DEMOCRACY AND EMPOWERMENT IN NEPAL

A Case Study on Community Security and Development in Village Communities in a Fragmented Country

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ABSTRACT

Dette speciale er udarbejdet på baggrund af empiri indsamlet under feltarbejde i Nepal fra august til december 2017. Det undersøger sammenhænge mellem *demokrati*, *udvikling* og *human security*, og hvordan implementering af lokaldemokrati og participatoriske processer i udviklingsprojekter skaber selvstændiggørelse (*empowerment*) i landsbysamfund i de to distrikter, Syangja og Kavre. Landsbyer i begge distrikter tager del i flere projekter, der er igangsat af organisationerne Trianglen og ASK Nepal, som jeg har været tilknyttet under feltarbejdet. Gennem samarbejdet har jeg haft adgang til informanter, som er en del af målgruppen for Demokrati-Projektet (the Doing Democracy Project) og/eller Økologisk Landbrug-Projektet (the Organic Farming Project). Idéer om demokrati og udvikling er derfor udforsket som både teoretiske og emiske begreber, baseret på udtalelser fra informanter og kollegaer. Denne dobbelte tilgang til begrebsbrug muliggør nye forståelser af, hvordan frameworks som både demokrati og human security kan få nye betydninger i nye kontekster. Specialet viser således flere aspekter af demokratiudøvelse i Nepal.

Demokratiet er påvirket af landets feudale og kastebaserede fortid, som har medført ulige forhold mellem forskellige etniske grupper i landet. Denne opdeling har fragmenteret landet, men gør på samme tid mulighederne for lokaldemokrati gunstige; deltagelse i demokratiet er nemlig ofte afhængig af, at alle kan være på samme niveau, fordi store sociale eller økonomiske forskelle kan besværliggøre interaktionen mellem de forskellige parter. Med tilknytningen til de lokale og familiære relationer, der findes i landsbyerne, bliver identitetsskabelse ikke bare en del af tilhørsforhold, men samtidig en del af, hvordan man kan interagere med sine medmennesker. Demokrati bliver hermed en oplevelse af ligeværdigt fællesskab i den lokale udvikling, mere end det opleves som værende en politisk styreform i en nationalstat. Derudover er demokrati folkets ret til lige udvikling i et system uden forudindtagethed baseret på kaste, religion eller køn, som landets grundlov fra 2015 også understreger.

Et andet aspekt af demokrati er, at alle skal ende på lige udviklingsniveau, og at denne udvikling bliver drevet af folkets egne idéer om, hvilke ressourcer, deres lokalsamfund har, og hvilke de ønsker at opnå mere af. Gennem fælles projekter, spare-

/lånegrupper med fællespenge og oplysning om egne rettigheder, opnår befolkningen følelsen af fællesskab, og gennem dette bliver de bekræftede i, at de alle har ret til samt krav på indflydelse i deres eget og fælles liv og udvikling.

Udvikling, ressourcer og magt hænger uløseligt sammen i demokratiskabelsen i Nepal. Akkumulering af ressourcer eller kapitaler, både fysiske, sociale og kulturelle, medvirker til, hvordan mennesker har mulighed for at agere og interagere. De fysiske og sociale arenaer påvirker hinanden, og ligeledes bliver fysisk og social afstand gensidigt forstærkende, især fordi udviklingen af infrastruktur også mest sker de steder, hvor der i forvejen er udvikling. Dette medfører også, at fragmentering og skrøbelighed i staten (*state fragility*) på nogle måder bibeholdes, fordi lokale identiteter er legitimeret mere, end national identitet og gruppeidentifikation er. Udvikling er også en måde at identificere sig på og er dermed afgørende for muligheden for agens og magt mellem forskellige grupper i samfundet.

Human security hænger sammen med både demokrati og udvikling, da de begge er med til at sikre et lige samfund, hvor alle kan leve et værdigt liv, som er en del af opnåelsen af human security. På den anden side er det paradoksalt at gøre human security til et koncept, der kan opnås lokalt, da det netop indeholder et aspekt af forbundethed, der går udover landegrænser og etnisk identitet. Ambivalensen udfoldes yderligere ved, at staten ofte gives et bærende ansvar for at leve op til internationale standarder i forbindelse med forsøg på opnåelse af sikkerhed.

Alt i alt viser specialet, hvordan globale koncepter og udviklingsmodeller kan genforhandles gennem tilpassede definitioner og bruges i lokale kontekster. Det viser også, at selvom begreber som stat, demokrati og sikkerhed er komplekse, og måske mangler almengyldige definitioner, er den lokale oplevelse af dem lige så virkelig, som hvis definitionen var universelt gældende.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASK: Aapasi Sahayog Kendra (आपसी सहयोग केन्द्र) (the Nepali organisation, I worked with)

DDP: Doing Democracy Project (implemented in Kavre & Syangja by ASK/Trianglen)

HS: Human Security

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

OFP: Organic Farming Project (implemented in Kavre by ASK/Trianglen)

RTI: Right To Information

SLP: Settlement Level Planning

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

VDC: Village Development Committee

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1. INTRODUCTION

> *Freedom and democracy are* relational *terms. Neither freedom nor democracy has ever been completely realized. That is why democracy can never mean the complete absence of forms of authority and power […] or absolute liberty* (Stehr 2016: 16).

Democracy is 'the rule of and by the people' (Dahal 2008: 128), and it is also 'the inclusion of different social groups in the political structure and the active participation of citizens in governance. [Governance is…] collaboration and partnership between political and civil society' (Gellner and Hachhethu 2008: 15). Both definitions, chosen from many like them, indicate that there is a group of people, who are aware of their position as citizens, and that they actively participate in their own governance. The participating citizen is used in development projects including democratic perspectives, because it is meant to create ownership about the project for the local people.

It is more often than not indicated that democracy is good, mainly because it is said to enhance development, equality and freedom (Stehr 2016: 1, 51; Large & Sisk 2006: 31; Drucza 2016: 63). On the other hand, more pessimist views on the topic suggest that the vicious circle of inequality will prevent actual democracy from ever happening, or that it is not beneficial for marginalised groups at all (Ross 2006; Dahl 2006; McLaverty 2014: 49). The positive connotations the word carries are also present in everyday life-discourses in societies defined as democracies, who sees the concept as 'unambiguously good' (Achen & Bartels 2016: 55).

Democracy is often connected to creations and maintenance of the nation-state and seen as only a political term or a way of governing, but it can be more and other things than a form of governing. To explore the possibilities of democracy in relation to Human Security (HS), I will examine democracy as 'consciousness of a communal life, in all its implications' (Dewey 1946: 149). The broadened and social understanding of the concept offers expanded analytical perspectives, which can add to the discussion of

the interrelatedness of HS and development in fragile (nation-)states. HS will be understood as a framework for action and will be put into the context of local democracy in Nepal in order to examine democracy and empowerment in a fragile state. The broad and narrow approaches to what the framework entails as model for action will be discussed in Chapter 7, as it is relevant in general and also relates to possible implementations of it in fragile contexts, such as the one of Nepal.

Nepal is a turbulent state characterized by its long-standing caste system, recent government and societal transformations and feudal structure. This makes the democratisation and unification of the country difficult (Pettigrew 2013; Adhikari & Gellner 2016; Sharma et al. 2012). Since the Maoist Insurgency, the civil war lasting from 1996-2006, the country has gone through different transformations, including the ones from Hindu State to federal state and from monarchy to democracy. The federal structure of the society has been reformed after the 2015 constitution became effective, and this restructuring is part of a decentralisation and devolution of power within the country to the different local governmental authorities (Shneiderman and Tillin 2015; Appendix 2). Nepal is a country characterised by its diversity and division, social as well as geographical. The distance between people and between people and governmental leaders is great due to a number of reasons, of which some are addressed in this thesis. At the same time, the state has not been able to provide basic services to its citizens, many of whom still live in poverty and some without land or property (Sharma et al. 2012; Drucza 2016: 65; UNDP 2015). With the constitution of 2015 – and also already partly by the interim constitution of 2007 – many socially marginalised groups have been given rights to inclusion in the political decision-making processes. These *backward people*[1] are granted special rights to ensure the implementation of the national project on social inclusion (Constitution 2015). Even though laws and regulations are no guarantee for implementation, the people, in principle, have rights to decide over their own lives, and the state should ensure everyone right to do so, without bias regarding ethnicity, caste or social class (ibid.). The state should, following the constitution, 'promote national unity […as well as protect] the life, property, equality and liberties of the people […and] guarantee the overall human security system' (ibid.: 30-31).

Despite these promises, the country suffers from years of differentiation and structural violence, which influences the possibilities of execution and legitimisation of power, just as the federalisation and the existing division of people has led to an ethnicisation of politics (Gellner & Hachhethu 2008: 20; Chettri 2017: 16).

The thesis is written on the basis of a four month stay in Nepal (1st of August – 1st of December 2017). During this time, I was connected to the people of ASK Nepal (Aapasi Sahayog Kendra, आपसी सहयोग केन्द्र). ASK is an organisation that works towards democractic inclusion and participatory development processes. This is done through facilitation of workshops and advocacy of citizen rights and participatory development. Through visits to and interviews with people in the villages around Nagarkot in Kavre District and Putalibazaar in Syangja District (see Appendix 1), I explored how democracy is understood and implemented in rural places, and how the division of groups of people and villages influences the possibilities for development, community, democratisation and HS. Therefore, the problem statement is as follows.

> *In this thesis, I examine how local democracy and development are experienced in small village communities in Nepal, and how the feeling of democracy and inclusion contribute to how power and community is perceived by the citizens. I explore to which degree, democracy as freedom and human security can be achieved locally in a context of state fragility and fragmentation.*

Many scholars have examined the ethnicisation of democracy as it happens in Nepal (Chettri 2017; Gellner & Hachhethu 2008), but this has mostly explored either the ethnic aspect of democratic participation or more general figures on poverty, or group-, ethnic- or female empowerment. Many argue that there is an explicit ethnicisation of politics in Nepal, and even though I do not find this to be a false statement, I want to show that ethnicity is not all that matters in (political) decision-making in Nepal (Hangen 2010; Chettri 2017). The thesis adds a perspective of HS to the debate about democracy and explores, how power structures can change and generate agency, when the community creates empowerment and legitimises use of power, which was not

there before. This is interesting in the light of fragile states as well. Where people elsewhere often take to violent measures when the state fails to provide basic security for its citizens, the Nepali people instead tend to find a way back to their ethnic group or original place of belonging in order to find security within their own group (Ripert 2013).

The Maoist Insurgency was a violent conflict, but even though the groups in the country still exist, the violence has ceased with the political ceasefire agreement and interim constitution of 2007 (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) & Government of Nepal 2006; Interim Constitution 2007). The local belonging as a solution to the lack of service-provision is interesting in a federal state such as Nepal, where the decentralised power can be used to ensure what the state cannot. This, combined with the ethnicisation of politics in post-conflict, post-monarchy Nepal, provides an opportunity to explore how the state and public is experienced as being part of development of the country as well as of democracy as unity. Democracy is further often used in nation-creation, but does that even make sense, if it is in the local that the power and agency is possible?

Throughout the thesis, I will address various topics regarding democracy, power and development; first, I show my methodological considerations regarding my work with another culture and language in a foreign country in Chapter 2, then I present and clarify the use of the key concepts and terms used in the thesis in Chapter 3. The following chapters explore the meaning and understanding of democracy and development, as seen by the people in the villages of Nepal. In Chapter 4, I especially focus on how belonging and trust play into doing democracy as they do in other aspects of life in a village in Nepal. After the linkage between democracy and development is explored in Chapter 5, power and agency and the way they are exercised in fragile and fragmented circumstances are then elaborated on in Chapter 6. The discussion in Chapter 7 addresses issues of equal participation in democratic processes and how the concept of freedom can be said to have influence on both democracy and HS. In this regard, knowledge also plays a role, and this is explored in relation to the possibility

for equal participation. Finally, I explore how local empowerment versus international community enhances and decreases the possibility of achieving HS.

