considers one's positions vis-a-vis one's research subjects, and breaks up one's position as neither either/or – in the same sense as intersecting identities have become an influential framework for dealing with identities and identity work. For the "categoricalists" these notions of "totalitarian" (in the sense of marking totalities) main locations or essences are gender, sexual orientation, religion and race. Their notions seems to rest on a presupposition that women and gay people share common experiences only because of their "womanhood" or "gayness", an essentialist view which one could argue reiterates these locations as social division markers.

Also, my theoretical position might inform parts of my resistance to this essentialist strand. According to Kvale: "In the postmodern world there is also a linguistic turn: the focus on language shifts attention away from the notion of an objective reality, and also away from the individual subject" (Kvale 2009:52). Even though I will try to avoid essentialising my informants, this does not mean that I will not take into consideration their positions, especially as women and as members of castes. I will not deny "objective reality", and the power of gender and caste as often exposed as the main social categories of differentiation and

systematic discrimination in Nepal, but I will show the new-found contestation of these traditionally socially ascribed roles on behalf of hegemonic discourses and the resources they contain for challenging the values of “Old Nepal”. I will thus take a soft, middle position, with regards to the “objective reality vs. discursive reality” debate, but I will look for their representations and recurrent descriptions of self and significant Others, and will not operate with a wish to (even without a belief that it is ever possible to) access an essential real self beyond representation. And even though I personally oppose such an essentialist viewpoint as the “categoricalists” hold, which would make many (also domestic) studies impossible, my positions vis-a-vis my research subjects will be taken seriously, and dealt with one by one: “If power is inherent in human conversations and relations, the point is not that power should necessarily be eliminated from research interviews, but rather that interviewers ought to reflect on the role of power in the production of interview knowledge.” (Kvale 2009:34) Furthermore I will argue that how these different positions will affect my fieldwork cannot easily be predicted, as an essentialist viewpoint of either/or (read: insider *or* outsider) might suggest.

Given the nature of my sample, my research subjects being female, rural, hard or soft illiterates and generally of low or lower caste, it is fair to say that I am quite dissimilar from my informants. Being an educated white male, I certainly faced some difficulty in meeting my subjects on equal grounds. Kvale (2009) stresses the interpersonal relation that an interview by definition has. There is no doubt that a power dimension was skewed in favor of the researcher.

Phoenix (2001) has done extensive deliberations with regards to interview relationships, especially with regards to understanding how different social locations might affect the relationship between interviewer and the interviewed. Her claim is that the effect of different positions with regards to reliability and the construction of data cannot easily be predicted: “As a result, she argues, the impact of 'race' and gender within particular pieces of research cannot easily be predicted. Prescriptions for matching the 'race' and/or gender of interviewers and interviewee are thus too simplistic” (K.Walseth 2006:81).

Contrary to traditional claims, my otherness might sometimes have been a surprising benefit. I was doing interviews based on “politics” and their felt inclusion or exclusion. Most of my informants had little or no interest in the topic 'politics' according to their answers. Like Chizu

Sato (2004) I found that my otherness in some respects was of benefit contrary to, in her terms, being a “young, single Western educated Nepalese female researcher (…) [:] Such differences are noted by Chopra, who, positioning herself as an academic researcher and an Indian national Hindi-speaking female in her 'home' community, found her ability to discuss issues that did not interest her informants to be quite limited (2001)” (Sato 2004:104). My otherness might be a reason for bearing such maybe seemingly pointless and boring questions demanding taken for granted answers. Being unknowing I could in a sense need and deserve some explanations.

Sato has, as Phoenix (2001), done similar extensive deliberations regarding positionality in her essay *“A self-reflexive analysis of power and positionality”*(Sato 2004), and found that she felt obliged to follow local practices and culturally constructed rules regarding gender and thus follow dominant patriarchal rules: “My experience, contrary to Panek's argument, is consistent with Wolf's statement that 'because of their foreign “otherness”, they [female researchers] may indeed receive and feel more pressure than men to adhere to gender role behaviors'” (Sato 2004:104).

Being a man and not a woman might thus in some sense be an advantage for me. As I told people in the cities that I was going to the villages asking questions about politics, they all laughed and said village people knew nothing about this, and that my topic was definitely an urban issue. But arriving in the first village and when the men understood I was going to interview the women about politics they all laughed too as it was clearly being perceived as a male issue. Even though I had some emotional reactions being confronted with their constructions of agency and understanding, I had no problems not adhering to that standard, even though it was clearly both bewildering and amusing. It also became important for me taking my respondents as seriously as one can, and I did my best to be polite and affirmative about their opinions’ relevance, a strategy which might have been contrary to local perceptions on the matter.

Regarding being *Gora*, a white man, it is also not so easy to predict how that is perceived. It is easily forgotten by most Westerners that our position within the caste system, has traditionally not been that flattering. Being as a westerner positioned just above the classically ascribed “Untouchables” now being termed Dalits, my position within the classical stratification system was either below or just above most of my informants. But being white and Western

also entails being part of a power relating to modernity and progress, in what most Nepalese term being “forward” or “back[ward]”, or what Escobar (1988) would call the imagining of modernity “through the idiom of development/underdevelopment” (Kramer 2008:5). Goras might no longer be understood as first and foremost on behalf of their “cultural backwardness” and “religious impurity”, yet some antipathies still exist. The Gora is now first and foremost a source of money for many Nepalis because of tourism, and we are more looked upon and constructed as rich and forward. We are in some sense the beacon of progress, a road to which many Nepalese find themselves traveling, not just based on rapid social and material transformation, but for a pervasive development discourse which defines the current national project of New Nepal. It is difficult to profess how this positioning as the Other within the discourse of emerging modernity through development has affected my fieldwork, but as Phoenix (2001) I would deem it difficult to predict in advance, and for me personally difficult to asses in hindsight.

But my position as a foreign white male is being mitigated by the fact that I am married to a Nepali. Put purely methodologically my position as outsider is in essence confounded, and thus further complicated. There is no doubt that I could not have accessed the villages I did without her help. I would also probably have ended up in more advanced villages, where the villagers are better off, without the help and aid of local people met through my wife. No one seemed to understand why I wanted to go to such “backward villages”. But she was of help not just in practical matters such as access and travelling, she might have mitigated my differences and thus power stemming from different positionalities, especially related to “education and forwardness” given the fact that she is born and raised in a village herself, with hardly any education and of middle caste, thus sharing most of my respondent’s main positionalities. In Nepal there is now such a widespread focus on education, that it now affects a woman’s worth regarding being a good marriage.[12] Being married to an “uneducated village woman”, I clearly had made a statement regarding my views on the worth of a woman being regardless of education, however unintended and also not being reflected over prior to my data collection. Rather, I was thinking, she might mitigate my otherness regarding gender, nationality and caste; the pervasiveness of the development discourse and the construction of

[12] Also in my own relations with my wife, I was initially surprised at how much my wife stressed my education. While enumerating my good qualities, education always was one of the first to be mentioned, also when she told me why she was so lucky to be with me, her own lack thereof was stressed. I did not know that uneducated Nepali women were “constructing themselves and being constructed as less desirable wives than educated women” (Skinner & Holland 1996:274).

the educated person and its opposite was notions which dawned on me during the data collection, and especially after.

A dimension which clearly posed an obstacle to me was language. Only understanding a little bit, I was clearly disadvantaged. I needed to rely on translators helping me. Of course I expected this to be a problem; things do get lost in translation. The importance of *which* words they choose, and *how* they say it might get lost as I don't have the frame to relate it to. In addition I started questioning two of my translators' capabilities. I ended up hiring an English teacher to help me to transcribe the interviews. We re-translated what was actually being said by my informants, with the help of my recordings, not what had been translated to me by my helper – thus heightening the reliability. But not speaking the language definitely makes me the other, and the flexibility in the interview situation was being limited by this. Important parts were being left out for discovery during transcription.

I do feel that my otherness was mitigated not just by my wife, but also through my translators. I decided to use people from villages as translators, and preferably women. I was conscious about not using urban and well-educated high castes as translators, since I expected their sum of positionalities to be too unequal to my own informants, given the fact that I wanted to mitigate my own otherness through the people I brought to the sites for data collection. Without knowing it I had perpetuated the binary introduced by bikas – that between city and village, and which makes development agencies and elite Nepalis talk about the need of an "outreach worker who is from the village" – 'the village' as a social world distinct and distant from that of the cities (see Pigg 1992). But in a way, I felt that the persons I had around me actually influenced the perception and reception of me, and that the effect of me per se is difficult to assess in contrast to the perception of me *with* the people I went to the sites with. This, in my opinion, also underlines that a researchers positions can not be regarded as static, and that the notions of insider/outsider are too simplistic when it comes to capturing the complexities of variables relevant for consideration.

3.5.2 The interview situation

The interview situation varied from the different contexts. The first village we went to became the most difficult location, where I would learn from my mistakes. As we arrived in the Hill

village, we went to the house of a local Brahmin, whose wife was related to a friend of mine. People gathered, some sitting at the outside of the simple house, moving freely, while others were sitting further away, looking at me from a distance. People were smiling. Women carrying grass stopped as they were walking by. Men came, and sat down. Not talking, they were happy observing me after a friendly greeting of *Namaste*. They sat for hours, talking and laughing, and curiously observing the white man.

I made a situation, just by my presence. There had only been one white man in the village before, and a lot of people wanted to see me. They wondered why I was there, and people were so curious that it was not difficult to get interviewees. But they were not ready for long interviews; they would gladly be interviewed, but as it progressed they were not able to sit them out. They had no time. I learned to warn people in advance of the length of it, which I was not sure of at that time, it being my initial interviews.

I also had problems because of the caste relations in the village. My Dalit respondents could not enter our house, as it was taboo for our Brahmin hosts to let people of such “low castes” into their house. Since my respondents were meant to be mostly “lower castes”, we had to do the interviews at the backside of the house. People, mostly, respected the fact that we wanted to be alone.

The males were very surprised that I wanted to interview their wives about politics. They looked amused, and laughed and talked condescendingly. “They don't know anything about these things”. I informed them that what they thought and felt was of importance to me. As the heads of the households, they were clearly surprised that I had not planned to talk to them. Also the woman exclaimed that they were not knowledgeable about these things, but I told them that what I wanted to know was their thoughts and opinions – “true” or not was not that important as long as they were “real”.

The interviews went smoothly, but my questions meant to weigh their ‘civic literacy’ raised discomfort. They had already warned me that they were not knowledgeable, and these questions seemed to bother them so much that I did not continue asking them. I did not want to end my interviews abruptly. I might have done this prematurely and lost valuable data. I also had the same experiences a few times related to caste questions, which I then quickly left

for questions surrounding *Nagrita*.[13] But I continued to ask these questions, for most seemed to have opinions on them, and most of them conveyed no discomfort talking about it, neither verbally nor through body language. The questions about civic literacy was the ones that seemed to bother the women the most, and the questions of caste seemed to raise the temperature the most - and I were forced to start thinking about the reasons for that.

At the end of a third interview, I saw women sitting around the village *Ama*, the most respected old woman of the village. They were discussing, and she was listening. They seemed far from agitated; rather they seemed to truly enjoy being asked these questions. One of the women said she was surprised – she had liked it. She had never been asked these kinds of questions before. She smiled. It is difficult to explain what this situation entailed, but I felt good – and somewhat proud.

Kvale (1996) writes that sometimes the interview situation can be of unexpected pleasure for the interviewee, a rare and enriching experience: "It is probably not a very common experience in everyday life that another person – for an hour or more – is interested only in, sensitive toward, and seeks to understand as well as possible another's experiences and views on a subject." (Kvale 1996:36)

I guess that for diverse reasons, it was especially so for my rural, illiterate and female informants given the social context of Nepal. There is a dominant image of the Nepali rural woman as backwards. Even the women warned me of their ignorance, they stressed it themselves. And the men chuckled. The English teacher helping me transcribe the interviews too, literally exclaimed his surprise of how "nicely" they spoke. And when I told them at the end of the interviews: "See - you know a lot, you understand a lot. Thank you so much" – they were truly happy. A few women were actually glowing. Some modern feminist approaches underline that there should be rewards for participating in interviews, and that sometimes this reward could be a sense of empowerment. Since most of the women warned me about their lack of capabilities regarding participation in a study, I realized that I had to provide them with a soft entrance to the more politically charged questions. Thus, I started with background information and easy factional questions. I followed up these questions with what I called my "reincarnation questions", e.g. questions about their wishes for their next

[13] Citizenship paper.

life. In part these questions were nice in order to tap into underlying assumptions of what constitutes a good life, and later more specifically in what social categories they wanted to be born into in their next life. Another aspect of these questions was to use them as a tool to go beyond reiteration of discourse. At the same time, starting with these questions made it possible for me to make them understand that I actually understood basic parts of their traditional social and cultural world, and that the starting point was actually themselves and their life. These questions also heightened the distance between their reiteration of circulating discourses uttered in a passive modal sense, and their experienced and perceived life world informing hopes and desires for their next.

3.6 Ethics

I have avoided naming the villages, to ensure anonymity. I found this not necessary with regards to the city.

As in all interview studies, I had to reach fully informed consent in a voluntary way from my interviewees. Given the fact that many were illiterate, I had to do this orally. I explained that I was doing a research paper on rural woman and their views upon New Nepal and what it meant to them. I also felt obliged to tell them this was merely a student paper, as many had no understanding of a Master degree. To convey that I was a student doing school work was important to me, as I did not want to give the impression that I was doing research linked to a development organization or the Norwegian Embassy, in case they could have hoped for or expected later benefits for participation, but also since I felt this could damage the data quality in case they would over-represent need and suffering. They were told that it was voluntary, and that they could retract statements and participation after finishing the interview, or during. None chose the former, yet some stopped before the interview was over due to a hard work schedule. Regarding their lack of time, I found myself sometimes as Chizu Sato (2004) did:

> "As suggested by the paternalistic development discourse of which I was yet a young subject, I believed that my positioning granted me the ability (power to) to control (power over) the informants' time and movements, to set the topics to our discussion, to demand answers and to have certain expectations of those answers." (Sato 2004:105)

On the one hand I felt a bit irritated when they did not have the time to finish the interview, and tried to keep them for "just some questions more", a situation Sato (2004) links to ones

position within the development discourse, a belief that my position entails power. I have to stress that I did not frame or understand my irritation within this framework as it transpired, but I do see the reasons for framing it in this sense in hindsight. In all, Sato's claims can be understood within what Wolf (1996) calls power exerted *during* the fieldwork, and I have to be critical upon the modes of mind which made it possible for me to frame this happening as something which were of disadvantage for me and the progress of my research.

Also, my relations and decisions not to interview the men and the village boss may be understood through the view that I was positioned within a paternalistic development discourse. On the one hand (as noted) I wanted to give voice to the people I initially had framed as voiceless, and thus not so interested in the males and the village boss. On the other hand I had set the topic of our discussion. I was not particularly interested in hearing what the village boss called their needs, as I wanted to make clear I was not linked to neither an Embassy nor a development organization. In hindsight I realize I should maybe have respected the local patriarchy and thus also interviewed the males, and also not have been so afraid of listening to their concrete material needs.

4.0 All are equal: contestation of discrimination linked to caste and gender

In this chapter I will present and discuss data regarding how my interviewees talk about caste and gender in New Nepal. I will first show how there is a re-iteration of the discourse of New Nepal as entailing gender and caste equality, and how this entails a de-naturalization of caste and gender discrimination. I will link this to the cultural politics inherent in the discourse of New Nepal, and show how this entails a new socially produced agency. I will relate to this as empowering aspects of the discourse of New Nepal.

But I will also show how there is a friction between uttered reality and lived lives; between discursive reality and social reality. I will show how the women through speech roles distance themselves from their own uttered sentences. I will also use the "re-incarnation questions" as a means to try and get beyond re-iteration of discourse. This argument is part of showing how the rural, illiterate women are under double exposure – here linked to the traditional social construct and power inherent.

4.1 The contestation of gender

Most of my respondents quickly retorted that men and women are equal. Having the preconception, both from earlier travels and earlier studies as the GSEA, this answer puzzled me. While most quickly replied that men and women are equal, there is a lot of contestation; not just of the hierarchies themselves but also about the "fact" that women and men are equal now. Yet, generally and typically most of my respondents quickly responded to questions of gender equality like this:

> *Are man and woman equal in Nepal?*
>
> Yes, they are equal.
>
> *Do you think the woman have easier life nowadays than before?*
>
> Now it is easier. (E Janajati Terai)[14]

[14] E refers to the letter I ascribe to identify each specific interviewee (A-V), Janajati refers to "middle caste", just as Brahmin points to "high caste" and Dalit to "low caste". Terai points here to the Plains village, just as Hill points to the Hill village and Pokhara to the city. Unless noted as male, the interviewees are female.

An important common feature is the link between the stated equality of *now*, and the hardships of the past. A change has occurred which makes the women in my sample talk about the present as qualitatively different regarding being a woman, as compared to the past: it has become "easier", and the women utter this either through the evaluative terms of "comfort" and "easiness" and through statements like "they are equal" or "should be equal" – the latter is undoubtfully normative, the content of the former is harder to depict as either factual, normative or performative.

While Tamang (2002) underlines the essentialising aspects of both anthropological and development activities in Nepal and the counterproductive efforts of the Panchayati state, there is no doubt that there have been important, yet inadequate changes with regards to women's rights in New Nepal: "For example, inadequate as they may be, laws and legal decisions have been made to ensure women's right to property, abortion and to their bodies (via a recent court decision on martial rape)" (Tamang 2002:161). Among my interviewees, the script of the present is inherently linked to the script of the past, and I will argue that this temporal dichotomy is not only related to the factual changes that definitely have occurred in recent times, but also to the stated "rupture" where "Old Nepal" is being replaced by the "New Nepal", where one discourse with inherent scripts is challenged by another:

> They [women and men] should be equal… These days it is changing a lot. Now we are almost equal.
>
> *How are boys more big?*
>
> What to say? [pause] It is our tradition to think like that. **It has been said like that, and it has been accepted.** (N Janajati Pokhara)

This woman's justification of gender-differences is linked to culture, and what has been *said.* Many women were readily able to link their perceptions to "what is being said", to the discourses circulating in society and cultural political forces having the power to name, represent common sense through official versions and represent the legitimate social world. But her ethical stance, "they should be equal", informs a contestation of the traditional social construct with regards to gender – like with most of my respondents.

There is no doubt that the (1) "ways of talking" (representations) has changed, and (2) that this "acceptance" my informant above is talking about is not automatically given anymore:

> *What is the condition of Nepali woman? Do you think they are equal to the men?*

> For my feeling, I want all to be equal. (D Janajati Terai)

While some claim equality, others just improvement and yet others underline the hardships and inequality, there is no doubt that the social practices and values of the traditional gender-construct are being contested.

> *Do you think Nepali women and Nepali men are same, or still different?*
>
> I thinking before...Now it is more good. Becoming little bit more same, not same same, now little bit more good.
>
> *How is boy still more high?*
>
> Nepali people thinking that boy every thing is possible, different jobs and so on… That's why boy is more boss. Possible hard working boy, not possible hard working girls..
>
> *But when I went to village, I saw a lot of girls working hard, while men were having more free time..*
>
> Yes, just thinking like this Nepali people. (M Janajati Pokhara/Terai)

The discriminatory practices, while still existing, are being contested. Her constant underlining of "thinking", that "Nepali people are just thinking like this", removes the practices of power from naturalization or anything God-given. The cultural politics of New Nepal gives resources to de-mystify the traditional gender construct and see it as it is: oppression.

4.2 The contestation of caste

Just as with gender, there was a high similarity between respondents regarding their views on caste. There was a ready-made answer; that one used to believe a lot in it, while now one does not. There is a new way of talking about and representing castes in New Nepal, just as I have shown with regards to gender. This re-thinking and re-articulation is linked to the cultural politics of New Nepal: just as personal change is possible through re-articulation:

> "(…) Social change becomes possible through re-thinking the articulations of the elements of 'societies', of re-describing the social order. (…) Rethinking ourselves, which emerges through social practice and more often than not through social contradiction and conflict, brings new political subjects and practices into being."(Barker & Galasinski 2001:47)

Through the conflicting and dissenting articulations of what Nepali society consists of there has occurred an opening with regards to meaning available, and thus openings for re-articulating self and re-describing the elements of society. While caste used to be the one of

the most rigid and defining aspects of social hierarchy ensuring some sort of stability, caste and gender became elements the Maoists were capitalizing on ensuring popular support (where given), given their strong emphasis of the traditional inequalities of Nepali culture and society – especially poverty, gender and caste. The Maobadi discourse on caste and gender (subsumed, for my purposes, under the discourse of New Nepal) were heavily disseminated and represented for many Nepalese a violent response to these practices as well.

In general people responded that "all are equal" and that "caste does not matter", in the words of this Janajati:

> I don't think there are high castes and low castes…Caste system is almost vanished…In village also it is not like in the old days. (Q Janajati Pokhara)

This view that caste does not matter was wide-spread. Her view that it is also less important in the villages than before is also common; both by rural and urban interviewees.[15] It also represents a denaturalization of the traditional power of caste.

4.2.1 Caste as man-made

This Dalit-man re-articulates himself and his identity linked to caste, by de-mystifying the religious background for being born a Dalit through linking it to feudal work-segregation and not religious pollution:

> In the beginning, because of the work they did, people made them Sarki. So, because of the work we do…people, everybody started calling us Sarki. (J Dalit Male Hill)

This notion that castes are man-made and not God-given was something I also heard from other interviewees. While the notion of a next life through incarnation, and what one would be given then was "up to God" was a natural way of talking of existence and life as Nepal still is

[15] Yet, this statement shows also that there is a perception that caste discrimination is more prevalent in "the village" than in "the city". This dichotomy between urban and rural appears very rigidly all over the interviews, and I will later show how important the distinction between city and village is in contemporary Nepali social imagination.

a very religious (and predominately Hindu) nation, many Dalits and others conferred this notion that castes were man-made.

This Sarki male and other Dalits were constructing their shared identity as Dalits to something man-made and "given" to them, and also as a "dukha"[pain, hardship, struggle] which was not accepted anymore, and not to be tolerated; a painful struggle linked to other people's thoughtlessness, in some sense, to lack of awareness.[16]

Language is not personal, but social – this personal and group based re-articulation is linked to new hegemonic practices of representing reality and of describing the meaningful elements of society. There is a new power to represent common sense, create official versions and to represent the legitimate social world:

> All castes are equal. In the past there used to be discrimination, but now everyone is equal. We cannot be odd, we need also follow. (C Janajati Terai)

Her first sentence is clearly a reiteration of the dominant discourse which she clearly recognizes as a new power representing common sense: if one does not follow, one is "odd". This "oddness" is being backward and clinging to tradition in New Nepal, and I will claim that "we" refers to village people. The notions and values of New Nepal are being disseminated, it is perceived, from the cities.

Another woman relates to the equality of castes through a metaphor:

> What do you think about your caste?
>
> [The] Caste is all right. Man and man should be the same. But people dominate by saying Damai. If the hand is cut off any people, blood will come in any case. (S Dalit Hill)

[16] It is worth to note that "Dalit" is a self-designated term, literally meaning 'ground, suppressed, crushed, broken in pieces' and is thus not etymologically linked to being "Untouchable". While the Dalit-movement has a long history for social struggle, it is still a "meaningful" category to relate to and to designate to others; representing them – and thus still a source for discriminatory practices. It is thus not my intention to relate the production of new Dalit-subjectivities to the discourse of New Nepal. As written earlier, the caste system itself lost legal sanctioning under King Mahendra, but I do claim that the development discourse, which I have seen as originating under this King, *culminates* in the discourse of New Nepal and the nation building process inherent in that notion. It thus serves as a wider impetus for Dalits to re-articulate themselves as Nepal is somewhat leaving the past and its discriminatory practices – and this, again, reinforces the anger and resentment discriminatory practices that still occur entails.

This is a very prevailing and recurring description of the shared humanity and bond between people – as equals. This recurring metaphor that "all people's blood is red" with the implicit meaning "all people are same" is a re-iteration of a school-textbook, which had the "didactic aim to educate people to a certain version of society" (Pigg 1992: 500) to stress national unity over other social differences. This common metaphor offers a window not just to the new metaphors representing the cultural politics of New Nepal, and the prevalence of the discourse of New Nepal, but also to the link between development, state and schools and their 'authoritarian' views being disseminated to the public creating a new *anschauung* – they have the power to represent common sense and create official versions.

As these answers regarding gender and caste were the most typical, I take them as common and pervasive representations of New Nepal, and thus as a re-iteration of the dominant discourse, but throughout the interviews, and on behalf of observation, it became clear that there were dissenting views and a friction between uttered reality and lived lives.

4.3 "Discursive reality" vs. "social reality"

4.3.1 Gender

One woman relates to the new notion of New Nepal as opposed to the traditional values of Old Nepal; for her particularly linked to a new way of talking about and representing gender:

> *What do you expect from New Nepal?*
>
> In New Nepal, it is said, that boys and girls are equal. I like that. (A Janajati Terai)

The discourse of New Nepal entails a change in the representation of gender. It is noteworthy though, that the woman in some sense at the same time embraces and distances herself from her own utterance, through her qualification of the fact that "In New Nepal(...) boys and girls are equal" to the fact that "it is said". As language is multifunctional, this way of relating to what one is uttering is what Barker and Galasinski (2001) would subsume under the *interpersonal function of language*:

> "The interpersonal function refers to the interaction between the speaker and the addressee by the text. (..) [i.e.], it alludes to the fact that speakers can express an attitude or evaluation towards their

> utterances, that is, speakers can distance themselves from the utterances they produce. Alternatively, speakers may adopt particular speech roles with regards to their utterances (e.g. author or mouthpiece).”(Barker & Galasinski 2001:68)

In a sense this woman is embracing (normatively, through “I like”) the utterance which she, through her qualification of the terms' truthfulness, is linking to the new way of speaking about and representing gender-roles in New Nepal; her speech-role is related to being a “mouth-piece” to the discourse of New Nepal, while at the same time normatively embracing it. There is no doubt that this agency is somewhat socially produced, and that it points back to the national power hierarchy which contests the traditional social construct as an instance of the cultural politics of New Nepal.[17]

In a sense, the truthfulness of her sentence is not linked to her *own* particular experiences of life, as well, and that this distance between the norms and values being disseminated through powerful and hegemonic discourses might be at odds with her own lived experience of being a woman in Nepal, as exemplified by another woman from Terai:

> *What rights do you want from the Nepalese men?*
>
> What to say. I should get job. My life should be easy and comfortable. That’s all. **There should be equality** between the man and woman.
>
> *Are man and woman getting equal rights or not now?*
>
> **People say that nowadays both the males and females are getting equal rights. But that reality is unknown to me.**
>
> *In your view, do you think woman nowadays are getting easier life than of the past?*
>
> Yes, it is easy. The women are getting much easier [life] than in the past days.
>
> *Why is it getting easier to be a woman?*
>
> **The males and females are equal**. In the past the woman didn’t get the rights. Nowadays, women are also getting rights. So, I think it is easier to be a woman nowadays. (B Janajati Terai)

Also this woman is distancing herself from her own utterance, yet at the same time the role of “mouth-piece” cannot be reduced to not having agency and simply being an unreflective medium of discourse, as underlined by her normative stressing of that men and women *should* be equal. Rather, I would claim, her distancing away from the discourse is related to its stated

[17]The traditional social construct represents somewhat a more “local” level of power, infused with tradition and social practices, while the power of the discourse of New Nepal represents a national power level as it is inherently linked to nation building and a new ideal citizen.

truths and her particular experience of life. Meinhof and Galasinski (2000) take a similar position:

> "[They] argue that the explicit presence of conflicting voices in the discourse of informants (e.g. (…) direct quotations of what others say, or said) represents a distancing of actors from views which they have already acknowledged as alternative perspectives to their own." (Ibid:127)

Discourse and social materiality is not equally supportive, a fact I will link to the women's perceived experience of being somewhat excluded from New Nepal. Their new ways of speaking about and representing "facts" is connected to the discourse of New Nepal, empowering them to contest the traditional text of gender and other socially ascribed identities and the following roles. But the friction between "what is said" and "what is" makes the narrative of gender linked up to social practices and "material facts" as well; perceived as "residues" from Old Nepal. This unrealized equality is also a source for suffering, and a sense of being "backwards" and displaced – a source of dislocation from the "superstructure" of New Nepal. I will, at a later stage, show how this is perceived as connected with their spatial residence in a village – one of the main positionalities in their intersecting identity as illiterate, rural women.

4.3.1.1 Break and continuation: The domestic sphere and work segregation

Women in general still have to face the values of Old Nepal in their everyday life through different social practices; but there is widespread perception that women from the villages have to endure a tougher inequality than their "sisters" in the cities. Their position as women still entails socially ascribed roles. This includes for the village women carrying and cutting grass, carrying water, making food etc. The script of being a good woman (see Bennett 1976, 1983, Skinner & Holland 1997) can still be re-iterated, as well as numerous traditional practices of scolding.[18] A good woman does not talk too much, she respects her parents, she does not quarrel, lie or steal, and a young woman or girl might just reiterate this Brahmin script if she is asked if she is a good girl (Skinner & Holland 1997:91). Through observation I have also noticed how easily one turns to the scripts of the Old Nepal in other areas of social interaction (Ibid:93). The scolding practices of "radi" (literally 'widow', but with the

[18] While presenting themselves young women still can reiterate the traditional narrative of being a good woman; as witnessed by me when meeting younger members of my wife's family.

connotation of whore) which in the broader sense denotes a woman who has not followed the dominant script of the path of a good woman, and thus preserves her (and her family's) honor is still commonly practiced. A bad woman gets called “radi”.[19] This scolding practice is still being performed on young girls, and I have heard baby girls being called “radi” for crying.

There is also no doubt that the domestic dimension is another power-relation where women traditionally were, and to some degree still is, subjugated to men. According to “The Global Gender Gap Report 2009”, Nepal got rewarded the worst score possible regarding maternal versus paternal authority (Hausman et al 2009:145). But this dimension of female suppression was not easily investigated by me, as I was told norms prevented women from talking freely about their domestic power structure, since women were not supposed to talk badly about their husbands – a performativity of the dominant values of being a good woman, which shows the prevalence of the traditional script of gender. One woman said that she felt there was not full equality between the genders, but that “it is currently not like this in our home”. Another woman responding to questions of male domination responded like this:

> “Those who dominate, dominate…Those who don't, don't...” (Q Janajati Pokhara)

There is no doubt that the women to some extent are dependent on their husbands’ values and relationship to the content of New Nepal, for their own possibilities of living that change. The power residing in the domestic sphere is one of the areas, according to “The Gender Gap Report 2009”, where women's positions have not been improved so far in New Nepal.