[1] Backward people as a term covers different groups of people, who, according to the government and the constitution, should be taken into special consideration when it comes to social inclusion. It includes groups such as women, children, Dalits and other groups who can have special needs. See also Pigg (1992)

2. METHODOLOGY AND FIELD

This chapter will provide an overview of the methodological approach I have had to my field. I will introduce the setting of the fieldwork as well as show which challenges and advantages working in Nepal with a local organisation has given. I will discuss the methods used and show how going into a new field can never be exactly as you want it to be. The use of interviewing and simply being present in a situation can be beneficial and challenging in different ways, and were my primary ways of data collection. This choice was made, because it fitted with the work of the organisation, and not only because they were the best methods for the study. The unpredictability of entering into a new field comes with benefits and challenges, and these will be shown in a discussion on which impacts the choice of methods has on the collected data.

2.1. Presentation of the Field

Arriving in Nepal was in many ways everything and nothing like I had expected it to be. Trbhuvan Internation Airport, the airport in Kathmandu, is small and filling out visa information seemed more as a formal need than an actual registration of travellers entering. No one spoke English, yet everything seemed easy, and there was no fuss about getting the visa, as it turned out that if just the name fitted the passport, the rest did not matter. I was picked up by the office manager in ASK Nepal's Kavre-division, and we drove through the dusty streets in his car to the office in Nagarkot. He owns the under-reconstruction-hotel, in which ASK has their Kavre office. It amazed me that the car actually got us all the way to Nagarkot without being stuck in holes filled with rainy-season-water. Generally, things seem to work out in Nepal if you have patience – I found that out during the next four months I spent there.

The work placement was my way to get into a previously unknown area, both geographically and theoretically speaking. Some things therefore need to be made clear in order to understand the environment. This especially has to do with the field, and the distinction between villages, towns, districts and municipalities as different political levels. The villages are the lowest level of political unit, when it comes to development (Pigg 1992: 491), and when I write about villages, the understanding of them as both

political and social units merge. Villages also contains connotations of underdevelopment and of being marginal and far-out, making them part of the discourse about backward people (Pigg 1992). 'Nepalis view villages as distinct from [towns and cities] due to their relative lack of 'development' (*bikas*), a category which refers to material and economic features, such as roads and health care facilities' (Hangen 2010: 11). Even though some of the villages I visited have a medical shop and most have schools close by, there are mostly footpaths and almost never a paved road passing through. The villages are remote areas, and they are backward in the sense that they are not developed to the degree that bigger towns are – they are looked upon as being placed backward in time (Pigg 1992). The people in the villages are living more traditionally and are in some cases looked down upon as ignorant; 'the ignorance of villagers is not an absence of knowledge. Quite the contrary. It is the presence of too much instilled belief' (Pigg 1992: 506). Because of this statement from Stacy Leigh Pigg, I choose not to call my informants villagers, as I find that it has unwanted negative connotations. Instead, *people in the villages* or *citizens* will be used, even though being a citizen also carries a certain meaning of being active and having agency. I will come back to backwardness in villages and distance in Chapter 6. In the next chapter, I will provide a short introduction to the political and social scene of Nepal will be provided in the following.

2.2. The Social and Political Structures of Nepal

'In Nepal, we have two castes. Man and woman.' The statement came from Maya, as we sat in a teashop in Nagarkot one afternoon after work when I had asked about the caste-system yet again. It was said with a smile but captures multiple aspects about Nepal and its project of inclusion.

Nepal as nation was established by the Gorkhas, taking control over the Kathmandu valley in the late eighteen century (Whelpton 2005: xi, 1). The relatively short life of the nation has been dominated by monarchy as form of government, and Hinduism as the main religion. After the end of the civil war in 2006, the country was declared to be a republic and at the same time no longer a Hindu state (Adhikari & Gellner 2016: 2016). Though Hinduism in Nepal is not directly adopted from the strict caste-division as

exists in for example India (Bista 1991: 8, 20-25), caste and ethnicity, as well as gender and religion play major roles in identification and social structure in the country. For the Nepali people, both caste and ethnicity exist, but the distinction between caste and ethnic classification is blurred in practice (Hangen 2010: 26), and the amount of ethnic groups – within and outside the caste-system – is vast and confused (Adhikari & Gellner 2016; Futtrup 2017; Whelpton 2005: 9-10).

Nepal is landlocked with India to the south and China in the north, making the country dependent on its neighbours for keeping a stable economic environment (Sharma et al. 2012: 3). The country has never been colonised but has had English influence from the British colonisation of India. For example, letters – as opposed to Nepali characters – are English letters and international holidays are talked about as e.g. English New Year by my colleagues. This shows the dependency on what happens in India, but where India has both been affected negatively and positively by the colonisation, Nepal has not had the positive impacts on infrastructure that has followed in many colonies, here keeping in mind that the colonisation in general has not only been beneficial (Kendhammer 2017). Additionally the Nepalese have had multiple relations and co-operations with England, including providing soldiers to fight in the World Wars and in the English suppression of India in the twentieth century (Whelpton 2005: xi-xii). The country's caste-division and bad infrastructure has had an impact on the contemporary political situation, and Nepal has been through different forms of government, as well as demands for democracy and ethnic equality. Democracy was introduced in the country in 1990 after the first People's Movement, replacing the *panchayat* system (Pettigrew 2013: 11). In 1996, however, the Second People's Movement, also called the Maoist Insurgency, was launched by the Maoists, creating a civil war that lasted the following decade (ibid.). Civil wars create – not surprisingly – a salience in ethnicity instead of national identity (Nunn 2012: 117), and the Maoist Insurgency added to the already split society consisting of multiple peoples with different languages and cultures. This is connected to the way community and security can be understood, as security originally was connected to national, military security (Rothschild 1995). Theories describe how security has changed over time, and now has a

new impact and implementation with the HS framework, which will be presented in Chapter 3. This changes the perspective on who is included in matters of security. Generally, the question about who is secured by whom depends on the existing and imagined communities, which I will return to in the discussion in Chapter 7 and will also touch upon during Chapters 4 to 6 (Baldwin 1997; Anderson 1983).

Since 2006, and in principle since 1990, the multiparty-system has been the form of government in Nepal, but as the government has changed every other year since the 2008-election, the hope for stability in the political sphere is still not fulfilled, and the social inclusion that should replace *social violence* (Galtung 1969) is only partly successful (Drucza 2016: 67). 'A weak or weakening state […] tends to politicize identity and fuel group-based loyalties' (Ohlson 2008: 137), and this is one of the reasons why the fragile – or at least unstable – state in Nepal has challenges of inclusion and unity of the different people(s) in the country, as internal and external identification plays a role in power relations between groups (Jenkins 1997).

During my stay in Nepal, I was affiliated with the organisation ASK Nepal, a small NGO based in Nepal working, amongst other things, with democratic inclusion and participation in local development. The Doing Democracy Project implemented in Kavre and Syangja districts (DDP, see Appendix 4) was what had initially caught my attention, but I also spent a lot of time talking to farmers' groups in Nagarkot, participating in an Organic Farming Project in Kavre (OFP, see Appendix 6). The projects are financed in cooperation with the Danish organisation Trianglen. The DDP's core element, it seems to me, is the Settlement Level Planning (SLP), where the citizens discuss and agree upon development initiatives they want to do in the village. Both projects aim at creating development through inclusion and participation of all citizens in SLP (see Appendix 5), saving groups, microloans and new farming methods. The projects also focus on issues such as gender equality and empowerment, as part of an overall plan for inclusion (Gellner and Hachhethu 2008: 21; Dilli et al. 2015).

2.3. Methods

The field and its specifics provide possibilities and challenges to doing research and to which degree specific methods can function in practice. The next two subchapters elaborate on this, mostly regarding how standard use of methods was replaced by a best-fit-in-the-moment version of them. This happened both due to language difficulties and to being in a foreign culture, which have influenced the fieldwork.

2.3.1. Planning and Focus Groups

Even though the term *focus group interview* is sometimes understood differently, it is the method that comes closest to describing my primary data-collection; mostly because the advantages and challenges I had were similar to what can be found in focus group interviews (Schensul 1999: 52), including generating more data and gaining insights into idiomatic expressions and communication patterns (ibid.). The latter, I think, is true even in foreign languages, as the interviewees repeated many words that I had heard elsewhere, and had different connotation than the direct English translation. For example, 'mati' (*up*) did not just indicate a place in the room, but also that people got a new place in society and gained more power, and 'suchana' (*information*) which was important because information means power to act and not just new knowledge. Understanding specific words, even just a few, gave insights into the understanding of democracy and development.

Group interviews became my primary way of collecting data, as I had access to group meetings through the projects ASK facilitated, first in Kavre with OFP and later in Syangja evaluating DDP. I initially wanted to record the interviews, since recordings save and make it possible to revisit the interview and analyse what has been said in another way than notes do (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2010: 43). Yet, the circumstances made it seem irrelevant for multiple reasons: the people in the villages did not speak English, so I needed translations, and at the same time, many people were talking simultaneously. My colleagues, who also translated for me, made sure that I got as much as possible translated, and everyone gave me a lot of time to take notes during the interviews, which made it easier to get and remember fulfilling answers, even with the

limitations it brings to only have the notes. My notes were always studied by the people I interviewed and by my colleagues, when in field. This meant that I had to put down what they said, which was both constraining, as it meant that some observations could not be written down, and helping, as they made sure that nothing was misunderstood and in that way guided me through data-collection in the interviews and in participant observation-settings as well (Bernhard 1994a: 189). The group interviews had some advantages, both for the possibility of getting differentiated answers, and for the benefit of looking at group dynamics that could be difficult to get answers about, when all were present. That was also the downside to the group interviews; there were no limits for what, I could ask, but some facts go untold, when the context is a group interview. For example, one time, I experienced differences in information regarding land-ownership in the household. When the whole group was present, everyone agreed that there were no issues related to the men being the primary land-owners, but later, when only a few members were present, it was made clear that it could be a problem for some of the women that the men had the power to sell or keep land as they wanted to. There are multiple reasons for people to keep information secret or untold, including humiliation or social awareness in other forms (Freilich in Salamone 1977: 118; Goffman 1966: 20), and as such, it is a condition that the researcher must deal with but cannot circumvent. Another disadvantage came not from the method in use, but from being related to the organisation that provided money for the SLP-projects. This is not necessarily only disadvantageous, but as informants will most likely tell you, what they think you want to hear, in order for them to secure future funding, this can lead to other answers than if someone else had asked the questions (Schneider 1980[1968]:10-11). This has been a consideration that I have taken into account during and after my fieldwork.

Another advantage with the group interview as a method was that it fit the topic of social inclusion. The participation of a whole group made it clear who could participate, as well as it created the possibility for more answers to be aired. The semi-structured form of the interviews (Bernhard 1994b: 209) made the interviews more open to unexpected inputs. I would have liked to have more control over the interviews, but

that would only have been possible with Nepali skills above my reach. Instead, I tried to make the best of the situations and challenges I encountered, including adjusting to the relaxed way of planning things. My biggest challenges were "lying" informants, as the example with men being landowners showed (Salamone 1977: 117-119) and trouble with understanding words as well as culture and norms.

> *No Nepali child […] is ever reminded of time as a commodity or a unit within which they can complete only a certain amount of work. In Nepal there is no sense of wasting time […] Whenever appointments are made, they would be confirmed by asking "Nepali time or English time?"* (Bista 1991: 84-86).

This notion matches my experience with "Nepali time", which was a commonly used phrase, when I wanted to know our meeting or departure time. The whole idea of planning was often dismissed or done just prior to departure, and the interviews were re-scheduled or cancelled, when something came up. One morning, Maya texted me that the people were busy so there was no need for me to walk to the field by myself. Changes like this made a lot of the time seem like it was wasted from my point of view, but for the Nepalis, time is not wasted, just passed. Understanding that and realising that I could not influence the way things were done felt like a victory and a failure at the same time. On one hand, the fear of missing out on gathering information made me feel stressed, but on the other, accepting the everyday way of living, helped me understand much more of Nepali culture than an extra interview ever could, as it gave possibilities for looking at people with no purpose other than just being and getting to know them. This was also what started many informal conversations leading to new insights.

2.3.2. Informal Conversations, Language and Informants

> *In a very fundamental sense, the anthropologist is like a child who must be socialized. He has to be taught right from wrong according to the culture he is studying*

> *[…] And just like a child, one of the most important things he has to learn is the language* (Schneider 1980[1968]: 9).