Also when it comes to work the women find themselves somewhat “stuck in the past”.[20] A common feature about the narrative of the present is that recurring descriptions regarding the better conditions for women are linked to “comfort” and “easiness”. But to be a *village woman* is by most constructed as being linked to hardships, by city people and village people alike. Village women have to work a lot, and have clearly designated roles:

> *According to law, are Nepali women and Nepali men equal?*
>
> According to the law, the men and woman should be equal, yes.

[19] While a man might get called “radi ko chora”(e.g. ‘a widow’s son’).
[20] I will in the next chapter elaborate on how their work distinguishes them from both city people and the educated, who are deemed more ”up” and ”forward”.

Why are men and woman not equal in Nepal?

The women are different than the men...What to say? The boys go out to study, to travel...Our tradition are also like that. The boys can read outside…But the woman should stay inside, cook rice, cut grass, get firewood and so on. The parents and the people slightly discriminate against the girls.
(F Janajati Terai)

There is also a perception that men have the work that demands some sort of skill or hard muscle-power, while the work that is "simply" exhaustive is being regarded as female work:

What is the difference between man and woman?

The females are suppressed from the very beginning. We can't do the heavy and difficult work. So, we are back… (U Brahmin Hill)

Another woman from Terai also related the differences between men and women to both physical power and division of labor. Given the context of the village where most of the work is agricultural, and thus manual, this relationship between physical differences and division of labor is one of the main reasons why some of the village woman stress that "men are greater", and at the same time makes sure that women "depend on them" and thus "can't stand on their own feet":

Do you think men and woman are same in Nepal?

While looking in general, men are superior to the woman.

Why are the men superior?

Women are weak. Men are strong. So, I think men are superior to the woman. Husband is important and we depend on him. So the men are important.

Is it easy for the woman nowadays, compared to before?

Nowadays men and women are much more equal. (I Janajati Terai)

Traditionally, women have also done most if not all of the domestic chores, but as the following Brahmin woman shows, this segregation of work related spheres is also being contested and challenged – not just in thought but in social practice as well:

Is it easier for the woman now than before in the old days?

Now it is easy and comfortable. In the past days we were not able to speak to our husbands... Nowadays we can say that we won't cut vegetables also. (U Brahmin Hill)

This contestation of rendering household chores to the female, which is clearly linked to the rendering of the private sphere as female and the public sphere as male, is also clearly uttered by another woman from the other village:

> *What about [equality] between man and woman?*
>
> Yes, men and woman are same. The household works can be done by both the males and the females. (R Janajati Hill)

A lot of the women also stress their need and just claims for getting work, that is *paid work* outside of the home and their ascribed farming chores. The paid labor available in a village is often, but not exclusively, working in other people's fields. One woman got very angry referring to the working conditions of women compared to men:

> In working men gets more, and women less for the same work. For planting rice from 10AM women get NRs 60 to 80, while men get 200. And for food in the middle of the day, they give rice to men, while women get other things, like corn and millet bread. (S Dalit Hill)

She talked with anger and a raised voice. The differences in payment and the differences of allocated food (as rice is perceived as better and is more expensive) to working women compared to the working men were clearly not acceptable.

The long hours of working and the various chores that are designated as women's work became clear as I did the interviews in the Hill village; most of the women I saw going by were carrying grass. The women simply had not time for long interviews, and some decided to leave and not complete the interview, either for cutting grass or feeding the animals. These time-consuming and enduring hardships that village women were expected to undertake, also clearly for many interviewees distinguished their lives from that of the city women, who were perceived as having more "easiness" and "comfort" in their lives. "Dukha" (pain, suffering, hardships), as expressed by the women, was linked to other social dimensions and not just to being female per se, rather linked to being a village woman, which underlines their intersecting identity. "Dukha" has been one of the narratives linked to the construction of being female in Nepal:

> "(..)Throughout Nepal, certain types of pain are unambiguously condemned – particularly suffering caused by other people's irresponsibility, selfishness, thoughtlessness, or greed. But in other situations, painful struggle is seen as normal, even normative, aspect of women's life; indeed it is through certain types of suffering that the adult feminine subjectivity is produced." (Leve 2007:153)

The concepts of “easiness” and “comfort”, as opposed to “dukha”, are the evaluative terms and recurrent descriptions which often emerge as the women contrasts their lives from that of the other; while easiness or comfort among my female respondents is ascribed to especially city women and the educated, there is no doubt that their own experiences is constituted by that of being the “Other” – the suffering ones. I will later argue that this is linked to being “backwards” and not “forwards”; their hard manual “work” contrasted to not having “jobs”, “freedom”, education and the material advantages offered (and promised) by the discourse of development realized (in their views) in the city – they are simply not developed. I will claim that this reinforces their pain, as their existence in the *local* power hierarchy is reinforced by their low status in *another* power hierarchy: as second class citizens in the nation building process.

While I have shown how discriminatory practices still occur, I have also shown that this domination is not naturalized; it is a source of contempt, anger and sadness. The discourse of New Nepal inherently challenges Old Nepal – and the cultural politics inherent in re-describing the social order and the elements constituting it through “creating official versions” and “representing common sense” entails a denaturalization of power linked to the traditional system of gender roles. The power imposed on them seems to be caused by other people’s (read: male) irresponsibility, selfishness and thoughtlessness, and that this painful struggle is not deemed acceptable any longer, though one might find one self subjugated to it.

4.3.2 Caste

Just as I have shown with regards to gender, there is also a friction between the circulating discourse saying that “in New Nepal caste does not matter”, with the lived experience of being of “lower caste”. I need to differentiate between the accounts of the “middle castes” and the Dalits.

While there is no doubt that most people referred to change when it came to perceptions of caste, both by Dalits and others, there is still no doubt that more Dalits than interviewees from the “middle castes” felt that caste still mattered in their life – as a source of pain, anger and resentment (see Appendix: A). Clearly, the interview situation also became a scene for venting these emotions as well – and questions regarding caste were among the questions that

managed to heat the conversation up as well as informing the most ambiguous accounts. On the one hand I will analyze that to be linked to prevailing discriminatory practices, as an issue which clearly represents the values of Old Nepal and which is thus a source of irritation in New Nepal. On the other hand, and more importantly, it often places people with a foot in each world: one in New Nepal and the other in "the village".[21] One foot represents the local power hierarchy while it presses at the other which represents the national power hierarchy – the power of New Nepal. I do think this is an issue where my respondents sometimes feel "odd", as they are not always "following" and thus feels – and might be subjected as backwards. For, to be non-discriminating is also a cultural marker of being educated – of being developed (see later).

One of my interviewees clearly feels there is too much re-iteration and performativity when it comes to the re-articulation of caste in the discourse of New Nepal:

> *Do you believe in caste?*
>
> I would want to be Brahmin [says angrily]. Some people dominate us very much. **Though people say "all people are equal", it is not like that**. The clothes that [the] Damai [e.g. tailoring caste] sew are accepted, but they are dominated. Before we give the clothes to the Brahmin we step on them, even our children spit on them. But such clothes are accepted. For Brahmins we put foam on the mat, and ask them to stay on it, even inside our homes." (S Dalit Hill)

She refers to the still commonly practiced discrimination/cultural practice that Dalits cannot enter higher castes' houses, as witnessed during my data collection. I have heard this being referred to as "just as dogs, they cannot enter peoples' homes". The Brahmin woman we lived with overheard this and rushed to the higher castes' defense:

> Nowadays we treat Damai with respect. We give rice with ghee, milk and so forth to the Damai people.

She refers to the better quality food which nowadays is given from the "high-castes" to the "low-castes".[22] The higher quality of food signals a mentality change, which the Damai concedes, but continues:

---

[21]As they clearly are constructed and perceived as dichotomous in my data. Importantly Pigg (1992) shows how these categories city and village, bikas and tradition are not as dichotomous as they are constructed by my interviewees and which she portrays as a consequence of how bikas alters social mapping in New Nepal.
[22]Levy (1990), in his study of Newar society and religion, writes about the dirty food an "Untouchable" receives from his high-caste patrons: "Their thrown away things are our meal, in which we get dust and hair, and everything…We eat dirty food" (Levy 1990: 385).

> Yes, you give it. But you don't take us inside your homes. You bring it to the corner of your homes, and ask us to stay there and eat.

A quarrel ensued, but it was hardly audible on tape. But the Brahmin women continued to defend her caste, and said that they treated the Damai with respect, while the Damai stood firmly on her views.

While there is a tension between social reality and discursive reality, there is no doubt that most felt there had been improvement from the past, underlining the perceived cultural changes in Nepal. There is also no doubt that while more Dalits conveyed that caste still mattered (than "middle castes") through stories of pain and discrimination, most Dalits also said it had become better. While this quarrel between the Damai and Brahmin women on the one hand underlines the struggle and emotional pain of being a Dalit, it also signals that there is contestation of this sort of domination – the power of the caste hierarchy is de-mystified and not naturalized as she stands up against perceived injustice.

But there is, at the same time, no doubt that throughout my data, it makes sense to talk about castes in a meaningful way: there are constructions linked to personal traits and capabilities which are being derived from their caste. So while caste on the one hand "does not matter anymore", in some sense it still does. We will later see how intellectual capabilities are by some constructed as being derived from castes, and how Brahmin domination in society is being symbolically re-inscribed; not longer stemming from religious purity, but from another symbolic power: through being educated and "forwards".

There is a new hegemonic representation of reality in New Nepal; where caste and gender discrimination is linked to the Old Nepal. While I also found that city people showcase the same ambiguities as village people when it comes to caste, caste discrimination and practices are still being linked to the village (See Appendix: B). We will later see how the village is being juxtaposed to the city, education and development – to the New Nepal. I do still hold that re-iteration and normative stressing signals an empowering aspect of the discourse of New Nepal when it comes to caste and gender. The cultural politics entailed in the nation building of New Nepal entails a possibility for re-articulations of self and society. While I have shown that most typically my respondents re-iterated the norms and values as conforming to the cultural politics of New Nepal, there was still a sense in which there is a friction between uttered and experienced reality, between the representations inherent in the

cultural politics of New Nepal and their lived lives. This difference is further highlighted in their answers of my re-incarnation questions which were posed to expose their desires and go beyond reiteration of discourse.

4.4 The "Reincarnation Questions"

I decided to include some questions regarding a desired next life for my informants through what I termed "the reincarnation questions". I was hoping to tap into their social imagination regarding what constitutes a better life, or a desired life, among my respondents. The friction between social and discursive reality is inherent in their answers to my questions tapping into their *social libido*, as these questions taps into not only their perceptions and outlook, but their socially constituted desires as well. As I went along I decided to introduce into these questions the binaries I had been confronted with in my earlier interviews; between man and woman, high-caste and low-caste, city and village and between the educated and uneducated. Most typically the women wanted to be reborn as a male Janajati in the city – and everyone wanted to take a lot of education.

4.4.1 Gender

> In my next life, I want to be a boy [big smile]. (N Dalit Pokhara)

While most of my respondents re-iterated directly or indirectly the hegemonic position afforded by the discourse of New Nepal, that "men and woman are equal in New Nepal", though some women distanced themselves from this re-iteration in particular forms of speech-act, most women still wanted to be reborn a male in their next life. Their re-iteration, which I have linked to both being mouth-pieces and as a sign of socially produced agency, surrenders to the lived experience of being a woman in Nepal. While I do not want to romanticize the social space available for living out the discursive change in representing gender in Nepal, I still maintain that this represents an empowering aspect. A focus on language and representations (especially in ethnographic work) might always infer the questions of the "real":

> "(…)However, if we think that the purpose of ethnography and other forms of qualitative empirical work lies in the discovery or accurate representation of an objective reality then the post-structuralist

> inspired critique of its realist pretentions is devastating. (…). We need to be less concerned with questions of representational adequacy and more with a 'politics of representation' in which marginality or subordination can be understood as a constitutive effect of representation realized or resisted by living persons. We have to be concerned with how representations signify in the context of social power and with what consequences." (Barker & Galasinski 2001:18-19)

Specifically, this quote shows why the re-iteration of the discourse of New Nepal, as where "women and men are equal" is relevant as a script embraced by the women which they re-iterate even though it might be at odds with their lived life – it is a use of language and discourse in a pragmatic sense denoting agency. One has to understand this representation and how it signifies in the context of social power (however de-mystified, challenged and resisted) where men still, to some extent, dominate and being male is linked to more "comfort" and "easiness" – a power they still feel and would like to avoid in their next life by being born male. [23]

I have shown not only that the discourse of New Nepal and the cultural politics entailed does not just produce mouth-pieces, but new versions of agency as well. I thus place agency within a social setting – agency as *socially produced*, in the sense of Giddens' (1984) 'duality of structure', meaning that structures are not only constraining, but also enabling (Ritzer et al. 2003:512):

> "Agency is the socially constructed capacity to act, nobody is free in the sense of undetermined (…). We do act even though those choices and acts are determined by biological and cultural forces, particularly language, that lie beyond the control of individual subjects. The existence of social structures (and of language in particular) is arguably a condition of action; it enables action so that neither human freedom nor human action can consist of an escape from social determinants." (Barker & Galasinski 2001:46)

While I have shown how social and discursive realities are in friction, I do not, however, claim that I have access to their objective reality. But I do claim that this new way of representing reality – the cultural politics of New Nepal – does contain an empowering element: this new language is social by nature, and it produces the discursive frame to re-articulate oneself:

> "Injustices may not be perceived as injustices, even by those who suffer them, until somebody invents a previously unplayed role. Only if somebody has a dream, a voice, and a voice to describe the dream, does what look like nature begin to look like culture, what looked like fate begin to look like moral abomination." (Rorty 1995:126)

[23]While I quoted this for specific reasons, generally, this quote also explains *why I focus on constructions and generalizations by my interviewees and allude to intersecting identities and the positionalities inherent*; even though Pigg (1992) does a good job in absolving these binaries by showing their ambiguous content.

4.4.2 Caste

While most interviewees stated that caste does not matter, only a few uttered that "any caste is OK for me" – and the only to do so were Dalits – on the question of which caste one wanted to be in their next life: there was still perceived cultural reasons and a personal desire to choose.

Most of my interviewees were either Janajati or Dalit, and there is no doubt that there was a big difference in their responses to which caste one wanted to be next life. All Janajati wanted to be Janajati in their next life, while Dalits were split between those who wanted to remain Dalit and those, the majority, who wanted to be born into in a higher caste as Janajatis. Quite notably, none initially responded that they wanted to be reborn as a Brahmin – though one in anger turned around in a later question (see above). This contestation of a desire to be Brahmin and their lack of uttering it – even if just defiantly – must be understood not just as a contestation of the caste system per se, but implicitly of the purity and symbolic value of being Brahmin, as one Dalit woman says:

> I think my caste is also like the Chhetri and Brahmins. (H Dalit Terai)

Another woman immediately sees a reason to contest what she sees to a foregone conclusion on my behalf:

> So what about your caste then…What do you think about being Magar?
>
> Magars are Magars…What to say? (…)Nobody comes to my home and do anything to me. I also don't go to the others home and do anything…**Why to be Brahmins also now [angrily]?** (R Janajati Hill)

It seems that she reacts to the question being posed *now* – in New Nepal. It is as if she implicitly acknowledges that there *used* to be common sense answer to questions like this, but before – "Why to be Brahmin *also now*?"