I felt a lot like a child during my work placement. I did not know the language, I did not know the rules about anything, be it drinking hot water before the tea in the morning, going by public transportation or taking the only chair when I was the guest. This was double-sided, as it gave trouble both in the professional and the personal situations, if the two can even be said to be different. On the other hand, it taught me to ask "stupid questions", which gave new insights. Being the other is difficult, and challenging in any circumstance, but getting to know the people you are supposed to study can never really be achieved (Geertz 1974: 27). Still, I gave it a try, even when I realised I was not going to learn Nepali or dance or dress like anyone there. Doing my best eventually paid off, as any of my Nepali words or gestures were rewarded with smiles, openness and acceptance, and a want for people to talk to me even when their English was as broken as my Nepali. Of course, I relied on translations in the field settings and interviews, as most people in remote areas – except the children – did not speak any English. Whenever one did, I had to decide if the best for me was to understand and talk to that person, or to include others by relying on translations of a group conversation instead. Most of the instances, I talked with the English-speaking person for some time, but then asked the rest of the group questions again. My colleagues in ASK were my friends and interpreters as well, and I trusted their translations of the interviews. One disadvantage with the need for translation was that I never knew, in what way exactly, a question had been posed, which meant a lot for me, since eschewed and biased questions also lead to less precise answers (Leung 2001: 188).

Apart from interviews, I have relied greatly on everyday talks and observations, as not all days were field days. Walking to the field sites, visiting tourism places like Bhaktapur or Pokhara, or simply living and meeting people has been enlightening for me, as participant observation and small-talk simply give understandings that other, more formal and forced situations cannot. When I talked to people, who had nothing to do with the projects or to people, who became my friends and family in Nepal, I felt

more free to ask anything and they could answer and talk to me as a person, rather than as receivers of money or other participants in a project. When we were in the field, I never knew everyone's name, as they either did not make any presentation, or, if they did, I was often told their relation to someone else in the group instead of their name by the translator. The people I do know the names of did not ask for anonymity and could be called by their names in this thesis, as the information I use here is not compromising or hurting, but there are other reasons as to why they should be anonymised (Kvale 1994: 120; Jöhncke 2009). The question on anonymity is related to ethical research in the way that both anonymity and the opposite can influence the things people want to say, and the use of names can both create issues and potentials for the research, as can many other aspects of ethical considerations (Brinkmann 2010: 429). One reason for anonymity is that there is no advantage in putting the real names of anyone in the thesis because only I know the people. They are not related to a bigger political picture as persons but only in their role as NGO-workers. The villages mentioned go by their real names after guidance from the people in ASK, who thought it would be best this way, and because the data presented will not hurt anyone in the villages, whose names are already public on the organisation's webpage. Desire for representation might be as big as want for anonymity, but the choice of anonymising names of people but not villages are based on a mix of wishes from the organisation and ethical considerations.

3. THEORETICAL APPROACH

This chapter is made to clarify the use of different concepts and frameworks as they are understood throughout the thesis. As many concepts are either confused or contested, I will rely on previous theoretical approaches as well as on emic understandings of concepts in later chapters. 'Concepts should not preclude empirical investigation by making true 'by definition' what should be open to empirical inquiry' writes David Baldwin (1997: 7), and this incites to an open-mindedness that can be useful when it comes to concepts that have no clear definition or have multiple. I will clarify my use of the concepts *democracy*, *citizenship*, *governance*, *state* and *fragility*, and these clarifications will be put into perspective in the analytical chapters. As the foundation for the thesis is an interest in how HS can or cannot be redefined in fragile settings, I will elaborate on how I understand *HS* as an ever-changing and negotiable framework, and which possibilities and limitations a use of such a framework has.

3.1. The Human Security Framework

As HS is the field of the study, I will elaborate on how the framework is understood and used in this thesis. I work from the understanding that HS is an expansion of the original state security. Emma Rothschild describes the change in understanding security as a four-fold expansion from national, military security into an international, multi-aspectual and individual-based security (1995: 55). This matches with other descriptions of the concept (UNDP 1994; Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007: 48), even though final and universal definitions as such are still sought for within both academia and in practice (Baldwin 1997; Chandler 2008; Owen 2008).

Though there is no complete agreement on the definition of HS, my understanding of it builds on the broad definition: 'freedom from fear and freedom from need and a life in dignity', though more narrow understandings of the concept can contribute with different ways of utilising it (Chapter 7; UNDP 1994: 24; Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy 2007). In addition, I use the concept both as a means to investigate development initiatives, as well as a possible outcome and, in this relation, a 'felt experience' (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy 2007: 39). The phenomenological use of the term makes it possible for me to

take into account what the emic concept of security is. HS works as a framework, but I use it in this thesis to explore new possibilities of understanding the concept, rather than as a predetermined and stable concept. Simultaneously, I acknowledge the call for a definition, but disagree to the statement that something cannot be achieved when it does not have a universal definition (Booth in Baldwin: 12), for the sole reason that I find it more beneficial to understand security in the given context than as a fixed achievement. What is, instead, important is that security is always for someone, provided by someone, and that there has been a movement from state and military being responsible for the security towards other actors playing an important role in providing HS, leading to a more individual and international understanding of the concept (Rothschild 1995; UNDP 1994; General Assembly 2012). This is interesting when put into the context of a country, where the local is the most important, as I will show later.

The upward-/downward extension of security from national to individual and international security means that a new group hold importance in relation to earlier, where the country's borders were the top priority. In principle, this means that the international community (real or imagined) holds the responsibility for individuals everywhere. Thereby,

> *the political responsibility for ensuring security [...] is itself extended: it is diffused in all directions from national states, including upwards to international institutions, downwards to regional or local government, and sideways to nongovernmental organizations* (Rothschild 1995: 55).

The division of responsibility for the individuals' security has been a topic of debate, as this is crucial in relation to eurocentrism and is of high importance when speaking about implementation of development projects made by (I)NGOs and the like. HS is normally excluded from a country's internal affairs policies (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007). In Nepal, the opposite is the case, as 'to guarantee the overall human security system' (Constitution 2015: 31) is a paragraph in the constitution, which is different and interesting, mostly because the constitution has been of great importance to the

continued support from foreign donors (UNDP Nepal 2016: 9). Including HS as a part of the constitution should be, normatively speaking, a good thing, considering the want from the United Nations Development Programme to ensure security for all, even though it is sometimes argued that HS (alongside human rights) is a eurocentric concept (General Assembly 2012; Chandler 2008: 429; Owen 2008: 446).

Putting HS into the country's internal affairs agenda can be counterproductive, as the responsibility of security is then put back on the state. This can be an issue, as 'some states are so weak, failing, failed, collapsed or inexistent, that they are incapable of providing this broadened concept of security' (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007: 18). This makes the situation in Nepal regarding security as well as development interesting within the field of HS, exactly due to the re-movement of the responsibility of the individuals' rights and security back to being a national matter to be achieved by the help of non-state-institutions and -organisations.

3.2. Democracy

Democracy seems to be a contested, or, at the very least, a confused and normatively understood concept, much like HS (Achen & Bartels 2016; Baldwin 1997: 12). Democracy as such is nothing, unless the people think that they have it, as per its original definition as 'government by the people' and it is thereby a social construct in the sense that it can only exist through interaction and negotiation of the concept (Oliver & Heater 1994: 11; Dewey 1946). Apart from that, the concept, theoretical as well as practical, needs some kind of definition to make it seem relevant to the case. As of now, the concept is somewhat vaguely and one-sidedly understood by the average person: 'For most [Americans], democracy means rule by the people, democracy is unambiguously good, and the only possible cure for the ills of democracy is more democracy' (Achen & Bartels 2016: 55). In addition to this, democracy is still discussed and brought forth as a good way of running countries, at the same time as it is questioned whether democracies really are democratic (ibid.; Ross 2006: 872).

The liberal democracy, which has been a field of study and implementation for most of the modern era, encompasses the paradoxical relationship between the economic,

social and political sphere. The paradox consists in that different spheres of society influence on each other; i.e., when one has economical capital, the capital can be used in political or socio-cultural settings too (Dewey 1946: 107-108; Bourdieu 1986), and in liberal democracy, capitalism, with economic capital as a major force, becomes both the facilitating and the constraining power (Blakeley 2014: 29). Following Marxism, the co-existence of a liberal economic sphere and a democratic political arena is not beneficial for actual or experienced equality;

> *the democratic vote was of real value to the working class, but [...] "the freedom and equality won in the political sphere were limited by the fact that they left untouched the lack of freedom and equality in the economic and social spheres"* (ibid.: 31).

The relation between (in)equality and democracy is taken up by other authors, who argue that democratic participation and equality are mutually dependent, but that they can both only occur when one is already in place (Macpherson in McLaverty 2014: 47-48) I will revisit this self-contradicting statement in Chapter 7. Equality and democracy, according to McLaverty, are not likely to be achieved, as the rich in economy are also still the rich in the political sphere (ibid.: 48). On the other hand, deliberative democracy holds some qualities which can be favourable to achieve greater equality through collaboration and discussions, and in that way, it might have the conflict-resolving powers that it is sometimes ascribed (see e.g. Large and Sisk 2006: 3). To other authors and thinkers through time, inequality is a way for a country to start developing, as economic and social equality only leads to laziness and increased poverty, especially following neoliberalist opinions (Heater 1999: 25-27), though it is not the understanding used in this thesis.

John Dewey explains democracy as follows in his book *On Political Equality:*

> *Wherever there is conjoint activity whose consequences are appreciated as good by all singular persons who take part in it, and where the realization of the good is such as to effect an energetic desire and effort to sustain it in being just because it*

> *is a good shared by all, there is in so far a community. The clear consciousness of a communal life, in all its implications, constitutes the idea of democracy* (Dewey 1946: 149).

Following this, democracy is the consciousness of being a part of a community and being able to take part herein. In addition hereto, the concept of inclusion is important to the definition of democracy as well as to the concept of community. Albert Wealy writes that 'if we take the criterion of inclusion into account, a democracy is not simply a political system in which public choice depends upon public opinion, but also a system in which the public is defined on an inclusive basis' (Weale 1999: 148). I will return to the understanding of system-thought in my analytical chapters.

Democracy relates to HS because the different spheres of life interfere with each other, and because equality and freedom are key terms in the achievement of both. Based on the above, I believe that, even with the relatedness between capitals, social equality can in principle exist without complete economic equality, and this may also be the case with securities, where political and communal security can exist even though other aspects of security is limited. The connection between political security and democracy is clear, as political security is about making sure that people have basic human rights and are not repressed by the state. Democracy is thereby an indicator of both free choice and will, as well as of being able to live in dignity, which is also a constitutional right in Nepal (UNDP 1994: 32-33; General Assembly 2012; Constitution 2015: 13). With the understanding of democracy as being a social phenomenon, it is not a given that it cannot be a political concept as well. But it should be taken into consideration how it is implemented as political tool or form of government, and therefore I will now address the alleged advantages of deliberate democracy and the critiques of equality-creating characteristics.

Deliberative democracy is, in theory, open to participatory discussions with equal importance given to every statement and argument. This equal participation is 'aimed at rational consensus where the "unforced force of the better argument" is decisive' (Elstub & McLaverty 2014: 5). The concept seems to overlap with *strong* or *participatory*

democracy, and the ideas from scholars such as Benjamin Barber lives on in the deliberative democracy revival (Barber 1984). Participatory democracy creates free citizens in a community, rather than slaves bound by the state (ibid.: 216-217). Even though participatory democracy is the way of practicing democracy in the parts of Nepal, I have visited, democracy needs to create equal possibilities and general development in order to be talked about as democracy by my informants. The rationality of people in a democracy is often what is mostly discussed when democratic governance is the topic of research (Barber 1984; Stehr 2016; Dahl 2006). Many authors, amongst others Chris Achen and Larry Bartels (2016) and John Tomer (2016: 41), point out that the rational citizen does not exist, and therefore complete self-governance is only a theoretical possibility.

In this thesis, democracy as an emic and theoretical concept refers to power of the people, including a movement towards political equality through common interest in everyone's development and well-being. I will elaborate on this connection to development in the following chapter.

3.3. Development

The relevance of this thesis is grounded in the development-security nexus. It will later be made clear, how democracy and development relate in practice in Nepal, but for now, the importance lies within showing how development and security are related in theory. The emic understanding of democracy in Nepal cannot be said to align completely with the theoretical and philosophical debate on the subject, as will be clear from the following chapters in relation to the introduction of the term in the above. Instead, democracy seems to be more about social equality and inclusion than anything else when talking about it in a Nepali context. As such, I argue that democracy in Nepal is very similar to creation of political and community security, or the communal understanding of democracy, pointed out by Dewey (1946). This is also supported by some theories and understandings of democracy's functions as conflict-resolution and community-creation as well as a means to create equality (Skaaning 2017; Large & Sisk 2006: 9; Barber 1984; Dahl 2006). Therefore, the focal point of the connection between

development and democracy, builds on the emic, less political understanding of democracy as equal opportunities within a group. Following this, the question of connection between HS and development seems to be more important than that between democracy and development.

3.3.1. The Security-Development Nexus

The connectedness of security and development is sometimes taken up to discussion, but is also often assumed to just be existing, without much elaboration on how the two became connected as a nexus. As example, Des Gasper writes - related to the broad and narrow understandings of HS - that 'it makes little difference in the end whether the concept adopted of human security is broad or narrow: for human security will not be achieved without development, nor vice versa' (Gasper 2005: 228). That Gasper takes the step from security to HS, makes the discussion of the mutual dependency between the two relevant in a HS setting. It also shows that he thinks that a solid definition of HS is not necessary in this regard, as all securities are related to development and vice versa. The statement of the two being related in a mutually dependent manner is supported by others (Porter et al. 2013; Buur et al. 2007).

I understand HS as the experience of freedom and a life in dignity, which is related to some degree of influence on one's own life and development. In Nepal, as well as in the theories on the subject, development helps ensure a dignified life. Dignity is then understood as equality to the same social, human and civil rights as others have, as is mentioned as an issue by the UNDP (1994). Here, the problem is that inequality is often connected with insecurities. Structural violence or -inequality poses a problem for security, as it is often minority groups, who suffers the most from insecurity(ies) (ibid.: 26). The same UNDP report states how security and development connects through the achievement of freedom.

> *The concept of human security stresses that people should be able to take care of themselves: all people should have the opportunity to meet their most essential needs and to earn their own living. This will set them free and help ensure that they can*

> *make a full contribution to development - their own development and that of their communities, their countries and the world. Human security is a critical ingredient of participatory development* (ibid.: 24).

To earn one's own living points to an understanding of the citizens as wanting to contribute themselves, and not as a passive recipient of emergency relief. This will also be elaborated on in the following chapter, as well as active citizenship will be seen as a necessity in democracy and development in general through the thesis.

Since the above-mentioned UNDP-report was released in 1994, more focus has been put on development and security as dependent factors. The need for security, especially in the post-9/11-world, has made states and political institutions reconsider how and why development is necessary, and the discussion has, at some instances, taken a eurocentric turn, meaning that the development of some countries has been for the sake of the security of others (Buur et al. 2007: 14). Even though the discussion is important, it seems irrelevant to fully elaborate on it at this point. Instead, I want to underline how security and development within *one* country or community seem to relate, though keeping in mind that the concept of HS involves international connection and dependence.

If we can assume that inequality is a hindrance to security, and thereby to development, equality must be enhancing the possibility of the two to exist or be achieved. On the topic of gender inequality (here interpreted as being true for other inequalities as well), it is said that

> *women gaining an equal position to men also has instrumental importance for attaining other development goals [...] as countries become more economically developed, industrialized, democratic, and their populations more educated, the resources available to women increase and give them a better bargaining position* (Dilli et al. 2015: 302).

On that quote, the connection between security and development is suddenly brought into the context of democracy and political power as well and shows how the boundary between security and democracy is blurry, in theory as well as in practice. This is partly due to the broadness of the HS concept, as interconnectedness is a main part of the concept, but it also shows how, in general, vicious and virtuous circles concerning (lack of) development within one sphere influences other life- and security aspects. To stay on the subject on equality as security, it is often looked upon in the light of gender equality. Titles such as *Gender Equality − A Condition for Achieving Human Security* (Radu 2015) and *Achieving Gender Equality: Development versus Historical Legacies* (Dilli et al. 2015) show how gender equality takes up its part of the discussion. The focus on gender equality is typical within the development sector and is often a goal with development projects. At least that is the case in the development sector in Nepal, according to my colleagues. The focus on gender equality as part of development shows how (at least one form of) equality is prioritised as a means to achieving development. It may not be proven that equality is directly related to development, but what is known, is that equality is very much related to aspects of HS and human capital, which are parts of many development projects. A TED-talk by Richard Wilkinson (2011: 9.15) shows graphs of the interrelatedness of inequality and lack of services and security within the health, social and human capital areas. Even though there are two words for the concepts of equality and security, respectively, the consequences of the two both relate to the ability for the people to choose and navigate within the development of their own lives and within the security, as is stated in the UNDP report (1994). I will show how democracy is experienced as a system that makes exactly this control and influence on one's own life possible in the Syangja and Kavre districts of Nepal, and how HS can then be said to be achieved through the understanding of development and democracy as two sides of the same coin.

3.4. Citizens, Governance and State

Citizenship, governance, state and – at least to a certain extend – the public as understood by Dewey (1946) are undoubtedly connected in the sense that they can only exist

by virtue of each other. They are also all key concepts in connection with the form of democracy, I will address in this thesis, and therefore I will now present them.

Citizens. Citizens are first and foremost understood as participants in decision-making and as people who have duties in relation to the government and state to which they belong. Derek Heater calls this the republican citizen, as opposed to the liberal citizen, who has fewer or no obligations but only rights to achieve from the state (1999: 4-6, 55). As such, the citizen is committed to the state. To Aristotle, 'the good citizens were those wholly and efficiently committed through thought and action to common weal' (in ibid.: 45). This notion of the good citizen as one who contributes to the common welfare and is also participating actively in decision-making processes is, perhaps, utopian. Achen and Bartels (2016: 320) take the critique of the participating citizen as far as to saying that 'no "ordinary citizens" are actually involved in the policy-making process'. This, I do not think is true, and the opposite will be shown in the thesis, but it depends on the way the state is thought of as well as the form and degree of democracy practiced in the given society. I will get back to the tasks and duties of the state later, which will clarify this point. The citizens' task is to take part in the governance and thereby they get the power to decide over their own lives, also giving the conditions for a functioning democracy (Stehr 2016: 12). The participation of the citizens in governance depend on the equality between the people, as argued by many others (Dahl 2006; Barber 1984; McLaverty 2014: 47), but is equality even achievable? Many critics hold the standpoint that the people cannot be equal citizens, if they are not equal in all capitals or spheres (Bourdieu 1994; McLaverty 2014).

In opposition to this, I follow the point of Heater, noting that if social and civil rights are implemented equally and distributed to all citizens, then the participation in democracy can be fair and non-discriminatory, even when the people are not on the same level of income or education (1999: 13). The critiques on this point mostly relate to the importance of the role economic capital plays in politics and being able to speak one's mind (Stehr 2016: 143; Dahl 2006: 55; Blakeley 2014: 29). Another critique revolves around the influence that knowledge or level of education can have on one's participation. Though knowledge is not necessarily the only way to democracy, it can counter

other factors related to equality and equal participation in the society (Sharma et al. 2012: 163; Stehr 2016: 55). But is the equality between people in all spheres the determining factor for a functioning democracy? And how is it possible to ensure equality enough of the citizens to make it function? The critics of complete democracy and freedom says that equality is not possible, and thereby democracy is not possible either (Achen & Bartels 2016; McLaverty 2014), while other gets around the issue by stating that citizens are automatically equals by being citizens (Heater 1999: 8; Habermas 1995: 114). Citizenship, for the latter, is based on being a human being and thereby a social agent, rather than on being educated by any other instance than the society itself, and as Emile Durkheim says, 'the individual, in willing society, wills himself' (Durkheim 1956[1922]: 78). Citizens, then, is related to society through its need of it, and is important to democracy if the society is a community and not merely a gathering, or in other words, 'the Great Society […] may be a *society,* but it is not a *community*' (Dewey 1946: 98, own italics).

Thomas Hobbes presents an argument much like Durkheim, stating that people will only ever live as citizens when they surrender their power to the common-wealth through unity of their power (Hobbes 1997[1651]: 95). With all these arguments, I want to emphasise the idea of people being able to be a community and not just a society due to proximity in space – and the possibility of harvesting the advantages of participating in the common citizenship. In other words, the community is not merely a collection of individuals, but an experienced community in connection with each other and with the state, too (Heater 1999: 55). This connection between individuals matters in relation to democracy and equality, and therefore the community must be defined before the state as a concept is defined.

Community and society. While many critics of participatory democracy pays attention to the utopian ideal of active and informed citizens (Achen & Bartels 2016: 41, 222), some advocates for participatory and deliberative democracies emphasise that e.g. deliberation and civil and social rights are leading to a possible equal participation regarding polities and decisions (see Heater 1999; Barber 1984). Dewey, being sceptical about democracy as way of governance, due to greater distances between the members

of the supposed community, believes that democracy is only possible, when the public is itself aware that it has agency, in line with the above-mentioned differentiation between society and community (Dewey 1946: 98). This relates to identifying with a group and imagine a togetherness with the people in that community, and this identification influences on the way people make decisions (Anderson 1983; Nunn 2012). Achen and Bartels describes how the individual is persuaded by different means when voting and taking political decisions (2016: 4, 222) and economist Nathan Nunn follows up 'culture [is] decision making heuristics or 'rules of thumb' that have evolved given our need to make decisions in complex and uncertain environments' (2012: 109). He argues that emotions, based on developing and changing culture, are actually a more rational way of choosing than gathering all information on a topic, and that different people with different cultures will, based on this, make different decisions in the same situation (ibid.: 111). Thus, where other authors argue for the rational citizen needed in democracies, an important thing to take into mind is the group identification aspect of decision-making. Being part of a community therefore means that the decisions are different than they would be elsewhere, which is why the citizen is not only an individual, but also part of the group when it comes to which decisions are available or suggested. That said, the citizens' role is only relevant, if it is connected to a state, though a state can be other things than a nation-state or country in this connection. If power is an important factor in democracy, which I assume it is (Barber 1984; Elstub & McLaverty 2014), then democracy is relationally determined as well as power is (Stehr 2016). The relation between state and citizens as community is dependent on the definition of the state.

State. The ideal state is the state that exists on the basis of a public, gathered on the basis of a connection to each other, and who demand some rules for the society to exist. This is also why the distinction between the state and the public is blurred (Dewey 1946: 37-39; Mitchell 1991). Thus, as I define the state, it and the citizens are dependent on each other to exist. The state and its function today are dependent on the way society has developed over time, and democracy has been unable to follow the progress towards modernity. Therefore, the state, the citizens and democracy, cannot function

as if they are the same as they used to be (Dewey 1946: 113-114). Instead, the state gets legitimisation from power and physical force, and simultaneously has the responsibility of distribution of services and resources to the citizens. The state is also often known as the nation-state. I see a division between the concept of state and that of a nation. For the nation to exist, the people need to consent on being one people and in some way find a mutuality and homogeneity, whereas the state holds legitimate monopoly of power that is not necessarily part of a nation (Dahal 2014; Bourdieu 1994: 3-4). Thus, the nation is a social construct based on culture and the state is a political entity, though also existing on the basis of the people in it but bound up on institutions and the capital and thereby resources and power. It should here be kept in mind that the state and government are not necessarily national but can be larger parts or smaller units within the country, for example if it is a federation, and this can change some power relations, as will be shown in later chapters of the thesis. Power, I understand here and throughout the thesis as control over resources or capital (Williams 2014: 1367; Bourdieu 1994: 4; Bourdieu 1986), capital then being equal to 'anything physical or human that provides capacity for a society' (Tomer et al. 2016: 3-4). Nico Stehr elaborates on this, saying that power is a

> *generalized medium of mobilizing resources for effective collective action, and for the fulfilment of commitments made by collectives to their constituents; it to [not unlike money] must be both symbolically generalized and legitimized'* (2016: 72, square brackets in original quote).

The state has the function of distributing resources amongst the citizens, which can be an issue when it does not live up to the citizens' expectations regarding service provision or political action. When the state, like the Nepalese, also aims at creating a unification of the country into one nation (Adhikari & Gellner 2016; Constitution 2015) issues regarding who gets a say in political discussions and decisions can arise. Pierre Bourdieu addresses this issue of universality of the particularities, saying that

> *by rising to universality, a particular culture or language causes all other to fall into particularity. […As universality] does not come with a universalization of access to the means needed to fulfil them, this fosters both the monopolization of the universal by the few and the dispossessions of all other, who are, in a way, thereby mutilated in their humanity* (1994: 8).