But this contestation of the worth of being Brahmin is being underlined by their social position of being women, as Brahmin values are deemed repressive by many women, and that life as a woman is perceived as being easier in other castes, especially among the Janajati castes. While many Janajatis traditionally have been excluded from earlier nation building processes, and also are disadvantaged today, there is a common perception among Nepali

people that there are higher levels of gender equality among these groups. The desire to be born as a Janajati, just like the desire to be born as a male, corresponds with their positionality as women. While Enslin (1997:283) claims that the ideal Nepali citizen is a "modern, urban, literate high-caste person" – a position I do not contest – the women underline the desire for more gender equality by wanting to be born a Janajati, as this Dalit did:

> Magar are strong, they have healthy bodies and woman and men are alike. (S Dalit Hill)

Another woman elaborates:

> I think Tamang caste is more good. Not same like Brahmin. Brahmin people saying if you get married and get a husband, you need saying like "excuse me, Sir"…Not coming husband, need waiting for husband…Eating after husband is finished…Same plate eating, yeah? Same plate husband eating, wife eating later. Not same like our caste. Our caste is not possible like this. Husband and wife is same, same…Not like Brahmin people. Tamang women have more easy life." (M Janajati Terai/Pokhara)

While King Mahendra abolished the caste system he tried to disseminate Brahmin values and make them hegemonic in Nepal given his perceived need for "unity" in Nepal. Tamang (2002), while acknowledging progress in some areas (e.g. legislation), also claims that development "has erased the heterogeneity of women's lived experiences in Nepal" (Tamang 2002:161). Looking historically and anthropologically there is no doubt that there is a huge variety of 'gendered norms':

> "To take the most well-known examples, orthodox Hindu groups emphasize the sexual purity of women; Thakali and Sherpa communities take pride in the business acumen and marketing abilities of their females; and Tibetan-origin groups inhabiting the northern rimland of Nepal practice polyandrous marriage. It is clear that not all women in Nepal have been sequestered in the realm of the domestic, nor has wage-labor, business and other realms of 'the public' been uniformly imagined as masculine; neither has the sexuality of women been consistently and narrowly regimented." (Ibid:162)

Tamang argues that the fusing of Mahendra's ideology with the post-World War II global project of international development entailed the fiction of 'the Nepali Mahila':

> "The patriarchically oppressed, uniformly disadvantaged and Hindu, 'Nepali woman' as a category did not pre-exist the development project. She had to be constructed by ignoring the heterogeneous forms of community, social relations, and gendered realities of the various peoples inhabiting Nepal." (Ibid:163)

The hegemonic Brahmin values which Mahendra tried making hegemonic are being challenged by the women. But while most of my respondents either wished to remain or become a Janajati in their next life, almost all of the Janajati women wanted to be reborn as a

male. It may well, as Tamang argues, be more productive to talk not of 'patriarchy' but multiple patriarchies (Tamang 2004:163).

Summary

I have shown how the discourse of New Nepal "empowers" my female respondents with regards to the social systems and hierarchies of gender and caste. I have shown that the age-old and traditional social system of caste and gender are being challenged and contested, and that the hierarchies are not looked upon as naturalized and taken-for-granted, though the narratives of course varies, and the accounts are heterogeneous. The language of the cultural politics of New Nepal brings oppression 'into view' through creating new languages from a new hegemonic representation of reality. The re-articulation of the elements of society – the nation not just as a political formation but as a system of cultural representation – affords its members with a language in which claims for justice do not sound crazy but come to be accepted as true.

I have claimed that the 'dukha'linked to caste and gender in a higher degree is perceived as an unnecessary evil, caused by "other people's irresponsibility, selfishness, thoughtlessness or greed" as Leve (2007:153) puts it, and thus something to be condemned and not accepted, something which *should* be avoided and if not is a source to contempt and resentment.

I have not claimed that gender and caste does not matter, only that these social dimensions and barriers have lost legitimacy and are not naturalized or taken-for-granted. But I have also shown that the accounts from the Dalits differ from those offered by the "middle castes". I have also pointed out the discrepancies between their stated norms and viewpoints *within* the interviews. These discrepancies points to a friction between the uttered reality through the discourse of New Nepal and an experienced reality through social practices which in itself is a source of pain – of 'dukha'. I will show that this 'dukha' is seen as normal, even normative aspect of these women's lives as they embody the characteristics of the rural, illiterate women stuck in the past, as they are rendered by the development discourse of New Nepal.[24] I will also show that the pain and hardships of this life is generally perceived as being linked to not having an education and living in a village – which are seen as interrelated, almost interchangeably notions.

[24] And which is alluded to throughout my data.

5.0 The discourse of New Nepal as constraining

While I have argued that the development discourse have empowered the women with regards to contesting the discriminatory practices linked to caste and gender, there is no doubt that the same discourse have muted and disempowered the same women with regards to other aspects of identity-work carried out in New Nepal. This underlines the duality of structure, as structures not only enables, but constrains (Ritzer et al. 2003:512).

While the caste system and patriarchal gender system of the dominant group (read: "high castes") were reinforced by the state during the Shah-Rana era, there is a sense in which the power of the dominant groups again is being reinforced by the state, yet this time on behalf of *a new elite* embodying *a new sort of symbolic power*. While caste and gender are being contested, the symbolic power of the educated is erected: a new form of power hierarchy, *a national power hierarchy as this is linked with nation building*, which I will claim the women do not contest – neither the hierarchy itself, nor their position within it.

I will further claim that this entails a general feeling of exclusion and alienation with regards to the national project of New Nepal disseminated through hegemonic discourses; they have a sense of being second class citizens. The notion of being second class citizens I will link to *not having education* and *being a villager*, as bikas not just constructs a new ideal citizen, but changes the social mapping of Nepal.

5.1 A new social and material logic

Liechty (1997) writes in his essay about consumer culture and identity in Kathmandu, how a change had taken place between earlier and contemporary modes of materialism among the better off urban middle-class in the 90s. A change had occurred with regards to their right to personal pleasure. His female informant recognized that the standards of comfort had changed – and that the comfort earlier deemed suitable was for her unacceptable (Liechty 1997:135). It is worth noting that "comfort" and "easiness" is recurrent descriptions surfacing throughout my fieldwork, as in the words of a Magar woman:

> I wish to be the same, but if other people work like me… and if others get easiness in their life, I also wish for the same. (R Janajati Hill)

The notions of 'comfort' and easiness' stands juxtaposed to the notions of 'dukha' – of hardships, pain and suffering, which traditionally have been normal and normative aspects of female life, according to Leve (2007:153). Liechty's informant "noted that "comfort" was a completely relative notion that hinged on awareness of options and the means to pursue them" (Liechty 1997:135). For my informants "easiness" and "comfort" belongs to the "city-people" and the "educated", and their main identity, produced through a certain type of suffering, is their intersecting identity as rural, illiterate women.

But it was not just with respect to the possibility of comfort, easiness and pleasure that Liechty (1997) perceived changes.[25] There had also occurred a new understanding of parents' obligations to their children; a changed perception regarding the transfer of wealth from earlier days to now:

> "[…] Nowadays people believe that parental investment comes in the form of providing education for sons (and increasingly daughters) after which children are expected to more or less take responsibility for themselves. In other words […] the transfer of resources occurs in a different manner (in the form of education, not in traditional forms of wealth like land or gold) and at an earlier time (in the child's youth, not at the death of the parent)." (Ibid.)

Also among my respondents education was framed as the most valued commodity to be bought, surpassing the more traditional value of land and gold:

> The education is more important than all the properties that people have. (U Brahmin Hill)

This view was shared by many, marking that a transmission of the new social and material logic had taken place:

> Education is the most important thing. There is nothing more important than education in this world. (J Dalit Male Hill)

The values Cliechy (1997) finds among middle class citizens of urban Kathmandu in the mid-90s now presents itself as the commonly agreed values of New Nepal – also among rural people which find themselves cut off from the material benefits of bikas, and which have never been to school.

[25] For Liechty's informants (which differs dramatically from mine with respect to certain positionalities), it was also more about the *right* to pleasure, than the *possibility* of comfort (as it was with my informants) – who generally linked this "comfort" and "easiness" to their significant Other; the educated city people.

After travelling up a newly constructed road to the Hill village, and after initial questions with my first interviewee regarding what they had of basics like water, electricity and toilets, which they all lacked in sufficient measures, I got what I in hindsight would deem an emblematic experience. Toilets, I was told, "were everywhere", the water had germs or was dirty and there was almost no electricity. While this was perceived as clear symptoms of being excluded from the material benefits of development, there was added another aspect, regarding bikas, to my question if there were public schools nearby which initially baffled me, but which over time presented itself as a common concern among the people I interviewed:

> "Yes, there are schools in this area...**But if we get good private boarding school I will send my children there**." (J Dalit Male Hill)

Also Cliechy's informant stressed how much pressure the urban middle-class felt about being able to provide the best possible education for their children, and "often will deplete their family's assets to do so" (Ibid.). The above noted male's wish to send his children to a private boarding school echoes this concern of being able to provide the best possible education for one's offspring, a concern a woman from the city could relate to – and framed her understanding of the hardships of village life through:

> In villages life is hard. There are no schools, and life is hard…The education is less, no boarding schools, some places also no government school…If the village people could get proper education, their problems would be reduced with 30-40%. There are also a lot of facilities that are lacking, electricity and so forth…So life in the city is much easier. (O Janajati Pokhara)

This is generally perceived among my respondents as the biggest *external* constraint and barrier for being able to participate under the new logic of New Nepal. Being often geographically excluded from private boarding schools, and financially excluded as well, it underlines their position as rural people: far away from opportunities for good education and good money – both being linked to city life. There is also a sadness involved in only being able to send their children to public schools, which are generally understood, among both urban and rural people, to have low standards of quality. The patterns of accumulation and forms of patrimony have shifted to better fit the realities of "a new social and material logic", as Cliechy (1997) puts it. The values of New Nepal are reflective of the new elite embodying the symbolic power of education.

5.2 Education for a bright future

Education have been linked to the development of the country, and seen as a prerequisite for being able to contribute and participate in this process, but also as a significant part of personal trajectories:

> "In 1986, the children who were in school made it clear that being a "student" was a very significant part of their (future) lives and self-understanding. For them, education was a major goal in life, and the necessary means to achieve their other goals: **making their futures bright** (…)."
> (Skinner & Holland 1996:281)

Also in my data there is a re-iteration of this narrative, as presented by teachers and texts, and as constructed in the school site. One woman reiterates this narrative "of a bright future" through education as granted by the development discourse:

> If I had studied, I would have had a bright future and my life would have been better (…). The life of having a good education, job and living in a comfortable way is a good life. (H Janajati Terai)

The life containing a good education is linked to comfort and easiness, and as a major goal in itself and as a necessary means to achieve other goals:

> I don't have any education, that's why I became like this. (V Dalit Male Pokhara)

Having education is also important for getting the jobs that are supposedly awaiting them (see Appendix: C). This notion of *jobs* also stress the difference between the hard *work* of the "uneducated" villagers doing long hours of manual labor; for *jobs* is part of New Nepal and of modernity – and linked to education and the city. Doing the work of Old Nepal is linked to pain and hardships while the jobs of the educated, just as the life of the city people, is being framed as linked to comfort and easiness. Another woman, while replying to the incarnation questions of the content of a desired next life, answered:

> In my next life **I wish to study and I want to do something**. In the future I want to study and do something.. Wherever I am born, **I want to study and stand on my own**. I want to do something! **Even though a person is girl, if she stands on her own feet and does something, that is good**…I think like that. (…) If I had studied, certainly my life would have been different. (…)Different meaning I could have spoken nicely in the village and communicating. I wish to do something in the village.
> (I Janajati Terai)

This is the same woman who stressed that “women are weak” – but if a woman is educated and “can stand on her own feet” then “that is [also] good”. Education becomes the means by which women get empowered, but not having it one “does not stand on your own feet”, one “cannot do something” and one “cannot speak”. Lack of education entails personal barriers for participating in New Nepal as well as for helping realize New Nepal through bikas. Not surprisingly, *all* the interviewees wanted to have more education “in their next lives”, as well as stressing that education should be for both boys and girls. The same girl underlines the importance of education in this manner:

> (…)Though the parents are uneducated, the children should be sent to school. **If they study they can do something in the future**. (…) Education should be for both [boys and girls]. If both are educated it would be good. If they both are educated **they will have a brighter future.**

There is no doubt that throughout my data it is perceived that education is linked to voice, agency, mobility (social and spatial) and easiness and comfort – “a bright future”. To not have education is to be bereft of opportunities and the possibility of a good life – as exposed by the development discourse and as constructed in the school site:

> *Do you think your life would have been easier if you had studied?*
>
> Why not? Yes, I think like that…Is there any person who doesn’t? (D Janajati Terai)

This rhetorical question becomes a window into “what is being taken for granted” – what represents the common sense and official version in New Nepal. The life of being uneducated is linked to hardships:

> “Those girls who could not attend school framed their experiences in the prevailing discourse that distinguished educated from uneducated females. They often portrayed themselves to us and to others as bearers of heavy loads in contrast to their school-going peers who only had to carry schoolbooks.” (Skinner & Holland 1996:285)

This discourse is still prevailing, slightly paraphrased by this Magar woman, as she reiterates this common construction:

> Though I may not be a great man, I think I might not need to carry loads like this. I could have earned my livelihood by the help of a pen. (R Janajati Hill)

While “comfort”, “easiness” and “bright futures” are being ascribed to the educated ones, the uneducated ones are the ones who sit “in darkness”(Ibid:282): who can’t talk, who can’t move freely and have to carry heavy loads. They are somewhat stuck in the past in New Nepal.

5.3 The Development discourse and the introduction of a new Power

5.3.1 The cultural production of the Educated Person and its Other

Debra Skinner and Dorothy Holland (1996) write about the cultural construction of the educated person in the classrooms of a village in Nepal. Arriving in the mid-80s they still experienced that some of the students were the first in their area getting public schooling, underlining the recent character of education in at least some areas of Nepal.

They found that young Nepalis “readily appropriated the development rhetoric presented to them in their textbooks and classroom lectures” (Skinner & Holland 1996:273). While the school on the one side was a instrument for the Monarchy’s agenda of cultural unison, it was at the same time a site where teachers and students struggled to turn the school “from a site of state control to a site of opposition not only to the state, but also to systems of caste and gender privilege hegemonic in society” (Ibid.). But, Skinner and Holland add, they could also see the contours of a new form of symbolic power emerging. For while the site definitely offered potent opportunities for liberation, the story would be incomplete without an examination of the other side in this personal and at the same time state-sponsored quest for liberation from the shackles of the Ranas – and their denial of education, industrialization and exchange of free opinions – with a resulting “unawareness” and “backwardness” which the Monarchy would legitimize its rule by eradicating:

> “Paradoxically, with the advent of public schools and their turning toward what participants viewed as emancipation from oppression, we found new divisions, new distinctions of privilege, and new forms of disdain (...). We saw an ever-increasing validation of formal education as a source of symbolic capital, giving those who possessed it claim to superior positions and statuses.” (Ibid:274)

While the discourse of development underlined the need to break with the shackles of the past and thus traditional ways of power, the new ways of talking about and representing state and citizens, producing a new *telos* for the citizens of the emerging New Nepal, entailed the

creation of a new subject; no longer a subject to the throne but an active and educated citizen that would contribute to the making of this new glorious project – to modernize Nepal through development aided by education.

The young students underlined the link between having an education and being able to do "good works" for the nation, and many expressed a desire to do so in the village as well. To be educated was not just an important part of their own futures and possibilities; it was also linked to a national duty of improving ones nation – to be able to contribute to the making of New Nepal. The earlier noted woman who "wanted to do something in the village" echoes these constructions in the school site.

> "Within this complex site that constituted the school, students were produced and produced themselves as "educated persons"; at the same time, they participated in the production of a person outside the school, the person who was uneducated and without awareness."(Ibid:274)

The educated person is a person who has 'cetana'; who is "aware" and "conscious". The Other is the uneducated one – without awareness and who is constructed as holding Nepal "back". The uneducated is a target, rather than a giver of bikas. This entails for the designated subjects a sense of being second class citizens and not being part of this new national project of New Nepal: through attributed – and personally felt – exclusion.

5.3.2 Education and awareness/consciousness

While 'cetana' initially was linked to consciousness and (political) awareness, there is no doubt that this understanding has fuelled further constructions. 'Cetana' was initially linked to a dangerous state of political consciousness to be attained as a means to reach parity, but this understanding underwent mutations as "disavowal of caste differences became one of the markers of an "educated person"" (Ibid:284). There is thus a chance that some of the normative statements regarding caste and gender were performative, in the sense of staging one's forwardness, as the Brahmin woman who was very happy being Brahmin, yet at the same time stressed that it was not a source for dominating others:

> Yeah! I am satisfied with being Brahmin. I don't want to discriminate others on the basis of their caste. I think in my next birth also I would be under my same caste. It is very good. I am happy. (U Brahmin Hill) [26]

The still occurring caste and gender discrimination in the villages, yet generally perceived as milder (both in village and city), was by many automatically attributed to the lack of education:

> Why do you think it is still a difference between men and woman?
>
> No consciousness…But also people with consciousness dominates women...But women…eh...are like animals in village. Men is men, but women...no good education, no healthcare, and all kinds of work, they do! (T Brahmin Male Pokhara)

The Brahmin male was the most educated among my interviewees, and embodied a lot of progressive and well-meant ideas, especially linked to gender, caste and development. He had at the same time been a school teacher for a long time, and thus highly trained in the development discourse as well. His presentation of self was linked up to the construction of the educated – where disavowal of caste discrimination is one of the markers of the "educated person":

> *You believe in caste?*
>
> Before I believe a lot in it...now I am educated, now this is minimized..
>
> *Do you think caste is important more so in village than in city?*
>
> Yes, in village.. Village people have no consciousness, they are not educated...so they believe in that. But now, for a few years, they don't care so strongly. Before, they cared a lot.

The framing of the villager's consciousness to the animalistic level occurs also later in the interview with the same male:

> (…)They also need training in hygiene and sanitation…Nail cutting, cleaning and washing... They don't know anything! They are like animals! They need training...

His final use of the word "consciousness"[27] appeared when he complained about the villagers' lack of progressive economic thought:

> In my village, there is a lot of potentiality...Many things is possible for the village people...There is possibility for orange farming…For 150 years the orange trees give good oranges, until now…There is no farming, people have two or three plants only…They don't want to make more…They don't want to make more money...They have no consciousness…

---

[26] At the same time it became clear during the fieldwork that she did not let Dalits enter her house.
[27] As this interview was conducted in English.

The solution was as generally perceived and informed by the development discourse:

> Yes, you see. In village also, the women's education is needed...It all depends on education! It is the key of success...key of development...in any country. (…)No education, no training, no success. .

The term 'consciousness' was used by him as a "mouthpiece" to the hegemonic representation of reality from the development discourse, and the following constructions in the school site: on the one side to explain domination linked to caste and gender, yet also used condescendingly about lack of awareness to hygiene, as they were "animals" in need of "training", and to explain backwardness as opposed to (economic) development – all reiterations of development of both consciousness and country through education.

One could also claim, from this, that the notion of 'cetana' had undergone a mutation from the mere focus on *political* awareness to a *general* awareness which distinctly is linked to an awareness of the values and manners of New Nepal, where the dispossessed, the uneducated, are stuck in the past – doomed to a traditional life and "old ideas".

5.4 The rule of the Educated

A young woman explained her wish for further studies in her next life like this:

> I really want to study more, and I want to go forward and forward, and be able to use the full strength of mind (...). I regret that I left school. If I had studied, I think I could have done something with my life. (P Dalit Pokhara)

Another woman distinguishes herself from people having government jobs in this fashion:

> There is a big difference. Because those people who work for the government, they are educated and have a big capacity for thinking…They know many things, they are certainly more up…There is certainly a big difference between people like that, and me... (N Dalit Pokhara)

The educated can "use the full strength of mind", and "have a big capacity for thinking", biological framings of capabilities, which they being bereft of education lack. Implicitly it is also a tale where the educated go "forward and forward", while others "stay in their own conditions" as another woman put it. The educated is clearly constructed as their significant Other, which points to their own perceived incapabilities to use their own potential – a view of themselves as unrealized capabilities and unrealized resources as they were constructed to be for the development of Nepal. There is a resignation involved, either in the sense "so I

became like this", but also as uttered by my youngest respondent (being 18 years old) that it was too late for her, as "it is time to send my children to school". As stated, there is also a sort of biological framing involved, as the word denotes both consciousness and awareness – as an Aristotelian innate potentiality failed to realize to its form. This biological notion hinted at were uttered more precisely and directly among some of my respondents who were talking about education and caste. While most of my respondents uttered that caste did not matter for getting government jobs, Brahmins were at the same time being looked upon as the ones ruling the country.

5.4.1 The return of caste

While I have shown that people don't (ideally) recognize the caste system as a symbolic power linked to religious worth and hierarchy, the caste system still operates as a distinct social system – as something you are born into – and whose *cultural practices* makes them want to be Janajati and not Brahmin. I have also shown that people through utterances contest the religious value and worth of being Brahmin, especially as women, since Brahmins are seen to focus on prestige and honor. While the Brahmins are not religiously more "up" there is a lingering sense that they *still* are constructed as more "up", in the words of a "high caste" working in a hotel in Pokhara:

> Maoists say that caste does not matter - everyone is the same, but inside, everyone knows that Brahmins are more up – even Maoists [know].

The GSEA report shows an entrenchment of "high castes" in government positions and civil service, often talked about as "government jobs":

> "Given their domination in legislature, it is not surprising that men from the Brahmin/Chhetri group also held the lion's share of cabinet appointments. *Their dominance in the civil service also increased from 70 to 90 percent* between 1985 and 2002. (…)Applicants to civil service positions are also overwhelmingly (83%) Brahmin/Chhetri. *Candidates from this group are more than twice as likely to be chosen as Newars, nearly three times more likely than a Janajati candidate and over four times more likely than a Dalit candidate***.** The pattern extends to the judiciary where the B/C and Newar groups hold virtually all positions [my italics]." (Bennett et al. 2006:31-32)

One can see that the perceived equality of possibility, as uttered by most of my respondents regarding getting government jobs (in a logical prolonging of statements as "In New Nepal it is said that caste does not matter", and through an equation of "Old Nepal" with

discriminatory caste practices and “New Nepal” with the opposite), does not reflect actual practices and quantitatively measured possibilities. But this “high caste” dominance is naturalized:

> *So, what do you think about caste in politics? Is that important?*
>
> No, no. Mostly Brahmin is educated...Brahmin and Chhetri are educated people...And they lead everywhere… (T Brahmin Male Pokhara)

There is a naturalization of power differences and representational differences between castes mediated through the symbolic power of education. This is widespread as most people perceive caste as not mattering, and that getting these jobs are all down to “education”, “hard work” and “thinking power”, and that if they only had education, they could also get these jobs. A young girl explains:

> The people who hold government jobs are different from us. They are educated, but we are not educated. So there is difference. (...)Now mainly the Brahmins hold the government jobs. (I Janajati Terai)

At the same time it is perceived by some an almost “biological difference” between Brahmins and other castes:

> *Do you think other caste people hold good jobs?*
>
> If children of our caste, even though we give priority for them to study, they don’t study like the children of the Brahmins. Even though the Brahmins' children and the Sarki children are studying in the same class, the thinking power of the Brahmins' children is very high. (L Dalit Hill)

She later concludes:

> The higher castes always go ahead, but the smaller castes stay where it was before.

Another woman explains her own caste's lack of representation and inclusion in government jobs like this:

> [The]Tamang caste can't study. They can't reach all the way to government. So, this caste is a little back. (B Janajati Terai)

To have education is a legitimized capital for wielding or yielding to power. There is at the same time a naturalization of power and inequality – of representation and inclusion. The mantra is “if I only had education, I could also get a government job”. While most feel that

caste does not matter for getting these jobs, since caste "does not matter" anymore, there is still a lingering feeling that Brahmins are more "up" – yet not in the sense of religious symbolic power as the peak of the traditional caste-pyramid – but through being more "forward" as opposed to "backwards". There is a *cosmological re-inscription* of the traditionally religious category 'Brahmin', where the power which (as generally perceived) it yields, is legitimized and recognized in "New Nepal" through its modern features.

While I have shown that the GSEA (2006) shows a statistical barrier with regards to castes and representation in government and civil service, and that "high castes" in general are having higher chances for getting a civil service job compared to "lower castes" while applying for the same job, this is not how it is perceived among my respondents, as Nepal, unrightfully, is reduced to some sort of meritocracy.

5.4.2 The symbolic power of education

For them the Brahmin dominance is naturalized through the symbolic power they have through education, a power or capital they more easily gain compared to other castes, as it is perceived – in some cases referred to as an almost innate capability.

This "biological difference" might better be explained by insights offered from Bourdieu (1986). Through the notions of different forms of capital he explains how a purely meritocratic view of society, where everyone has the same opportunities for success is a far too simplistic approach to a social order, where power resides and there is a systematic reproduction of inequality:

> "The social world is accumulated history, and if it is not to be reduced to a discontinuous series of instantaneous mechanical equilibria between agents who are treated as interchangeable particles, one must introduce into it the notion of capital and with it, accumulation and all its effects.(…). It is what makes the games of society- not least, the economic game- something other than simple games of chance offering at every moment the possibility of a miracle. Roulette, which holds out the opportunity of winning a lot of money in a short space of time, and therefore of changing one's social status quasi-instantaneously, and in which the winning of the previous spin of the wheel can be staked and lost at every new spin, gives a fairly accurate image of this imaginary universe of perfect competition or perfect equality of opportunity, a world without inertia, without accumulation, without heredity or acquired properties, in which every moment is perfectly independent of the previous one, every soldier has a marshal's baton in his knapsack, and every prize can be attained, instantaneously, by everyone, so that each moment anyone can become anything." (Bourdieu 1986:241)

While there is no doubt that of my interviewees understood their geographical distance to – and lack of economic capital to finance participation in – private boarding schools as a major *external* obstacle which benefitted the better off, there is no doubt that in New Nepal, if not being the site for perfect competition or equality, there is still this sense that if they only had access to "good education" – this most prized commodity and valued capital – they could compete, get government jobs and "do something". Even though the rules of the game are fair, the match is uneven, but when looking at the scores, they cannot do differently than to accept defeat; while readily perceiving the advantage "city people" and "rich people" have to access the private boarding schools, there is no doubt that the capital they wield is one which one, when dispossessed, should yield to. There is no contestation of the *internal* qualities, capabilities or capital the educated person possesses. The women did not challenge the hierarchy of power, nor their position within it, just their disadvantaged position with regards to getting access – in most part on behalf of their children. I will claim that education have reached the level of symbolic capital. While education is primarily a cultural capital, it has some distinctive features which make it presupposed to function as symbolic capital:

> "It (…) manages to combine the prestige of innate property with the merits of acquisition. Because the social conditions of its transmission and acquisition are more disguised than those of economic capital, i.e. to be unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence (...)." (Bourdieu 1986:245)

This "legitimate competence", which in Nepal's particular case legitimizes Brahmin dominance, is applied to the understanding of them as more educated and that's why "they are leading everywhere" – and at the same time have offspring with very high "thinking power". But it is at the same time important to remember that symbolic capital cannot be incorporated into anyone's habitus, or exist in separate modes of existence:

> "[It] cannot be institutionalized, objectified or incorporated into the habitus. It exists and grows only in intersubjective reflection and can be recognized only there (…)[:] in the "eyes of others". It inevitably assumes an ideological function: it gives the legitimized forms of distinctions and classification a taken-for-granted character, and thus conceals the arbitrary way in which the forms of capital are distributed among individuals in society." (Siisiäinen 2000:12)

This view of "Brahmins" as the beholders of the new symbolic capital, just conceals the other forms of advantages, be they (through access to- or incorporation of) cultural, social or economic capital. But there is no doubt that "in the eyes of the Others" it appears so, and thus legitimizes both the wielding of and yielding to power, however intricately it is constituted, yet perceived as pertaining almost solely to the symbolic power of education. The rule of the

educated – and often urban, male and Brahmin – is naturalized. The people who are not educated have an equal opportunity – if given access to education – and without it they "became like this".[28] For: "(…) Only the language of the oppressor is available, and most oppressors have the wit to teach the oppressed a language in which the oppressed will sound crazy – *even to themselves* – if they describe themselves as oppressed" (Rorty 1995:126).

There is also another aspect of Bourdieu's work which is complementary to my focus on state-sanctioned discourses of development which have legitimized different forms of rule, and different forms of rulers, and that is his focus and attention to those "authorities in whose hands the symbolic power is concentrated" (Siisiäinen 2000:13). While Bourdieu links this to the state, the state is at the same time a field where different groups compete for influence (Ritzer et al. 2008: 532).Traditionally it has been the upper-class and upper-caste urban males in Nepal, but the construction of New Nepal have been linked to the 'cetana' of the (desirably) socially upwards urban middle class. While the struggle for dominance in this field continues, there is no doubt that the state is a container for diverse forms of power, who wish to wield and legitimize their capital and power:

> "The modern state holds not only the monopoly of physical violence, but also, above all, the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence, i.e. the power to constitute and to impose as universally applicable within a given "nation"(…) a common set of coercive norms (…). This stresses the importance of schools and other institutions of socialization in the system of symbolic power." (Siisiäinen 2000:13)

Pigg underlines that schools are "the primary institutions of bikas" (Pigg 1992:502). I have shown how constructions from the classrooms, initiated on the background of state sponsored and sanctioned school books, from a state that have legitimized its rule through bikas and thus through the development discourse, have affected both the educated and the uneducated – it has constructed an ideal citizen and it's Other, and a situation where education is the means to propel ones children to a better social position: "Great moments for the system of symbolic power come as the lower classes accept euphemistic value banners suggested by social elites" (Siisiäinen 2000:14).[29]

[28] I will look upon this lack of recognition as symbolic violence: "Symbolic violence (…) is the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity (…)." (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1996: 167 in Ibid.).
[29] Tamang (2002) argues that while it may have been a change in individual state elites post 1990, Brahmin and Chhetri dominance continues. Mishra and Sharma (1983) argue that between 1951 and 1980 development only benefitted the traditional power structure, while Pigg (1996) argues that the middle class that had emerged the last four decades sustains itself largely from development-related employment.