As such, the state is expected to be the resourceful power holder, but also has political goals such as uniting the country in a nation-state and sustain the support for its further existence. The function of a state should be to ensure that the citizens are seen as equal, and this entails equal distribution of resources. This alleged equality and equal treatment of the citizens leads to 'a general enrichment of the concrete substance of civilised life, a general reduction of risk and insecurity' (Heater 1999: 15), and this is the reason why the state's contribution to security for the citizens are important in relation to both democracy and HS. Therefore, I will now address which consequences it can have, when the state fails to deliver security through resource-distribution to the citizens.

Fragility. Fragile and failed states are a diverse category of states, which does not live up to being service-providing for the people, yet they do not necessarily have anything in common, neither reason for or consequences of the fragility (Porter et al. 2013: 312). Though, there are some similarities between fragile states, and the OECD defines fragile states as 'those where the state power is unable and/or unwilling to deliver core functions to the majority of the people' (Stepputat & Engberg-Pedersen 2008: 22). This, in turn can lead to an increased fragmentation of the country, as the people in it has no belief in the nation-state but instead identifies with smaller groups, from which they can get the services or securities that the state cannot provide (Lund 2006). In some cases, the fragility of the state leads to mistrust in the government, which can have multiple outcomes; for instance, violent conflict over resources can arise (Le Billon 2008), other instances than the state can take over to provide services, or the people can find other ways of identifying themselves as part of a group than through the nation-state (Dahal 2014; Hangen 2010; Evans-Pritchard 1962). In all cases,

the identification of the people is related to the stability of the state or government and to their own feeling of being empowered to make their own decisions in life. If there is a strong and stable government, the citizens will be national citizens, dependent, at least partly, on a common history or tradition and taking part in their own governance as a united Nepali people (Heater 1999: 2; Friedman 1992: 837). This is also relevant in relation to group influence in decision-making as mentioned in the section on community and society (Achen & Bartels 2016: 4; Nunn 2012: 111).

With this chapter, I have shown how multiple concepts such as community, security and democracy all relates in a web of power relations and state stability. The sections cover a wide range of concepts, which will be referred to in the three following analytical chapters and will also be taken up in the discussion in Chapter 7. The understanding of citizens as active, and as part of a community, which is dependent on and at the same time influences the state and its actions is important to keep in mind throughout the thesis, firstly in relation to how democracy and politics play out in villages in Nepal.

4. DEMOCRACY AND POLITICS

> *The manifestation of ethnic identity through clothes, cultural performances, and architectural structures has become a key tool in the construction of group identities, which have been eventually converted into bases of political mobilisation* (Chettri 2017: 13-14).

Ethnicity has been and is continuously a main issue in Nepali politics, which is why this chapter will address the issues regarding the connection between ethnicity and group identification as they play into the field of doing democracy.

Like Mona Chettri, many others point out, how ethnicity is the main issue in Nepal, and how ethnicity plays into both nation(al) development and identity rights (Shneiderman and Tillin 2015; Adhikari & Gellner 2016). Ethnicity has been and is still important in Nepal and may be much more important than issues of social class. This, of course, has many reasons, but one is that the discourses available, when it comes to democracy as social inclusion and development (Chettri 2017: 28), limits the possibility of voicing one's opinion, if it does not fit in with belonging to a backward or indigenous group of people. The power play on ethnicity is not new (Bista 1991) and has happened before both the civil war and the new constitution, but it might have increased due to the now available discourse, where ethnic groups function as groups of agents who needs to be taken serious in political discussions (Adhikari & Gellner 2016). As both Chettri (2017) and Georgina Blakeley (2014) underlines, discourses in politics is an ever-transforming space, where the state and public interferes with each other in order to achieve what is wanted. As such, the public can use the frame provided by the state on social inclusion.

> *ethnic activism [... is not] guided by the desire to bring about change in the various structures that promote social, political, and economic discrepancies between ethnic groups, but, rather, to be guided by the desire to enable ethnic groups to have better access to the state and public goods* (Chettri 2017: 29).

This statement underlines the importance of ethnic politics; they may be ethnically bound, but they are so because that is the possible discourse to talk into, when seeking political influence. From my own experience, democracy in Nepal is not about strengthening one's own ethnicity. It is about strengthening and empowering one's own community, as will be shown in the following, but that is not the same as assuming that it is done for ethnically based reasons. Instead, participatory processes in decision-making is limited and made possible by the decentralisation of power that has followed the federalisation of the country.

In Nepal, the use of deliberative or participatory democracy has meant that democracy is something that happens and stays local because the federalisation and (infra-)structure in the country makes it the only way for it to play out (Chettri 2017: 16). It creates a community security as well as promotes fragmentism of the state, because it tries to fight the inequity within the state through ethnic group formations. The paradox that the process of democratisation creates, happens because security provision by the state - not to be confused with traditional military, national security or 'old security' (Rothschild 1995: 55) - is close to non-existing, and means that it stays that way, as democracy and access is something that exists locally. This is what I experienced, when I discussed democracy and access to development and fulfilment of basic needs with my informants. I had the experience Chettri describes, when she talks about how the democracy becomes ethnicified and group-based, and how that influenced the distance between people (Chettri 2017: 18; see also Dewey 1946: 42-43). As is then clear, there is a paradox within the democratisation of Nepal as a type of within-the-country-*glocalisation* (Eriksen 2007) and the state's agenda about social inclusion to connect and unify the country. In the next chapter, I will show what democracy means in the villages, and how that connects to creating security by using community as a resource.

4.1. Local Democracy

My first time discussing democracy with people in the villages in Kavre, was not at a meeting about democracy. We discussed development, as the Village Development

Comittee (VDC) agreed to have a meeting with me about their tasks in the village, especially in relation to the yearly SLP. I did not know at this point, we were discussing democracy, as I expected it to be about development projects implemented in the village, but it showed later that democracy was exactly, what it was. The meeting was one of my first interviews in Nagarkot, and after having spent the night in Gairigaun with Maya's family, I woke up with smoke and animal sounds entering the house.

> *Maya's sister took me to the [family's] shop, where Maya made me tea. I was served chick pea-curry and a boiled egg by Maya's sister, as I watched other people entering the shop, having tea and selling or buying fresh vegetables and some brought milk from the other side of the street for the tea. I sit in the shop, waiting for Maya to return, as Nepali time works its magic, just passing without anything happening on time. [...] We walk to Makaibari, but it is a different place than normally when we are in Makaibari, as the villagers are offering chickens for the Gods of a 'mix religion', according to Maya. After the long walk we sit down to talk about the SLP. As we sit on flip-flops as our chairs on the ground, we discuss how the VDC is the steering committee for the SLP. The people, still focused on the head-less chicken, sit down with us, and children join to sit with their mothers. They have used the money from the SLP to send seven poor girls to school, creating microloans, and building a community building. 'Is it fair that someone just gets all the money? I mean, how is it good that the girls get the money or that someone gets the microloan when others don't?' I ask them. 'It is fair, because we trust each other, and then maybe next time someone else gets the money. It is good, because everyone develops, not just some people, it is the village and the people in the village who all develops', they tell me* (Field notes 19.08.2017).

The quote shows how the idea of the citizen as contributor to the common good, as mentioned by Aristotle, plays out in practice in Nepal (in Heater 1999: 45). Fast forward to a group interview a village in Syangja some months later, this idea about fair-

ness and inclusiveness makes sense to me, all of a sudden. When we talk about democracy in Bangsing, a small farmer village on top of the hill, we discuss election of representatives to the local government. A woman tells me about how, when people are elected, they get a higher position – *mati* is the word she chooses – and I ask her, how, then, the rest of the people benefit from having elections, if only the ones who get elected get up.

> *When we have elections for local governments, we have to elect the good people, because they can bring us up as they are up. We have democracy, because we have women and Dalit seats in the governments, so the low people get up, and that is democracy. We have to choose good leaders, so good governance is created as well'. As the people take turns to explain how the "low people" should get up, I ask about the task for the rich people, as they are part of the "up". 'The rich people need to stay within the boundaries of the community and help create equality in the village* (Interview, 06.11.17).

Dewey discusses this election of good people to create good governance (1946: 32, 146). Where Dewey sees the representation as situating someone up high in a symbolic or structural sense, the Nepalese seems to see the situating as something both metaphorical and literal. I will get back to the situated power and how places and directions are often mentioned in regard to democracy in Nepal in Chapter 6, but for now, I will elaborate on how democracy is experienced and which consequences its implementation has for the citizens.

Democracy is, at least according to a citizen in a village in Syangja, 'the system in which all have the right to the same opportunities without bias', but it is a system, with the main function being to include all and bring all "up" on someone else's level, rather than creating a majority vote on whose turn it is to get money or how development should happen. Based on my interviews, democracy is locally embedded politics leading to greater participation amongst people, who never before took part in doing democracy as well as it is mutual trust. Greater participation in deliberative and local

democracies are also observed by others examining how groups take part in local processes of decision-making (Chettri 2017: 17; Hangen 2010: 5-6). In the same breath, ethnic motivated democracy, as it is mentioned by Chettri (2017) and David Gellner & Krishna Hachhethu (2008) does not seem to stem from a want to promote one's own ethnicity in relation to others. Rather, it stems from the fact that most communities consist of one (or only a few) ethnicity(ies), and it is one's own group that seems important, not only due to a shared ethnicity. I believe that this has to do with the way people depend and rely on each other in Nepal. By the term *afno manchhe* (one's own people), Dor Bahadur Bista shows how dependency is created within the group in which a person lives and belongs (1991: 97). The belonging plays out in the political arena, too, and local becomes the things and people, you can trust. The local democracy should encourage local agency and should include all people in the village. One week, during an interview in the Syangja district, an old man told me how the idea of democracy was not new in Nepal but had existed for about 25 years[1]. To him, democracy means no discrimination. The group he was in, consisting mostly of men from the village, told me how democracy is both a local and a national thing, but they reconsidered the answer, and then they told me 'we do not think about the national. Because that is too big thoughts. We do not think such big thoughts or think about the bigger picture'. Another interview showed same tendencies, when talking about national and local democracy; they found it important to vote, as the national elections was coming up, and it is a citizen right to do so. On the other hand, the local democracy and local elections are found more important by the people in the villages, because they can vote for people, they know and whom they trust to make good governance and make a difference in their own lives. Susan Hangen writes that 'democracies must uphold a set of political ideals and values that enables citizens to participate in the process of governance' (2010: 13). The local democracy gave exactly the possibility for the citizens to exercise their power in *governance* (Gellner & Hachhethu 2008: 15) through communicating with their local leaders and through their own empowerment in relation to the local government. Power is always relational (Stehr 2016: 65), and it is in this

relation the people get the possibility of addressing the political leaders and governmental institutions. My informants told me how democracy is 'when the people and the politicians work together to implement projects and make decisions', and this was possible only when they could be a part of the local system of communication. This fits with the idea about the state and the citizens working together in order to create governance (Gellner & Hachhethu 2008: 15).

The idea about democracy being the system in which all becomes equal before the law and also within the village community, relates to trusting each other as people and as cooperative decision-makers. Therefore, I will now analyse how trust in the local community plays into both democracy and general interactions between people.

4.1.1. Local Trust

In the beginning of my work placement, I spent a lot of time with Sharmila and Krishna, who were responsible for the OFP in Kavre, and took me to the villages when they had their monthly meetings. The people, who participate in the workshops and groups for OFP, also take part in the SLPs, as the villages were part of the DDP as well. After a group meeting in Halede, a man tells me, how the projects have had an impact on the group dynamics: 'When we have the SLP and the savings group, and we have money to spend in the group, we have learned to think more about "us" instead of "I"'.