One of the social value euphemisms developed by social forces, in Nepal's case by the social elites, and adopted by the lower classes, is the concept of competence:

> "In Bourdieu's words, the "ideology of competence serves very well to justify an opposition which is rather like that between masters and slaves. On the one hand there are full citizens who have very rare and overpaid capacities and activities (…), and then, on the other side, there is a great mass of people condemned to borderline jobs and unemployment." (…) Competence is in Bourdieu's view the heart of a "sociodicy" that provides justification for the dominant groups' privileges, and which is accepted by the dominated. The structure of inequality is given ethical and intellectual justification at the same time with the help of the ideology of competence: "The poor are not just immoral, alcoholic and degenerate, they are stupid, they lack intelligence"." (Ibid:21)

I will claim that in Nepal the "sociodicy", a naturalization of difference, is characterized by the symbolic power of the educated, who are the ideal citizens of New Nepal. It is also a naturalization of "high caste" dominance through their perceived "innate" capacities for learning – where education legitimizes rule and veils "accumulated history". On the other side you have the uneducated, who are backwards and without consciousness/awareness. We will later see that these social dimensions are being framed linked to geographical locations, as bikas alters the social imagination and mapping of society.

5.5 Exclusion: A perceived and attributed lack of awareness – and its consequences for participation in New Nepal

While going to the villages, most of the women were initially reluctant to participate in my interviews on behalf of their lack of knowledge – of lacking capabilities. "The political things are unknown to us" I was told. This perceived lack of voice, a sense of feeling muted, nervous and shy also appeared in my data regarding political participation, for example about making up their minds for whom to vote, with regards to going to the VDC [30] and so forth. This lack of voice, informed a sense of alienation and exclusion from the democratic practices of New Nepal. "I cannot talk" was a common representation of self, directly linked to not having education in a nation where the rulers are "the educated".

[30] VDC stands for Village Development Committee: "Nepal is administratively divided – in descending order of size – into development regions, districts, village development committees and wards" (Manandhar et al 2004: 971).

5.5.1 Going to the VDC

All of my interviewees told me that they were not discriminated on behalf of caste and gender at the VDC, and might just as well bring a female companion as a male. But there still persisted an almost all-pervasive view that they could not go alone – related to a lack of education. A Dalit man from the Hill village conveyed the common view that they were not discriminated according to caste:

> No, it is not like that. When we walk around to the VDC, in the market and so on, nobody can say you are Sarki. (J Dalit Male Hill)

Another woman also denied that her caste was perceived as a barrier for going to the VDC. On my follow up question if her shyness or unwillingness was rather linked to her lack of education, the woman explained:

> In my heart I feel like that. (D Janajati Terai)

Another woman also denied caste being the barrier for going, and emphasized her lack of education instead:

> No…But if I was educated I would have gone to the VDC...I could have talked better...What to do? (G Janajati Terai)

A majority of my respondents would not go alone to the VDC, established to reduce political exclusion and promote development from the bottom up, influenced by ideas of local government and decentralization (see Baral 2008). The perceived need of assistance going to the local VDC, the threshold of institutional Nepal, is symbolic of their perceived lack of inclusion and possibilities for participation – *exclusion* due to a felt lack of capabilities in a country where the educated rule. And it was not just being understood as linked to the difficulties of eventual paperwork, but to shyness, nervousness and feeling muted:

> Yes, I am thinking if I had more class, it would be possible going alone. Not being shy, possible talking…like this... (M Janajati Terai/Pokhara)

This shyness for going to the VDC is also linked to being dominated by the "government job holders" and surpassed by "rich", "educated" and "forward" people – of being dominated by the people who are seen as better off in New Nepal, as this male stresses:

> There will be discrimination. That person who is educated and belong to a rich family, and can talk good, they will get their work done quickly. ..It is not like that the first person gets served first. The person who is educated and forward, gets his job done earlier. So there is discrimination. (…)These politicians and the people who are government job holders, discriminate and suppress the uneducated people who can not speak...They ignore us as long as it is possible. So there is discrimination.
> (V Dalit Male Pokhara)

The educated and forward people can talk nicely, while the uneducated cannot. Not being able to "talk" or "talk nicely" is also utterances which are among the most recurrent descriptions of self among my interviewees – and a barrier for going to the lowest level "government office" in Nepal, and experienced as a source for domination if they went.

Language is power – and my respondents do not feel empowered. It is difficult for a non-Nepali to fully address the power inherent in Nepali language, which is quite hierarchical and contains many subtle addresses of speech that denotes power. But importantly, there is a vast number of languages: according to the "1991 Census of Nepal" there were registered 70 languages and dialects (Pradhan 2002:1), and while the census was considered flawed for its categorization (opening up for a higher diversity and cultural complexity) it does account for the power inherent in making Nepali the official language – only 50% of the population has Nepali as their mother tongue (Ibid:3). And the language of Nepal is the language of the traditional elite[31] – I have also heard the language Nepali being talked about as "Brahmin-speak", even though this is not precise. But this feeling of being unable to talk is also linked to the construction of the educated person and the legitimate symbolic power he wields, as Nepali is also the "language of the schools".

5.5.2 Being represented by Politicians

While the women "cannot talk", politicians have education and are thus able to speak. A woman answers like this on my question about what politics mean, implicitly a statement that the politician embodies the precise qualities they feel they lack:

> Politics means a person that is skillful in talking, or what? I don't know… (B Janajati Terai)

[31] The part of the Hill community, *the Pahadi*, that was caste-structured, *the Parbatiya*, which dominated Nepal for so long, making Pradhan (2002) talk about the 'Hinduisation of Nepal' as 'Parbatiyasition' (Ibid:5).

There is no doubt that politicians and government job holders are constructed as a significant Other; as people that have education, can live comfortably and that can talk nicely (see Appendix: D). There is generally perceived a big difference between themselves and the politicians:

> There is a big difference. Because those people who work for the government, they are educated and have a big capacity for thinking…They know many things, they are certainly more up…There is certainly a big difference between people like that, and me… (N Dalit Pokhara)

There is also, among those who make up their mind themselves with regards to for whom to vote (which is a minority in my sample), a few who stress the candidate's education (see Appendix: E). This is in alignment with the constructions in the school site and the development discourse of New Nepal, where education is not only a requirement for personal success, but is prerequisite for doing "good work" for the nation:

> If I had studied, I could have done something, right? The educated can do many things, everything they understand…Also politics…I haven't studied … (C Janajati Terai)

Not having education is linked to nervousness and shyness – and an incapability of "talking" and "talking nicely". Even though there is now democracy and a New Nepal where caste and gender "does not matter", the women in my sample are feeling muted, and are being represented by one of their significant Others. But this felt exclusion with regards to the national project of New Nepal is not just linked to education, but also to their shared positionality as "village people".

5.6 Center and periphery in New Nepal: Bikas and a new social mapping

Pigg (1996) writes that the project of bikas has had severe cultural effects, and has affected the way the village and its people are conceptualized in modern Nepali social imagination:

> "This narrative [of modernization] posits a rupture, a break that separates a state of modernity from a past that is characterized as traditional. Tied to the idea of progress, then, is an idiom of social difference, a classification that places people on either side of this great divide. Modernity, in this sense, is quite literally a worldview: a way of imagining both space and people through temporal idioms of progress and backwardness." (Pigg 1996:163)

It is quite telling that in a country where the population is *predominately* rural and *most* people live as subsistence farmers "the village" and "villagers" are constructed and constructing themselves as *a problem* – reminders of a past that Nepal is "rapidly" leaving, and thus obstacles to development as they are the targets for development. How is this possible? It can only be explained by the hegemonic development discourse and by the cultural politics of New Nepal – in a country where a new elite is embodying the "New Nepali", and where the dissemination of the defining values and norms are being transmitted from the cities – *in opposition to the past* – as this "evolutionary" project entails in its narrative a break or rupture.

> "When development policy makers plan programs, they discuss what villagers do, how they react, and what they think. Together, these images coalesce into a typical, generic village, turning all the villages of rural Nepal into 'the village'. Commonplace as these representations of the village and villagers are, they mold the way in which people in contemporary Nepal conceptualize national society and differences within. (…) The village crystallizes into a distinct social category in the context of this national project of development." (Pigg 1992:491)

And just as there are a generic village there is a generic villager; and "predictably enough; the generic villager have a generic consciousness" (Ibid:505). Just as Tamang (2002) shows how the development that targeted women entailed cultural disadvantageous effects as it homogenized the category 'women', Pigg (1992) shows that the development that targeted beliefs and outlook had the same disadvantageous consequences for its other target – 'the villagers'.

While the new ways to talk about and represent gender and caste points to the (potentially) emancipating and empowering functions of re-articulation, through a new way of talking about and representing New Nepal and its society's constitutive elements, the talk of the generic villager represents a (temporarily) closure and fixing of meaning which is disadvantageous and disempowering in the development discourse – defining the nation building process of New Nepal – the generic villager does not have the noted consciousness/awareness.

This representation of the undeveloped and unknowing villagers is a *representation realized* among my interviewees:

> *What do you think about democracy?*
>
> No, I don't know anything, as I just stay in a village. (S Dalit Hill)

This interviewees' qualification of the fact "I don't know anything" is precisely her positionality as a villager – where social space denotes a certain consciousness, or rather a lack of it.

> The political things are unknown to us. (J Dalit Male Hill)

I claim that "us" here points back to the generic villager and not just the social space of his particular village – as in the words of a woman from another village:

> The people of the cities do the politics, but the village people don't know about it.
> (B Janajati Terai)

Quite importantly to my overall ambition to show that their positionality as rural, illiterate women entails a sense of being second-class citizens, Pigg (1992) argues:

> "As a social category, villager is an identity relevant only in the context of Nepalese national society defined (…) through its relation to bikas. Within any given village, distinctions of wealth, ethnicity and gender loom large; it only makes sense to identify generic villagers when the social scale of reference is the national one."(Pigg 1992:505)

While questions of gender and caste seemingly tap into the local power dimension, the questions of education and illiteracy tap into the national power hierarchy, and thus into notions of citizenship.[32]

5.6.1 'The village' and 'the city'

This binary opposition between city and village, where the city is the center of modernity and creating a specific sort of man, echoes earlier sociological works in our European past. Georg Simmel (1903), in "The Metropolis and mental life", wrote that the life and logic in the city can be contrasted to that in the village: "The metropolis exacts from man as a discriminating creature a different amount of consciousness than does rural life" (Simmel 1903:13). The intensification of impressions associated with city life creates a man with a "different amount of consciousness":

[32] As it is *perceived*, though Pigg opens up the binary between urban and rural - just as my data shows ambiguities with regards to caste among my "city-people" as well.

> "Thus the metropolitan type of man – which of course, exists in a thousand individual variants – develops an organ protecting him against the threatening currents and discrepancies of his external environment which would uproot him. He reacts with his head instead of his heart. In this an increased awareness assumes the psychic prerogative. Metropolitan life, thus, underlies a heightened awareness and a predominance of intelligence in metropolitan man." (Ibid.)

While most of my respondents equate the city with development and modernity, there is no doubt that this modernity is linked to a specific sort of awareness – an awareness which is available through education – and education is best in the private schools of the city, and the city is again being equated with better opportunities for wage labor (*jobs)*, where economic capital can be used to create cultural capital through education for ones children.

Pigg (1992) claims that the "ideas of progress that fuels the imagery of development in Nepal are linked to concepts of the city" (Pigg 1992:495). While Pigg rather views the ideology of modernization in Nepal as a fusion between the western and the Nepali through development, as a "matter of simultaneous nepalization and globalization" (Ibid:512), there is a sense in which the western categories of Williams (1973) are being re-introduced in Nepal:

> "The common image of the country is now an image of the past, and the common image of the city an image of the future. That leaves, if we isolate them, an undefined present. The pull of the idea of the country is towards old ways, human ways, natural ways. The pull of the idea of the city is towards progress, modernization, development. In what is then a tension, a present experienced as a tension, we use the contrast of country and city to ratify an unresolved division and conflict of impulses." (Williams (1973) in Ibid.)

These western categories, being nepalizised through various social actors embodying a certain style of cosmopolitanism, according to Pigg (1992), echoes the laughter the city people came with when I told them I was going to the villages to do interviews about democracy and New Nepal. This again resonates with another aspect of European history – the dawn of democracy. In ancient Greece it was precisely the better off city people who could vote, while the 'idiots' – the workers, the rural and the women could not. The idiot etymologically derives from "uneducated or ignorant person", "ordinary person", "lay person, person without professional skill". This again echoes Bourdieu's (1998) concerns about the "ideology of competence", which I have claimed are being introduced in Nepal through education as symbolic capital, which serves to justify an opposition which is more like the one between masters and slaves…

5.6.2 “The politicians care for the city people”

Among almost all my interviewees there is a general feeling that the politicians don’t care for “village people”, but that they care for “city people”. As the cities have the facilities and material advantages being linked to bikas, the villages’ lack thereof constitutes a feeling that politicians don’t care for the village people – a widespread perception among both my interviewees from the villages *and* from the city:

> I don’t think they care for normal people. If they cared for normal people there would be roads to the villages…schools…police…If they cared, the villages would be more developed.
> (O Janajati Pokhara)

As Nepali nation building since King Mahendra has been deeply related to progress and development, exposing the population to a barrage of rhetoric “equating the legitimacy of the government with national unity on the one hand and national progress on the other” (Pigg 1992:498), most of my interviewees viewed politics as a ‘techne’ of development (see Appendix: F). But the politicians are *talkers*, and not *doers*:

> *What do you hope from New Nepal?*
>
> I am hoping it will be good. Everyone should have hope. [But] everyone says to do something, but nobody has done anything. (I Janajati Terai)

There are also widespread allegations of corruption and a general feeling of *alienation*:

> Our problems are the same regardless of which government are ruling. All governments are the same.
> (K Dalit Hill)

Bikas and New Nepal seem to be contained within the cities. On my questions on the *Nagrita*, the citizenship paper, almost all said it had grown in importance over the years, but most reduced it to notions of practical matters: as needed for jobs, the selling and buying of land and getting a passport, and generally talked about more as a *constrainer* than an *enabler*. While the Nagrita have risen in importance within New Nepal there is still a sense, just as with New Nepal and democracy, that it does not entail any difference for the rural people:

> “I don’t know why the citizenship paper is being made. I have not got a job. It need not be shown while carrying the grass.” (R Janajati Hill)

Her reference to carrying the grass is to distinguish herself from the ones who do not have to carry heavy loads – the city people and to the educated. To be a village woman is to be distinguished from needing a citizen paper; from partaking in New Nepal. It signals a sense of being a second class citizen, as does this statement from another woman regarding democracy in New Nepal:

> For people like us it is nothing. (G Janajati Terai)

Pigg (1992) argues that development has had severe cultural effects, which largely go unnoticed and unstudied: "Development alters the meaning of the village in Nepalese social imagination, perhaps more than the actual villages in which its programs are carried out" (Pigg 1992:492). 'The village' as a generic expression stands as a container for everything framed as backwards – less education, more domination, more tradition, less facilities and hard work. While some of these notions might seem hard to contest there is also the construction of a generic villager with a generic consciousness – Simmel's notion of the arch type of metropolitan man is being reserved by the fact that he exists in "thousands of variants" – in Nepal the generic statements hide judgments as facts, and alludes to powerful and pervasive constructions of reality. Pigg (1992) writes that villagers know that they are being framed as backwards, and I have shown this as a representation realized. I will also show how their ascribed identity is being alluded to through their constructions of the city women – to the people they are not, as identity is being constructed through negation.

5.6.3 Being a "city woman" or "village woman"

Importantly, most of my respondents could talk meaningfully of "city-people" and "villagers" in the generic sense – strongly indicative as generalizations are for *constructions of reality*. In general the village is a location infused with tradition, old ideas and habits; and thus implicitly with discrimination, ignorance and lack of awareness – and the city is equated with bikas, with the facilities equated with that but also other aspects: jobs, education, freedom and, importantly, social and spatial mobility.

> Yes, they [city women] are getting easier. They could get jobs…They could read. (C Janajati Terai)

The city is the site for bikas – and for *jobs*, which one has to distinguish from the *work* village people do. It is easier being a woman in the city as ”they can read” and ”get jobs”. Oppositely, the life of a woman in the village is hard:

> City women have easy life. Village women have to dig land, cut grass and keep buffaloes.
> (L Dalit Hill)

Another woman also underlines the difference between village and city according to the work one do, when I pressed her on how it is different being a woman in the village and a woman in a city:

> Freedom, cha! Gaum ko freedom chaina… [Freedom! There is no freedom in the village]. Women in the cities are having more freedom. Women in the villages have to do all kind of domestic work. They have to do all kinds of village work also, so she has almost no free time… They always have to do some work. (O Janajati Pokhara)

The city is the place for the modern jobs and for “comfort” and “easiness”.[33] The village is equated with hardships and pain – especially for women due to the nature of village work designated to them. The ‘dukha’ of being a woman is linked to a particular sort of ‘dukha’ - the ‘pain, hardship and struggle’ of the ‘village woman’.[34] The recurrent descriptions of being not-knowing and having to carry heavy loads are intertwined in their construction of self through who they are not:

> “Significantly these two formulations caste the difference between bikas and village in different terms, one by seeing it as a difference of consciousness, the other by seeing it as a difference of labor; drawing symbolic boundaries between the village and bikas. Each offers a way for individuals to locate themselves in this mapped society.” (Pigg 1992:510)

“City people” have access to jobs, money and education – all markers of the New Nepal. The city is the symbol of bikas as it has the material facilities equated with it: roads, schools and electricity – and the people can live in “comfort” and “easiness”. The city geographically marks the rupture between tradition and modernity: the city does not just mark geographical distance, but social distance as well. And since Nepal is travelling in an evolutionary path towards modernity through progress and development, where development has been

[33] Which Cliechy recognized as a new relationship to comfort and pleasure which accompanied a new social and material logic and a new patrimony among his urban middle class interviewees in the 90’s.
[34] Quite tellingly, for the symbolic ramifications of cutting gras, one of my female translators (who was originally from a village but now was living in Pokhara) wanted to have a photo of her self, just as we arrived in the village, of her self cutting grass…

inherently linked to education – the "city people" are "educated" in the same sense as "village people" are constructed and constructing themselves to be "ignorant" and "uneducated" – and education is linked to reach parity for women (see Appendix G): to comfort and easiness, to be able to talk nicely and to stand on your own feet, as well as to move freely.

5.7 Development and the spatial dimension – mobility and being stuck

While the village is being framed within a *temporal dimension*, Pigg (1992) argues that schoolbooks promote an evolutionary understanding of society; a message conveyed in signs that people in Nepal associate with towns and affluence – that everybody's tomorrow should look like some people's present: "Elites are already in the future, while villagers remain in the past" (Pigg 1992:501).

But in addition to this temporal dimension there is also a *spatial dimension* - not just as geographical or as social distance between city and village – but *more*. Inherent in the development discourse is a notion of *evolution* and *movement* [35]- the movement inherent in leaving tradition and entering modernity through the nation building culminating in New Nepal. This powerful imagery of "leaving the past" is something that spurs other notions of movement, for example and most concretely, bikas and New Nepal as inherently implicating social mobility.[36]

This representation of social change as social mobility does not just reflect the development discourse's maybe most fundamental building stones – it also spurs new constructions: "[The] analysis of language-in-use can show us how social constructions are built. We can see not only the building, but the design and deployment of individual bricks"(Barker & Galasinski 2001:21).

The notion of movement inherent in the "super-structure" of the development discourse – as a guiding metaphor – is echoed in accounts of the spatial mobility accorded to the socially "forward" city women:

[35] Pigg argues: "Embedded in the Nepali usage of bikas is an ideology of modernization: the representation of society through an implicit scale of social progress." (Pigg 1992:499)
[36] But as Pigg notes: "The representation of social change as social mobility is perhaps the most deceptive feature of development ideology" (Ibid:500).

> What about the woman in the city?
>
> In the city the situation is very different. There is freedom in walking here and there. What to say? (F Janajati Terai)

This was also one of the most recurrent descriptions that occurred, and through their constructions of the generic city woman (which of course appears in a thousand variants), there is a positioning of one self – the ones who cannot move freely.

> The town's women know much. The village women just go to the forest, cut grass and so on.(…)They go here and there, see many different things. Compared to them we are back. (S Dalit Hill)

The city women have a mobility that village women don't. While I do not contest that village women might sit a lot inside, and that their movement outside might often be work-related, this generic statement conceals as much as it unveils according to another woman, grown up in a village but now residing in a city:

> *Some women saying that they think city women are more free, because they can walk freely…Is village women sitting a lot inside their houses?*
>
> City people [e.g. women] are also sitting house inside…But city women possible more understand, understand same like boy…City people have more education, more reading they understand more things…The same work a man does, also women can do in the cities…City women **can** [emphasized]…They have more education, that's why… (M Janajati Pokhara/Terai)

This mobility is not just linked to "village values" conflated with "old thinking" and tradition, i.e. the feminine private space and the public male space according to traditional (yet contested) values, but to the all powerful symbolic power of education:

> There is a vast difference between the educated and uneducated in this age.
>
> *Why?*
>
> The people who are educated can go anywhere and speak well. He can do anything he likes. (G Janajati Terai)

Just as shyness, not talking much and sitting inside used to be part of the script of the good woman, and still is to some degree, it is generally not talked about as normative anymore. It is more generally being conceived as a problem – as a pain and unnecessary evil caused by lack of education, an important aspect in their intersecting identity as rural, illiterate women.

The movement inherent in the script of the development discourse, and the representation of social change as social mobility, affords a construction of someone having movement while others don't:

> (…)Many governments come and go. **The people who are back are always back, and the people who have power are always moving ahead**. If we work hard by sweating a lot, then only we can get food to eat. The government is not helping. (S Dalit Hill)

While women still sit a lot inside, and maybe even more in the 'village' than in the 'city', there is a sense where the inability to move, as stated earlier, is linked to not having an education and where education is linked to parity, mobility and liberation. And education is generally, among my village informants, an attribute of the city people and also, to distinguish their own particular womanhood, by city women. To have education is linked to both social and physical mobility – to getting jobs and to "move up" – in the most extreme: as an enabler to go to more developed and forward countries. A male which looked on me and said: "Look: he has education, he can go here and there" – an utterance which initially baffled me, as I arrived in the Hill village, is now intelligible, just as these metaphors in a Tij-song quoted by Skinner and Holland (1996:287):

> Women have even climbed Mt. Everest and reached the moon,
> Women have done so many things in this world.
>
> Women of other countries are pilots,
> We Nepalese women will be happy if we get a chance to be great women

I claim that the pain of "being stuck" do not just resonate the pain of being a woman stuck in the house, but also of being a villager: *the pain of being stuck in the house is amplified by a feeling of being stuck in Old Nepal in New Nepal.* They do not have the education associated with New Nepal, which frames them as not having consciousness – they are constructed as "'incarcerated' in a way of thinking" (Appadurai in Pigg 1992:505). They do also not have the facilities equated with bikas, nor have they experienced the social mobility which social change is represented as – they are stuck:

> "The key modern concepts are cosmopolitan concepts not just because for Nepalis they are associated with the rest of the world, *but because the concepts themselves are mobile*. Being cosmopolitan in Nepal means being able to draw on and maneuver with these notions. Being modern advantageously distinguishes a person in Nepal from others in the same village or the same country. At the same time it signals distant alliances. *The lingua franca of modernity allows one to move, to speak with more people, to establish far-reaching connections. To claim a modern consciousness in Nepal is to claim membership in a transnational community of modern people* [my italics]." (Pigg 1996:193)

This sense of not having movement and living in Old Nepal is poetically, yet tragically framed by a woman, through a metaphor adopting signs from the metaphors of the development discourse:

> *If you get rebirth, what do you want to be in your next life?*
>
> **I want to be a monkey. I can jump from the top of the hill.** (…)If I could be a monkey, I don't need to work. It don't need work, **and can also jump from anywhere**(…)**By living in a village and working hard**, one day I will surely die. After dying I want to be a monkey as there is no fear of dying, and life will also be free and easy. (R Janajati Hill)

Her lack of movement and the hard work associated with the village informs a wish to be reborn to a life which is "free and easy" – where one can "jump from anywhere". Later, she sums up her own life, here and now:

> [Now] I don't go anywhere. I am just like a frog in a pond.

5.8 Recurrent descriptions and metaphors

I have focused on the linguistic and cultural repertoires, made up of the figures of speech, recurrent descriptions and metaphors by which my interviewees construct specific accounts of themselves and the world. I have shown how they in their accounts of their significant Others, of who they are not, positions themselves.

I have shown how "comfort" and "easiness" is recurrent descriptions of the life of the educated and the city people (which sometimes is used as inter-changeable terms as both are related to the imagining of bikas), and that "awareness" and "carrying loads" is opposite values – and where lack of the former implies the latter – and that both these terms are meaningfully deployed to contrast the villager from the urban. Some people are "forward" or "up", while others are "backwards" and "down". And while some have the ability to "walk here and there" and "to walk freely", others cannot – and it is the same people who can't talk or talk nicely – namely, the uneducated. The uneducated is the people who "cannot stand on their own legs" and who "wish to do something" – the people who are targets rather than givers of bikas – the second class citizens of New Nepal.

These re-current descriptions and metaphors are reflective of the social imagination, and of language that structures and informs our understanding through discourse.

5.8.1 “The metaphors we live by”

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) write that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life: “Our concepts structure, what we perceive, how we get around in the world and how we relate to other people” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:3). Many recurrent descriptions are linked to someone who are “up” or “forward” and to someone who are “backwards”: “Such metaphorical orientations are not arbitrary. They have a basis in our physical and cultural experience” (Ibid:14). Further: “Most of our fundamental concepts are organized in terms of one or more spatialization metaphors” (Ibid:17).

I have argued that the discourse of New Nepal is somewhat related to movement. The route Nepal is travelling towards progress – an evolutionary understanding of society inherent in the concept of development, which has been propagated through schoolbooks, designs and spurs new constructions. I have not treated discourse as a hidden presence – rather I have shown how it is to be understood as “a metaphor suggesting the regulation and patterning of human marks and noises”(Barker & Galasinski 2001:14).

The recurring descriptions, figures of speech and metaphors all point to the structuring of events through language – and to the social nature of language. No matter how private we look upon both language and metaphor – they are social by nature and so are the constructions being made available. But the pervasiveness of metaphor also shows Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) point: metaphors are possible because human thought processes are largely metaphorical, which opens up for focusing on cognition and constructions of significant Others. Thus it makes sense of Barker and Galasinski’s(2001) view that one should view discourse as a metaphor – and where power enters is the closure and fixing of particular meaning available – the structuring of metaphors available through “official versions”.

I see the metaphor of “development as movement” as the most characteristic metaphor – which creates its own system of metaphorical meaning and own subsystems of metaphors. The nodal point in the discourse of New Nepal is development of nation and consciousness through *education* – which gives social mobility, freedom in walking here and there, the possibility to go to even more forward countries and the ability to talk nicely – the ability to move and interact freely. The key concepts of modernity are, as Pigg (1992) argues, mobile *themselves*. To be modern in Nepal signals distant alliances: to the modern world “where women are pilots”.

5.8.2 Cultural politics: the state, discourse and identity

I have shown how identity is a process of becoming built from points of similarity and difference – where cultural identity is continually being produced within the vectors of resemblance and distinction. I have also shown how the cultural politics of New Nepal is both *enabling* and *constraining* – and that this is linked to the cultural politics of New Nepal – the power to represent common sense and create official versions. I have shown this through the contestation of discrimination linked to caste and gender, and the unquestionable symbolic power the educated wields, which shows the duality of structure in the discourse of New Nepal: that the cultural politics inherent in the notion of New Nepal does not "involve the discovery of truth, or less distorted perception in opposition to ideology, but the forging of a language with consequences which serve particular purposes and values (…)" (Barker & Galasinski 2001:57). I have linked this power to the middle-class, which Pigg (1992) claim was generated in relation to the development industry, and which popularly has been seen as the driving force of New Nepal. I understand this power something akin to ideology, which cannot be counterpoised to truth – the 'world view' of any social group which justifies their actions, and which have consequences for relations of power at all levels of social relationships. I have also related this power to a state-sanctioned ideology (which though in the end undermined the rule of the King), and thus the "consciousness" which are laudable is also indicative of the power of the state to generate subjectivities – and is thus in some sense also a specific sort of unconsciousness – though legitimized as the ideology of competence, as the state not only has the monopoly of physical violence, but of symbolical violence as well. And for Nepal, which never was colonized, its new political identity was forged in the post-war, post-colonial period: "For nearly forty years Nepal's modern political identity has been linked to global institutions of international development" (Pigg 1992:498).

Conclusion

The discourse of New Nepal is both empowering and disempowering. It opens up for re-articulation of self and society, at the same time as it momentarily fixes meaning and stops deferral, creates new distinctions and new sources of symbolic power. The modernizing project creates a new *telos* for states and citizens. The nation is not just a political system, but a system of cultural representation, through which national identity is continually reproduced. The creation of the new ideal citizen entails minioritising: where a particular group is being constructed by the environment (and consequently by themselves), and that this positioning entails a subordinate position with regards to power – the second class citizens created through an imaginative identification with the symbols and discourses of the nation-state. The second class citizens are rural and uneducated, and for my informants their construction of identity is also linked to distinguish themselves from the women they are not – the city women with education – which begs the question if it is really gender which are the most relevant category in their intersecting identity as rural, illiterate women. But there is no doubt that the content of being a village *woman* is linked to hardships and struggle, and that one could claim that the women in my sample, also mostly from "middle caste" or "lower caste", are under *double exposure*.

First, "within any given village distinctions of wealth, ethnicity and gender loom large" (Pigg 1992:505) – the same discriminatory practices that can be challenged and contested in New Nepal, which heightens the perceived injustice of actually experienced discrimination.

Secondly, in the national hierarchy as uneducated villagers – the new national power hierarchy – which cannot be contested, and that they would sound crazy, *even to themselves*, if they understood this as oppression.