In the OFP, saving money in the group and being able to get credit from the group is one part of community-creation. Money brought the people together but knowing that they can accomplish more as a group than as individuals, including earning and saving more money, made them realise other aspects of having a safe and trustful community. It helped them in other ways to empower and develop themselves, and to approach the state institutions in a way that proved helpful to accessing services and support for development or farming. Common money equals common interest, and as it is important to have good relationships, it became important that the common money was used in everyone's best interest; to benefit the community. I will show in Subchapter 4.3.1 how money is utilised as a resource towards community. Michael

Ross, in his article on the failures of democracy in relation to ensuring improved figures on child mortality, includes some insights into this, as he writes that democracy 'unquestionably produces noneconomic benefits for people in poverty, endowing them with political rights and liberties' (2006: 872). Other authors voice the same opinion, though still believing that democracy has more positive outcomes than other forms of government, e.g. that democracy creates increased life quality and liberty, as well as it 'tends to enhance good relations among the citizens, building a community' (Dahal 2008: 128; Gellner & Hachhethu 2008: 16).

ASK works with multiple tools in relation to the DDP and especially in accordance with the SLP. One of the stages of the democracy-teaching is to make the people in the villages identify the challenges of development and then map out which resources and capitals they have, and which they need to enhance. 'The most important one [of the capitals, see Appendix 7] is the one with the heart', a villager explains to me, as we discuss the process of doing democracy in relation to SLP. The capital with the heart is the social human capital, meaning the one that has to do with creating relationships and benefit from having the relations – in other words, using social relations to achieve things that cannot be achieved as individuals. The relationships between the people in the villages, and between family members matter, not only because they need to socialise, but because they realise how a community holds resources that can be of use to themselves and others and can help them gain in other regards as well. On top of that, the Nepali people focus a lot on being related and being dependent on each other, as also briefly mentioned in Chapter 2. Bista, in his book about *Fatalism and Development*, blames this dependency for creating a natural blocking of development in Nepal (1991: 136 et seq.). His argument has support and warrant in the time writing and maybe also generally, but at the same time, the new constitution gives the people a better chance of being heard, if they unite within their community in order to achieve development and funding for projects. The unification plays out as local belonging, mostly because the people live in small villages far from other villages, and they already have a community and identity bound in their place of origin and the caste[2] they are born into. When Chettri (2017) mentions the ethnicisation of politics, she talks about it as if only

ethnic classifications matter. In my experience, ethnicisation of politics stems from fitting into an available discourse in inclusion in politics, rather than being an actual need for ethnic politics as such. It has more to do with ethnicity and caste being a way of belonging. The mutually enhancing effect of structure and belonging re-creating existing structures plays out as creating strong relations within the groups, and these can be counteractive to development and democracy (Bista 1991). On the other hand, when my informants identified the social capital as the most important one when discussing resources for development, it shows how the strong personal relations can also be used actively in the creation of development, if seen and used as a resource and not merely a form of identification. In the following, I will show how belonging is related to doing democracy. I will come back to community security as a means towards achieving development in Subchapter 4.3.

4.2. Belonging and Politics

'Namaste, Uncle', 'Mia didi', 'he is my brother'[3]. The multiple ways of addressing people usually include a title or indication of the relationship between the ones who talk. When people talk to each other, they have a mutual, articulated understanding of their relationship. In Nepal, this is supported by the use of family titles for everyone who is close to you. Calling all close friends by a family title (uncle, sister (*didi/bahini*), brother (*dai/bhai*)[4]) emphasises how relations are something you choose, but also something that matters. It can be compared to what Gerd Baumann observed in Southall regarding familial relationships; 'cousins are friends who are kin and kin who are friends' (Baumann 1995: 734). He shows how kinship – or cousinship – has expanded to include more people than blood related ones, simply because it makes sense to have a strong bond with people from one's own ethnic group, or, in the Nepali case, with the people in the local community. Identity formation in Nepal has been a great concern, both in relation to politics and development (Chettri 2017; Bista 1991; Pettigrew 2013; Adhikari & Gellner 2016), and in relation to how democracy can be done.

The titles and relations play a role in doing democracy, and in choosing who belongs to you, and which group is one's own. Some titles are worth more than other, when it

comes to trusting people, either as kin or as professionals, and these matters, as belonging means dependency, trust and equal possibility to speak one's mind (Barber 1984: 66). One day, on a field trip during training with the farmers, one of the women called me, but not by my name. 'Sister,' she said, 'Sister, we will take selfie!' Even though many people call each other only by family terms, I experienced it as being different from 'miss', as most of the people would call me in the town, where I lived, or in office-circumstances. Being around my colleagues and the people in the villages, I was sometimes 'sister', other times 'researcher' and rarely 'miss', even when the same person presented or addressed me, creating my role more explicitly than I have experienced before, as every title has its expectations and obligations tied to it. In that way, belonging and titles matter, but being someone's relative always seems as a positive thing, and it means that you belong to a cultural unit (Schneider 1980[1968]: 2), on which you can depend in all regards (Bista 1991: 97).

In Baumann's case, being cousins is not equal to belonging to the same culture or ethnicity, but still bears resemblance with the family terms in Nepali culture, as it is something you choose and pick at the same time as it is ascribed genealogically (Baumann 1995: 734). In small villages, all are family, a partly truth for bigger places, where the blood relations are the basis for belonging and creating bigger "families". Family is not the same as community, but sometimes the relations are family-like, and that becomes relevant in political situations as well, since putting someone in a cultural unit is determining for the possibilities of agency. 'The person, as a cultural unit capable of action, has a *primary identity*. This defines what kind of person he is; that is, it defines the relevant cultural domain in terms of which he acts' (Schneider 1980[1968]: 57). In this way, the agency of the person and the group depend on how they see and address each other, be it with family titles or not. It matters that it is family, in the sense that friends can be dropped, whereas family stick together through thick and thin (ibid.: 54). Even though family according to David Schneider (ibid.) is limited to meaning father, mother and child(ren), the kinship terms for other people than the blood relatives have the meaning of uniting people in ever-lasting constellations of relationships in Nepal. Both creating family and being related by blood matters in identification as

group in Nepal. Either way, the groups of as-if-kin are related to the notion of being local. Generally, it was my experience, based on multiple statements from people around me, that local means good. Family is local, locally produced food is valued as better, and that has to do with knowing and experiencing on your own that you can trust the product or the people you have within a small range. Every time I ate in a home, I was assured that the honey, vegetables or milk was local, which meant that is was trustworthy regarding its quality. Trust is necessary in Nepal, because there few regulations for buying or selling and other interactions between people (or at least they are not enforced). This leaves only the option of trusting each other for conflict to be avoided (see Porter et al. 2013: 313). Trust is not only necessary in private affairs, but also in other areas, e.g. when it comes to organic certification.

One day, when we were preparing a part of an application for a new OFP, Sharmila and I had the task of finding out, how produce get a certified organic-label. Long story short, they do not. Some products in Nepal can get certifications, but for the most part, only exportable goods, for example coffee and tea, are certified organic. Maybe for the same reason, there are no state provision of certifications (SASEC n.d.). We talked a lot about how to make the project relevant, and as organic farming was a main goal in the project, it seemed important to know how to get a certification for the products to gain value at the market as well as in other aspects (health conditions, food accessibility). As the project is similar to the already existing OFP, I asked Sharmila how they dealt with the issue of claiming the produce to be organic in that, because then we could suggest the same to the next project. There are methods of certification outside the official ones, and it was Sharmila's suggestion to follow the one called PGS (Participatory Guarantee System, see Appendix 3), depending on mutual trust between buyer and seller. Knowing the seller and trusting that the product is organic, even without anything other than the word for its quality, was the preferred method of certification for the OFP.

> *It is easier, and it works, and the other way is very expensive and complicated. When it is like this, the people trust each other, and if someone is not telling the truth, it is only a problem for the one farmer with the problem,*

was the explanation. The reason that the method worked, was that people trusted each other, because they knew each other within the local area. The same thing can be said about local politics and democracy.

The people believe in the local democracy and the local elected leaders, because they have strong relations within the village or community, and because they can see the impact it makes and relate hereto on a personal basis. This relation of trust and responsibility goes both ways, meaning that the local politicians also feel obligated to live up to the expectations (Baral 2008: 236-237). The close relationships within the villages make it possible for the people to trust that the people they elected for the local governments will practice good governance and bring the community and their rights 'up' when they themselves get 'up' by being elected. It is also used within the villages, when decisions are made regarding development projects and micro finance.

The point of knowing people is keen in Nepal, and the local connections between people are the ones that matter the most (Bista 1991), as also shown above. The tendency could stem from the (earlier) caste system and rules about who belongs together and can interact, but also has to do with other traditions, depending on having certain relations and family members to perform the rituals. Some examples are the mother's brother cutting the hair on the small boys, the brothers and sisters blessing each other, the son guarding a house of the dead mother and so on. This dependency is not only visible in traditions regarding holidays, but also holds some value in the everyday life of people. When Bista writes about this phenomenon of *afno manchhe* (1991), also used in Chapter 4.1, to show how belonging creates dependency, it becomes clear how one's own group of people become the only group of interest. This is then also important in this context of why the local is trusted, not because the rest is bad, but because there is not emotional attachment outside the group.

> *People who do not belong to one's own inner circle are perceived as being non-persons and there is no real concern over what happens to such unrelated individuals. Time and effort is exhausted in taking care of one's own people so that there is little inclination left to be concerned about non-persons* (Bista 1991: 97).

Based on my experience, and as should also be clear from the above, it is not so that other people are regarded as being worth less than one's own people. It is simply different people, which makes it important to have strong relationships within the community to have an identity. My colleague said to me one day 'I would rather not live in a developed country … in your country, you have no emotional attachments'. Hearing this from a person, who also wanted technological and structural improvements was just another sign of the importance of relationships. I will address in Chapter 5 how the degree of development has to do with identity and stereotyping, both from the developed and the developing point of view.

It may seem as if the division of people is making democracy as such a close-to-impossible mission, but for the people I met with, democracy was not about creating a nation-state doing democracy together. Rather, it was about creating community and inclusion within one's own group of people or within the village, or as described earlier, a democracy based on the experience of community. I will get back to how the national plan and the locally implemented democracy are both a part of the same agenda while also contradicting each other.

4.3. Democracy as Local Community

In this chapter, I will clarify how the villages experience democracy in their everyday life as being a part of moving towards a non-discriminatory society. ASK has multiple steps in the implementation of DDP. One is based on a poster showing the different capitals (see Appendix 8), and in the middle, as the ultimate goal for the project, is a non-discriminative and inclusive society, which has been projected into the people's minds (if it was not already there) as being the same as democracy:

> *'We have no gender discrimination and no rural discrimination. Isn't that democracy?!', the man says during the meeting in front of the clay house. With the sun shining and schoolchildren passing, all I can think is that the understanding of democracy reaches further than simply being able to vote. It is the inclusion of every person in the society in the decisions about their own lives* (Field notes, 06.11.17).

It strikes me, especially during the evaluations of the DDP, how I never understood democracy in the way, the Nepali people do. When I talk with the Nepali people about democracy, we never talk about voting or about representation in a bigger picture. We talk about getting up, about including backward people and about how everyone should benefit for the society to be developed. Voting is not a secret or private matter in the villages, instead everyone is encouraged to speak their mind to reach a common decision. Voting has to do with the national politics and corrupt political leaders, ruling only for their own benefit, it seemed, when we discussed the national election[5]. Voting is, in literature, seen as less efficient and as splitting up the group rather than creating a feeling of common decision: Voting 'is associated with political parties, which are not respected because they are associated with severe struggles of leadership positions' (Gellner & Karki 2008: 122). The corruption-discourse in Nepal is caused by the distance between the people and the politicians in Kathmandu and the lack of personal relations and trust, as the national society is not a community. Another point against voting as legitimate decision-making tool is made by Achen and Bartels, discussing the issues of democratic voting. They notice that 'voters, even the most informed voters, typically make choices not on the basis of policy preferences or ideology, but on the basis of who they are – their social identity' (2016: 4). The influence of group identity in political voting is important but seems to be more important in national election-relations than it is in the local communities in the everyday life. When citizens discuss rather than vote, it is easier for them, as a group, to find meaning in the final decision, which is supported – or at least not refused – by all members. This agreement and common understanding and support is one of the goals of deliberative

democracy (Setälä 2014: 153; Elstub & McLaverty 2014: 5). At the same time, the decisions made in the SLP has to follow national beneficiary standards (Appendix 8), which make the process differ from deliberative processes elsewhere, though the feeling of ownership still exists when proposals are made by the people. 'When we propose the projects,' I was told in one village, 'we support our own projects, so they get implemented. If the projects come from the state, we have no influence, so we do not have any motivation for completing the projects'. Whenever I asked why the decisions were better when made in plenum, the answer was that it was an advantage to be more for three reasons; together they understand all existing issues, they can discuss what is possible to solve and how, and deciding together creates community and ownership for all in the projects, which will benefit the community as a whole.

But then which projects should be realised? Many villages have used the money from Trianglen on community buildings or places to gather everyone. It made sense to me, that it is nice to have a building to do events in, but as I know that a lot happens outside in Nepal, I asked what that had to do with either democracy or development, since the project got so many points in the SLP, and how it even came about as an option. 'Then we can sit together. And everyone can look at each other at an equal level and create community. No one sits in front or in groups'. Whenever asked about what the most important thing about the projects is, they answered the system or the community. 'Now we can always get money, but we cannot create the facilitation and communication in the system ourselves', the chairperson of the old Reepa VDC told me. The people in the farmers' groups in Kavre told the same story in different words. The money was important, of course, as they needed it for education and household, but having a community, where everyone could speak freely, combined with having a role in the household[6] by contributing to the income through farming, empowered them. The villagers as well as the ASK employees reported how the projects (primarily DDP) had had an impact on the group structures and inclusion in the villages.

In one meeting, it seemed like the whole village showed up, but I noticed how not everyone was speaking (in Kavre, everyone speaks at the same time, whereas there seemed to be more room for one-at-the-time speaking in Syangja). Ram told me how

the number of people participating in the meeting made it clear that there was no reason to talk about inclusion in this village. I asked why only some people talked, if they all felt equal to do that. After some laughs at the question, a woman said: 'Now we have learnt that we do not have to speak all the time. We speak together, and if we have another opinion, we say it, otherwise it is no problem, because it is already said by someone else'. Having the possibility to talk, rather than to talk all the time, matches an idea amongst the people that it is more important to know your rights than to use them all the time. Being equal means to have equal access to resources, and to have equal access to participate in the (political) decisions in the village and in one's own life, and it holds the ideal of inclusion as well. Equality in political settings, related to the subject of inclusion of all is discussed by many (see Barber 1984; Dahl 2006). Robert Dahl wonders, if it is even achievable. He says that to achieve political equality, we need democracy, and to know what democracy is, we need to set an ideal. Following, he mentions different criteria for something being a democratic ideal, including effective participation, enlightened understanding, control of the agenda and inclusion (Dahl 2006: 9). In my notes, participation and inclusion came to mean the same thing. Not because they are the same by default, but because the inclusion was only accepted as such, if it meant that all people would then be included in the participatory processes of e.g. democracy or the SLP.

So, one point about democracy is that it relates to political equality and voice, and to (situated) power over one's own life or in reference to HS, freedom and a life in dignity. Another dimension of democracy, which seems to be essential, is the social one. As well as social capital was a part of doing democracy and creating equality, other resources or capitals did as well, and the example of money will be used in the next subchapter.

4.3.1. Putting Your Money Where Your Mouth Is

The social equality does not come along without an understanding of the community as a group of equal people, all equally entitled to participate and be heard. But even when the people told me that the social system and political equality was what was

important, money was also a resource or capital that gives power and legitimate agency. The women felt like they participated more and had more power over their own lives, when they earned money on farming, but the projects brought another aspect of security than economic to the table. It should be mentioned that Nepali people (at least the ones I know) do not generally save up money. My informants told me that, and I experienced a way of living that was more day-to-day based; for example, the money that was there now might as well be spent, because there was no need to save for later. 'When we have money, we just use it', a woman told me, and that was the reason for the group savings' necessity.

We invited local politicians to take part in a yearly evaluation of the OFP in the end of August, because the politicians need to support the projects, so that stakeholders, who are not directly part of the project, can verify the progress. We visited some of the farms of people I had already met at farmers' groups meetings, and we were all greeted with tikas and flowers before the project was discussed. At one point, we talked about the microloans that was made from the Triangle-money, and had to be paid back within a year. Most often, they were invested in goats, because they could sell the meat and earn money in years to come as well. The farmer told us about the loan he had, and a colleague of mine translated the arrangement of loaning as a microloan, but one of the elected politicians corrected him, using the term "social borrowing" about what was going on. That term, even though none of the others translated it as such from Nepali to English, tells why the microloans are functioning in two ways; 1) everyone pays the money back and 2) the money is everyone's in the sense that it becomes group money the moment they are pooled. The reasons are connected to the community feeling, and to each other, because the people feel connected through the money. They realise that when they have a common project, they can have sustainable solutions for the community and keep in control over a pool of resources – be it economic, social or natural – and accumulate them instead of using everything at once. When the money comes from the group, they feel obligated to live up to the expectations of creating surplus and paying it back. One woman, who had gotten a loan from the group, was sad and upset, because a tiger killed and ate her goats, which meant that she did not

know if she could pay back the loan to the group. The group money was not the individuals' money put together, but became everyone's, because all were equally dependent on them getting used for general development of the community. The democratic ways of deciding on common projects for using the money, is related to the idea, that all should be equal within the system of communication and decision-making.

> *If one gets the money, it is good. Maybe I wanted the money, but we have to create the development for the whole community. We are all looking for development, but we have to create the development. Development is a better life always,*

a man said during an interview in Gairigaun. Another said that development happens, because all have the right to speak and demand action for development in a democracy. Common money and individual surplus became a way of empowerment, both for the individual within the group and for the group within society and the political system. To show how this functions in practice, the next chapter is dedicated to showing how democracy as community-awareness and -identification plays into the action towards development.

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[1] That is, since the claim of democracy made by the people in 1990 (see Hangen 2010: 32).
[2] Caste is often interchangeable with ethnicity and is always known when one says his last name. If I was asked about my caste, it was to find out where I belonged through knowing my name. I experienced this a couple of times, when I was talking to new people about their family-relations.
[3] Namaste is the formal way of saying hello, didi means big sister, and was used for me, when the kids in the house talked to me.
[4] There are different words for older and younger siblings. Thus, brother/sister will always include younger/elder in the word.
[5] The election took place in November-December 2017
[6] Mostly, the women were the ones who took part in becoming organic farmers. Contributing to the household economy meant for them, that they had something to say. Their role in the household made them more self-confident, which made them participate in the community as well.

5. DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY

'Is democracy the same as development?' I ask, as we sit in the sun with four men and a woman, all in plastic chairs and drinking coke in front of the house. 'It looks like the same,' Ram says. On the same field trip, visiting many small villages in the Syangja district, we revisited the subject, which brought forth different comments on development. Democracy, as shown in Chapter 4, is the power of the people and community to decide over their own development (see also Stehr 2016: 12). But it is also a vehicle for development, following both official laws and regulations and the people. In this chapter, I will examine how development can be experienced differently, and how the experiences seem to overlap with other concepts; democracy, information and HS are some of the concepts, that seem to align with being developed, and I will therefore provide an elaboration on how development is understood in different contexts.

5.1. Communicating Community: Acting on Knowledge

The Right to Information Act (RTI) of Nepal became effective with the constitution of 1990, and has since then been through different reformulations, but is still present in the new constitution of 2015 (Constitution 2015; CCRI n.d.; Interim Constitution 2007). The act assures right to all types of insights into regulations, budgets and other information regarding national and local matters and the citizens are informed on their rights to claim civil and human rights. The act is 'an indispensable tool for the functioning of a true democracy' (CCRI n.d.). RTI meant to my informants that they knew they had the right to contact the municipality and local institutions with questions that would lead to action. As some people told me, 'development is not words, it is action'. In their mind, the right to information meant right to act, confer the understanding of *suchana* as mentioned in Subchapter 2.3.1. Stehr writes about knowledge and information and notes in this regard that knowledge is capacity for action (2016: 9, 38).

When we talked about development, we talked about the different projects happening based on the choices from the SLP, but also about new farming methods, better roads, health facilities and especially education; all services that should be provided (partly) by the state, as is stated in the constitution (Constitution 2015: 30-32). It should

be mentioned here, that the people I interviewed did think that the state services functioned, but it was still these basic services that needed improvements, and which were funded by the development-money from the SLP and from local government funds. The RTI makes it possible for the people to know which projects are supposed to be implemented, and it gives them the right to demand information on the given project. The civil servants are obliged to answer questions rightfully within 15 days of the request, and often, to avoid humiliation, things will be put into action, because all other outcomes will point to corruption or laziness, which is frowned upon (Ramasubban & Jepsersen 2011[1]; Internal meetings ASK). RTI is generally not used actively by the citizens in the places I visited, but, as they said, the knowledge about the rights meant more than actively using them all the time. This is also due to the civil servants knowing about the citizens' rights. The act has had impact on other villages as well as it is promoted as a campaign with a song on Nepali television, which shows the want for public knowledge about it. Some scholars point to exercise of rights as the only way of rights to be enjoyed (Habermas 1995: 114; Stehr 2016: 66), but I challenge this, as knowing one's rights made the people feel secure and ensured about the possibility of claiming those rights. The RTI is made to ensure the citizens their rights in relation to the official institutions and to make sure funding for development initiatives are used for what was originally intended.

If democracy is the system of communication with no bias, development is the outcome of that communication, which has illuminated the needs of the citizens, and therefore development looks the same as democracy, as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. Democracy is the right of the people to determine their own and the community's development, I was told in Okadi during our interview with what seemed to be the whole village. Everyone had just been around to get water and returned for the interview to evaluate the DDP. Democracy is a vehicle for development through knowledge about rights and access to information, but development creates an equal community as well, since development projects and "social borrowing" can benefit all in the village and can in that way lead to democracy as described in Chapter 4. In the start up phase of SLP, only the most poor could get money from the common savings,

but as the microcredit money has been paid back, all can benefit equally from the projects and the money. Therefore, the citizens' rights are claimed and to some degree fulfilled, because the citizens themselves take action, or make the official institutions do so. The quote about development being action, presented in the end of Chapter 4, merges with knowledge being the capacity to act (Stehr 2016) which lead to different aspects of security as a main outcome. But what is development, apart from action?

According to my informants, development is the creation of an equal community, and it is about always improving. This fits the idea from other places, where the goal is to create stability, meaning the improved conditions for being able to achieve a life in dignity (Schielke 2015; Visbo-Bomose 2016). In this way, development is continuous improvement of the community, and in Nepal this can for example happen through improvement of farming methods or through obtaining knowledge or information in various areas. It is as such physical as well as human change that is included in the term development.

It is discussed whether development and security are related or mutually enhancing in any way, or if the two are not connected unless the state is functioning (Luckham & Kirk 2013: 2). For the people I talked to, development creates better societies, it creates community and it creates different securities, for example economic, health, food and community security. This might be because the state is now shifted from being a national power institution to the people having access to it through contact with local governments. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations says, on food security, that it has four aspects: availability, access, utilisation and stability (Scialabba 2007: 4-10), and the access to resources and development creates an enhanced security situation. This shows, as is also the case with democracy, that the local community is what matters most, because here more aspects are ensured than in a national setting. This can be a challenge, when talking about HS, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

'Knowledge is development,' the women in a group interview during internal monitoring for ASK told me. They said it in English, as they wanted to make sure that I knew what they were saying to me 'and it is education in farming and for the children

in schools'. The children should be educated to have success in life and make them competitive in society, as they express it. I asked them who creates development. In one group, the answer was that they had to create development themselves, in other cases, the question was answered at the same time with 'ourselves' and 'leaders'. The leaders – here understood as government officials or elected leaders – are needed in projects that need monetary supply or were projects of large scale, e.g. water management or construction of paved roads. Common for the people mentioning themselves and the leaders as creators of development respectively, was that the important development was the self-development, like it was also the local democracy that mattered. The changes should be felt and be visible for the people to matter, and they should be so for the entire community.

The country should be developed, but as shown in Chapter 4, the fragmentation of the country has consequences for how communities are created and sustained through ongoing negotiations of possible interactions with power holders. This is also true for development, and even the way villages are talked about says a lot about how the separation of central power and village people contributes to the fragmentation. The next chapter will elaborate on this.