The notion of 'double exposure' is taken from Leichenko and O'Brien (2008). While they use it as a metaphor for cases where "a particular region, sector, social group (…) is simultaneously confronted by exposure to both global environment change and globalization" (Leichenko & O'Brien 2008:9), I use it as a metaphor for the double exposure the women are confronted with as they live in the transitory phase where Old Nepal is being re-placed with New Nepal, and where they end up as being constructed as unable to stand on their own feet

in “both worlds”: within “Old Nepal” where distinctions of ethnicity, caste and gender still informs discrimination, and within “New Nepal” where lack of education and being a villager informs second class citizenship. Having education becomes the mean by which woman can “stand on their own feet” and transcend the traditional social construct. But being uneducated one cannot “go here and there” or “stand on your own feet” – the rural, illiterate women in my sample are constructed as “leg-less” in “two worlds”. Just as the traditional social construct entailed a feminine space and a male space, the discourse of New Nepal entails that the rural, illiterate women feel that they cannot move freely – a sense of being stuck. This sense of being stuck is informed, I will claim, by the double exposure of traditional and modern power hierarchies.

“In film photography, double exposure describes the accidental creation of images, where the intention was not to photograph over a previously exposed image but to produce two separate pictures” (Ibid.). Unfortunately, it seems that the same people that are socially vulnerable in the traditional system are accidentally being framed and constructed as an incapable and backwards group in New Nepal, where development have had severe cultural consequences: creating new distinctions and new disdain, as well as a new mapping of the country – where bikas have changed the perception of the village more than the actual villages themselves. Importantly: a development that focuses solely on capabilities ignore accumulated history, and the developmental “fix” of literacy has at the same time introduced the neo-liberal “ideology of competence”.

I have tried avoiding being the viewer that only “perceives the double-exposed shot as a single picture and respond to that new image rather than to its constituent parts” (Ibid.). I have balanced between avoiding the trap of romanticizing the social structure both *before* and *after* bikas – thus avoiding the trap of both post-colonial thinking and evolutionary optimism.

But there is a sense that the modernity which comes from abroad, and are mediated by the Nepali cosmopolitan middle-class, are linked to modernistic notions of progress which are devoid of some of the neo-Marxist, ecological-sociological and post-development strains that are academically thriving notions in the late modern world of today. Ironically, as development might be seen as Westernisation, the aversion to modernity is itself a sign of high modernism (Pieterse 2000:179). Neo-Marxist critiques of a special sort of globalization, which to them entails a lack of global economic convergence as well as a class-polarization

crisis within countries, is a critique of the neo-liberal agenda which according to Bourdieu (1998), wants to smash the Welfare State (and Kiely (2005) would add: the destruction of the developmental state of the "Golden era of Capitalism") through, for example, "the ideology of competence", which gives structures of inequality an ethical and intellectual justification. These contestations of the global ideology of neo-liberalism is further heightened by ecological sociologists that argue that neither people in "developing" societies, nor people in the MDCs themselves can continue to let the social systems, and especially the economy, interfere with the eco-system of the world on the scale which is being done by the Western countries: denoting cracks in the 'human exceptionalism paradigm'. The unconsciousness of the villager might be small in comparison to the unconsciousness of the cosmopolitan man, and the processes which are spreading ideals of middle-class lifestyles, with the implicit notions that this lifestyle can be attainable by all: "Post-development starts from a basic assessment: that attaining a middle-class lifestyle for the majority of the world population is impossible" (Pietersee 2000:175). The knowledge which is valorized in Nepal, and spread from the West, might be of lesser value than the green knowledge of the villagers – a knowledge which is not valorized and is disappearing – being replaced by high-pesticide farming.

While being skeptical to developmental practices and its concrete results, I do not want to essentialise development into 'Development' and refute "the idea" with "it's" practices. My critique of the development practices, as first and foremost creating a new elite embodying a new symbolic power *and* a new mapping of Nepalese society in the social imagination – the current results of development discourse and its framings of its recipients – is linked to what many see as a particular sort of globalization, denoted by urbanization, a class-polarization crisis and the introduction of the "ideology of competence". My critique does not romanticize the previous cultural product – rather it begs the need for re-articulation for demystifying the rule of the people "embodying" – in the eyes of their Other – the new symbolic power and legitimate capital in New Nepal.

Just as cultural politics entails the possibility of re-articulation, and my movement away from the notions of "discourse and docile bodies" enables a form of agency – there is a belief that re-articulation and social change is possible and not just necessary. I have claimed that the rule of the educated veils the impact of other aspects of social capital and that "the rule of the educated" is not contested. Too long has one equated poverty with capability failures and

framed education as the “lucky number” which can change one’s status quasi-instantaneously: “a world without inertia, without accumulation, without heredity or acquired properties (…) [where] every soldier has a marshal’s baton in his knapsack” (Bourdieu 1986:241). My goal has been to expose and de-mystify this naturalized hierarchy with the hope that the “dispossessed”, the uneducated, can challenge this hierarchy *also*: where they can frame a new language and re-articulate the elements of society and see beyond the “ideology of competence” and see oppression as oppression – without sounding crazy neither to themselves nor others.

Appendix

A.

What do you feel about your caste? Do you feel good or bad about being a Sarki?

I wish to be of higher caste, as the lower castes like us are dominated by them.

Are you being dominated being of lower caste?

Yes, I have been dominated by the Brahmins and Magars.

Are you being insulted…Not allowed to enter the higher caste's houses?

Yes.

Are you feeling inferior being Sarki?

Yes, I feel it in my heart. (L Dalit Hill)

B.

This caste system is not created by the Gods - it was created by men themselves. So these castes are not that important. They are man made. (…) In the beginning, people were not educated, so there was discrimination on behalf of caste. With change of time, people started getting education. Then their thinking also changed, so there is not much discrimination on behalf of caste nowadays. (…) There will be more discrimination, in the village than in the towns. God created everyone, higher castes and lower castes, everybody. This caste system is man made, it is just artificial and man made. (…)In village they are traditional. They don't know the benefits, advantages and disadvantages, merits and demerits. They listen to their fathers, and there is also lack of education. But in city, people come from different areas, so they don't care that much about each other. In village they know fathers and grandfathers, everything about each other…It is not like that here…In city area there is more education, so there is less discrimination. (V Dalit Male Pokhara)

C.

Education is a great thing!

Why?

If they go on studying they will get jobs, right? (L Dalit Hill)

D.

The government people are different.

How?

They have studied. The people holding government jobs can eat nicely and sit nicely.

Do you think your life would have been easier if you had school?

If I had studied it would have been better. I am just thinking, but I don't have any education. (A Janajati Terai)

When you hear that women are doing politics, what are you thinking about it?

It is good that women are also talking. I want to be like them.

Do you talk about politics with your husband and other people in your village?

No, I don't talk about it. But others talk, I only sit and listen to them. (S Dalit Hill)

E.

On what basis do you give your vote? What are the criteria?

If the person is good educated, nice...I think he will do good to our society, and I give [him the] vote. (U Hill Brahmin)

If I…I want to know about them…His education, background and ideology…Everything! I find out, and then decide. (T Brahmin Male Pokhara)

F.

(…)Politics, I don't understand…But when I hear them talk, I feel they talk about the welfare of the people. (N Dalit Pokhara)

What do you think about politics?

I am thinking: who want helping Nepali people – poor people? Not just taking money, eating money… I am hoping for good government. (M Janajati Terai/Pokhara)

G.

Do you think it is easier being a woman in a city?

Yes, I am thinking that.

Why?

City people little bit more understand…More school…That's why it is more easy.
(M Janajati Terai/Pokhara)

I think like this…If I could read, I could earn my livelihood…I need not be under the control of my husband…I could have gone to different places…If I go somewhere now, my husband will be thinking bad about it…What to say? (C Janajati Terai)

References:

Appadurai, Arjun (1988). “Putting Hierarchy in Its Place”. In Cultural Anthropology, 3(1), pp. 36-49.

Ball, S. (1990). ”Selfdoubt and soft data: social and technical trajectories in ethnographic fieldwork”. In *Qualitative studies in Education* 3(2), pp. 151-171.

Baral, Uma Nath (2008). ”Local democracy and local government: a case study of Dhikur Pokhari Village Development Committee, Kaski, Nepal”. In Gellner, David and Hacchetu, Krishna (ed.). *Local Democracy in South Asia: Microprocesses of Democratization in Nepal and its Neighbours*. pp. 232-257. Delhi: Sage.

Barker and Galasinski (2001). *Cultural Studies and Discourse Analysis*. London: SAGE.

Bennett, Lynn (2005). “Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal: Following the Policy Process from Analysis to Action”. Paper for New Frontiers of Social Policy: Arusha Conference, World Bank.

Bennett, Lynn (2006), et al. “Unequal Citizens. Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal: Summary.” Paper for World Bank, DFID and National Planning Commission’s joint GSEA Project. Nepal: Wordscape.

Blaikie, Norman (2005): *Designing Social Research.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Borre, Ole, Sushil R. Panday & Chitra K. Tiwari (1994). *Nepalese Political Behaviour.* Århus: Århus University Press

Bourdieu, Pierre (1986). “The Forms of Capital”. In Richardson, J. G. (ed.): *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, pp. 241-258. New York: Greenwood.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1998). *Acts of resistance. Against the New Myths of Our Time.* Cambridge: Polity.

Burawoy, Michael (1998). ”The extended case study”. In *Sociological Theory* Vol.16, no.1, p.4-35, American Sociological Association.

Carby, H.V. (1997). ”White Women Listen!”. In H.S. Mirza (ed.) *Black British Feminism. A Reader*, p. 45-53. London: Routledge.

Enslin, Elizabeth (1997).”Imagined Sisters: The Ambiguities of Women’s Poetics and Collective Actions”. In Skinner, Debra, Alfred Pach III and Dorothy Holland (eds.). *Selves in Time and Place. Identities, Experience and History in Nepal*, pp. 269-300. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Fielding, N.G. and Fielding, J.L. (1986) *Linking Data*. London: Sage

Freedomhouse (2007) Country Report: Nepal. Available: http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7239 (Accessed last: 23.11.10)

Giddens, Anthony (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hausmann Ricardo, Laura D. Tyson and Saadia Zahidi (2009). *The Global Gender Gap Report*. Paper for World Economic Forum at Davos. Accessed through intermediary present at the WEF. Geneva, Switzerland.

Hjelde, Ida (2006): *Eurosentrisme i norsk sosiologi*. MA Thesis: UiO.

Hoftun, Martin, William Raeper and John Whelpton (1999*). People, Politics and Ideology*. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point.

Kiely, Ray 2005: *Clash of Globalization*, Brill Academic Publishers.

Kvale, Steinar (1996). *Interviews. An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage.

Kramer, Miriam (2008). *Negotiating modernity: Narratives of change and development among village women in Nepal*. MA Thesis: UiO.

Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark, 1980: *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Leichenko, Robin and Karen O'Brien (2008). *Environmental Change and Globalization: Double Exposures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Leve, Lauren G. (2007). "'Failed Development' and Rural Revolution in Nepal: Rethinking subaltern Consciousness and Women's Empowerment". In *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 80, no. 1, pp. 127-173.

Levy, Robert I. (1990). *Mesocosm*. Berkely: University of California Press.

Liechty, Mark (1997). "Consumer Culture and Identities in Kathmandu: "Playing with Your Brain"". In Skinner, Debra, Alfred Pach III and Dorothy Holland (eds.). *Selves in Time and Place. Identities, Experience and History in Nepal*, pp. 131-154. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Manandhar, Dharma et al (2004). "Effect of a participatory intervention with women's groups on birth outcomes in Nepal: cluster-randomised control trial". In *The Lancet*, Volume 364, Issue 9438, 11.09-17.09.04, p. 970-979.

Meinhof, U.H and Galasinski D. (2000). "Photography, memory and the construction of identities on the former East-West German border". In *Discourse studies*, 2(3):323-353.

Mishra, Chaitanya (2008). "New Nepal and new Nepalis". *Gorakhapatra* Special Issue, May 6, 2008, p.1-7.

Pant, Anna Robinson (2004). *Women, Literacy and Development – Alternate Perspectives*. New York: Routledge

Phoenix, Ann (2001). “Practising feminist research: the intersection of gender and ‘race’ in the research process”. In K.K Bhavani (ed.). In *Feminism and ‘Race’*, pp. 203-219. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pietersee, Jan Nederveen (2000). “After post-development”. In *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 21, No. 2, pp 175-191.

Pigg, Stacy Leigh (1992). “Inventing Social Categories Through Place: Social Representations and Development in Nepal”. In *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.34, no.3, pp. 491-513.

Pigg, Stacy Leigh (1996). “The Credible and the Credulous: The Question of “Villagers’ Beliefs” in Nepal”. In *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 11, no. 2, pp 160-201.

Potter, J. and Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*. London and Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Pradhan, Rajendra (2002). “Ethnicity, caste and a pluralist society”. In Dixit, Kanak Mani and Shastri Ramachandaran (eds.), pp.1-21. *State of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Himal Books.

Ritzer, George and Douglas J. Goodman (2003). *Sociological Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Ritzer, George and Douglas J. Goodman (2008). *Sociological Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rorty, Richard (1995). “Feminism and Pragmatism” in R.S Goodman (ed.), *Pragmatism*. New York: Routledge.

Sato, Chizu Sato (2004). A self-reflexive analysis of power and positionality. In Anna Robinson Pant (ed.). *Women, Literacy and Development – Alternate Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.

Sharma, Gopi Nath (1990): “The Impact of education during the Rana period in Nepal”. *Himalayan Research Bulletin* 10: 3-7.

Siisiäinen, Marrti (2000). “Two Concepts of Social Capital: Bourdieu vs. Putnam”. Paper for “ISTR Fourth International Conference, The Third Sector: For What and for Whom?”, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland.

Silverman, David (2005). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. London: Sage.

Simmel, Georg (1903). “The Metropolis and Mental Life”. In Miles, Malcolm, Tim Hall and Ian Borden (eds.). *The City Cultures Reader*, pp. 12-19. London: Routledge.

Skinner, Debra and Dorothy Holland (1996). ”Schools and the Cultural Production of the Educated Person in a Nepalese Hill Community”. In B. Levinson, D.E. Foley and D. Holland (eds*). The Cultural Production of the Educated Person*, pp. 273-301. Albany, NY: State University of New York.

Skinner, Debra, Alfred Pach III and Dorothy Holland (1997). ”Selves in Time and Place: An Introduction”. In Skinner, D., A. Pach III, and D. Holland(eds.), *Selves in Time and Place. Identities, Experiences and History in Nepal*, pp. 3-19. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Pbl.

Skinner, Debra and Dorothy Holland (1997). “Contested Selves, Contested Femininities: Selves and Society in Process”. In Skinner, D., A. Pach III and D. Holland (eds.), *Selves in Time and Place. Identities, Experiences and History in Nepal*, pp. 87-110. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Pbl.

Tamang, Seira (2002). “The Politics of ‘developing Nepali women’”. In Dixit, Kanak Mani and Shastri Ramachandaran (eds.), *State of Nepal*, pp. 161-175. Kathmandu: Himal Books.

Thagaard, Tove (2004). *Systematikk og Innlevelse*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget

Walseth, Kristin (2006). ”Young Muslim Women and Sport: the Impact of Identity Work”. In *Leisure Studies*, Vol.25, No.1, p.75-94. London: Routledge.

Wolf, D.L. (1996). “Situating feminist dilemmas in fieldwork”. In D.L. Wolf (ed.), *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, Boulder CO: Westview Press.