5.2. Fragmented Development

Though development should come from the community itself, according to my informants, this is not true for all development. I have been told more than once how something has to be done by or in a developed country, or that 'because Nepal is not developed we cannot make this or that'. The very direct way of talking about things in Nepal exists in various forms; when someone is bad at something, it is not meant to be a secret or taboo, and when something is just a fact, there is no reason to treat it as anything else, it seems. The same goes for development. The Nepalese were very conscious about what both democracy and development should be, but at the same time, the relation to being developed was ambivalent, as developed places are seen as oppositional to the life in the villages in many ways, not just in being developed techni-

cally. As shown by the quote from Chapter 4 about developed people having no emotional attachments to each other, the developed society is expected to be one without real relations and a more rushed approach to everything. I was told that I was always 'busy-busy' when I was working on my reports instead of drinking tea or sitting around for pastime.

Development can encompass distribution of development to others. In a talk about agriculture, while we walked from the field, my colleague said to me that it would be nice to have a machine producing meat without needing to raise animals. I suggested her to invent it, as the talk was just for fun, but the answer was that 'it has to come from a developed country.' This idea of development as coming from other places than the local is known from other pieces of literature on Nepal as well (Pigg 1992). The degree of development is, so to speak, a differentiation in priorities in life and a way to indicate where you are placed in time (ibid.). Backward people are thereby backward because they are placed backwards in time and also in development. Development can – also because of the different understanding of time and wealth – create identities, and as it encompasses an idea of possibilities to act in a specific way to be developed, it is a classic example of creating one's own identity on the basis of being different from the "other" (Jenkins 1997; Pigg 1992: 497-499). Development depends on different forms of capital, as does democracy. The similarity between the two concepts is based on the idea in the villages that if all have an opportunity to participate on equal level in decisions, and the decisions benefit most people possible, there will be democracy through development. As mentioned earlier, democracy can be seen as the notion that all benefit mutually from being a community (Dewey 1946: 149; Barber 1984: 118). The theory of the notion might not be applied in practice, but working from that understanding creates an enhanced feeling of community and equality. I see this, when I see people and when I read statistics on development, income, etc. Multiple statistics show how backward groups own and earn less, and how Dalits and previous tenants (Kamaiyas and Hilayas) with no right of earning the land, they till, are still kept from having their own land (Wily et al. 2009: 64). This reinforces the structure and

difference between the castes, which can affect the possibility of partaking in discussion on an equal level.

The projects I was related to have aim at including different groups of people in the same system of communication towards development. If we see development as placement, which I will also elaborate on in Chapter 6, both development and place of living – rural versus urban setting – contributes to the way in which equality in different spheres of life can be achieved. The structural, invisibly violent past – and to some degree present (Futtrup 2017) – of Nepal has separated people. Each village or municipality is on its own, and even with the inclusion projects of the state (Constitution 2015) and NGOs, the federalisation of the country is not providing a change in structure on a national level but can create possibilities for the local districts or municipalities, if the people get informed about their rights. At least that was what the people I talked to had experienced with the information about and practice of democracy as participatory governance.

Pigg writes 'In daily life, bikas [development] becomes the idiom through which the relationship between local communities and other places is experienced' (1992: 499). Though, there is still an issue regarding the fragmentism of the country that is based on the geographical and perceived distance due to development. If we include the idea of a solid structure in society, enhanced by this fragmentation of people, culture and places, it shows how development can be a way in which the difference between people is expressed. This is easy to see, when looking at material wealth in Nepal. I have talked to more people unrelated to the organisation, telling me how the people in Nepal has to create development and not just sit around and wait or go abroad to earn money to send home, which is a general issue (Sharma et al. 2012: 26). Yet many young people do migrate, and while some see it as a last way out, other see it as letting the community down. I talked to one man, taking part in managing a hotel, who thought that only the single person, rather than the state, could make a difference for themselves and had to help others who were less fortunate. This was related to the earthquake a couple of years earlier, and he criticised both greedy people and the government for the handling of the situation. The ones who did not have anything left, did

not receive the help they were entitled to, because everyone wanted to get things, even when they already had money themselves. The conversation led us on to talking about migration, as a young man, also sitting with us, had gone abroad to earn money to his family, and wanted to go again. 'But we have to develop here, because development will not just come, we have to act', the man first mentioned and the people in the villages said as well.

I have already shown how development is action, and as some people do not expect the state to fulfil the needs of the citizens, they see it as a necessity to take part themselves in that action. 'Many Nepalese people are rich, but the country is not' was a sentence I heard multiple times as well. And many things cease to happen in Nepal, because 'the rich people do not want to pay taxes and have land reform, so therefore we do not have a land reform yet' as my colleagues told me one day, when I was reading about the issue on land distribution in Nepal one afternoon. The unequal distribution of resources has had a long history in the country, as land was originally assigned to people close to the king and court, and the feudal structure of society has kept the land to the families of those who already own land. It might sound like it is only the high caste-people who are to blame here, but the idea about fatalism lives strong in different layers of society, simply because social mobility is not supposed to happen – with exceptions, of course. I talked to Sharmila one day in the office, and we discussed how things could change, and how caste was a question about coherence in the society, and she stated that it was smart, rather than a question about religion and subjugation of lower castes. I asked her how that was, and she answered me:

> *You can do something else than your parents, but if your parents are good at one thing and are for example painters, then you will be a better painter too. It does not make sense that I become a painter, because it is not in my DNA.*

Many of the people in the villages had the same attitude towards the future of their children. They wanted them to become farmers and take over the field and farm when

they grew up. Any other thing did not make sense, and farming would mean that they could stay with the family, which was much valued by the women.

Both the lacking land reform, the idea about caste as a functioning system for structuring society and the fatalism in general are mentioned here to show, how changes do not just happen overnight, and how power has been legitimised for high castes through land owning and resource management (Wily et al. 2009: 65).

But, as other parts of the thesis show, the locality of democracy as well as of development means that the local becomes important, and the structures are regenerated through belonging. 'Borders not only join what is different, but also separate that which is similar' (Chettri 2017: 18), and though the borders in this case are not between countries, the borders between different levels of development are another hindering in national unity of the people in Nepal. Development and democracy, then, are bound up on group identity and boundaries between the "we" and the "other". It should also be taken into consideration, that group identity can be used politically, and this is part of the reason why Nepal has had issues with special advantages for marginalised groups playing into political decisions (Adhikari & Gellner 2016; Chettri 2017: 16). This will briefly be discussed in the following chapter, where ideas on empowerment and placed power are also explored.

[1] The material should be available at actionaid.org/nepal but is not. The file with the information can be obtained if requested.

6. SITUATED POWER

Distance in space and in social position is a key factor in Nepali politics and in the exercise and rise of power. When power is seen as resources and capitals that can be put into place, it is important to know, how these resources are distributed, and to which degree empowerment is a question about realising who has them, and how they can be utilised in new ways in order to be part of one's own development and decisions in life. This is what I will address in this chapter.

Backward people and central power are some of the key terms to describe how power is experienced by the people in the villages in Nepal. As shown in Chapter 2, 4 and 5, the term backward people covers a wide range of people, who have in common that they have been or are in a position of powerlessness in relation to other groups of people. Backwardness is in some ways synonymous to being disadvantaged or having less ability than others to do certain things, which also limits the access to take part in discussion and decisions. First, I thought that the backward people were categorised as such by the state and that the group included people who had special needs or wants. I also knew that women, children and disabled as well as Dalits and some ethnic minorities were often mentioned when talking about inclusion. These groups of people have lately been given 'advantages' or special inclusion rights in political settings, and both women and Dalits have reserved seats in the different committees and governments to create equal terms and inclusion in the political arena (Adhikari & Gellner 2016; Pettigrew 2013; Constitution 2015). I talked a lot about the vulnerable and marginalised groups with my colleagues at ASK to understand the development situation of the country, and mostly we talked about ethnic minorities or women, as female empowerment is important in many development projects. Sharmila and Ram have both mentioned to me, how Dalits and women should always be represented in the projects and in the committees, and therefore, I thought about those groups, as well as the ones who are mentioned as beneficiaries in the SLP-score-system, when the term backward was used, both regarding literature and in daily conversations.

Later on, when we walked towards one of the field sites in the Syangja district, I asked Milan and Ram, why it was always so far away, when we went to the field. I did

not mind the walks, as we always had spectacular views and good talks on our way, but I wondered why the projects took place so far away from the cities, in which much more people could have taken part. The answer was that 'we have to do it far away, because the people who live here are backward people … People who live so far away are also backward people, because of the long distance to the city'. They could have chosen another place to do the projects, but the state and donors support projects including backward people more, as well as women empowerment and educational projects rank high in the development sector too (Pigg 1992: 493). Chapter 5 mentions how the backwardness in time is a boundary between people, but sometimes, it is the physical distance that matters, which was also mentioned by the people in the villages.

The problem with distance is self-enhancing; people living far away have limited access to state services such as medicine, general health and education institutions, and because they have longer distance to the (local) governments and municipalities, they have difficulties in applying for projects to develop their area, including better roads and tracks, which could bring them closer – at least timewise – to the local municipalities. One of the villages had had success in applying for road construction from the government, and the project was an ongoing project related to the government's obligation to enhance infrastructure and water-facilities[1]. Roads and their conditions are crucial for how easy it is to attend school, to reach health clinics and to get in contact with official institutions in general for information and funding.

When I visited one of the villages in the Syangja district, 30 kilometres took more than 4 hours by jeep. Going from Pokhara to Kathmandu[2], a distance of about 250 kilometres, easily took 8-12 hours by bus. The time consumed by transportation was not the sole problem for the people in the villages, as the price of transportation was also high, everything taken into consideration. I talked with some of the people in the villages about the possibility of applying for funding at the local government for projects, and they knew the application process and rules, yet, they did not apply for all the projects they wanted, because the trip to the governmental office was too long and expensive if the application turned out to be denied after all.

The issue of distance was also present in the OFP regarding marketing of products. At first, the women said that it was no problem to bring them to Nagarkot to sell, and they could get better prices for the organic vegetables there, but instead they continued to rely mostly on local distribution, as the time consumed transporting the goods, meant wasted time and money. Another disadvantage of distance from the central part of the country is an increased price for many products, Milan told me. Resources, and thereby power, was then somehow more difficult to get access to in the smaller villages than in the cities, which also influenced on how people could feel empowered. The next chapter will look into how power can at one time be present in a village, and at the other be something that is reserved for the ones already having it.

6.1. Where is the Power?

There was an ambivalence regarding the placement of power for the people in the villages. On one hand, people felt empowered because they were enlightened about their rights and the projects had helped create a "we" rather than an "I" feeling, and standing together as a community made it easier to approach the politicians and local governments, claiming fulfilment of rights and services. On the other hand, central power and distance to it remains an issue to feeling included in governance. In the following subchapter, I will show how power seems to be focused in a central core in Kathmandu at the same time as it is arising in the local communities.

6.1.1. Local Empowerment

The citizens in Kavre told me, how they felt more empowered, when they had control in their own lives and development. One woman, who participated in the OFP told me, when we were evaluating on the project, that she felt more empowered now than before the project, because now she could contribute to the household economy through the sales of surplus produce from the farming. Being able to take care of oneself is also mentioned as an important factor by the UNDP when trying to achieve HS (1994: 24). When the backward people felt like they had a voice in the village, took part

in the development and could speak their mind in plenum, all members of the community felt like they had power and control over their own lives, and they also felt that they could make better decisions than before.

Hannah Arendt argues how 'political freedom, generally speaking, means the right "to be a participant in government", or it means nothing at all' (in Stehr 2016: 65). Here, I understand government as *governance*: '[governance is] an interface, a collaboration and partnership between political and civil society […] in negotiating burning issues and taking decisions of public importance' (Gellner & Hachhethu 2008: 15). Expressed differently, political freedom is to have 'equal ability to take part in and influence the "fate of the collectivity"' (Stehr 2016: 68). My informants said the same in many ways and repeatedly, for example one man mentioned that when they do things together, it creates better solutions, than when they all do things on their own. A woman in a village in Syangja said that democracy is the right to power, and that they had democracy, because they could talk to the service provider and apply policies themselves. Yet another, in the village Okadi, made it clear that the most was important was to have power over the collective's decisions as a community, stating

> *in the monarchy, there was supreme power, but in democracy, power is transferred to the people. The right of the people is the right to choose our own development and the development of the community.*

The want for self-governance as a means of achieving freedom and development can only be realised when the citizens are empowered or experience having power in their own lives. This is the foundation for democracy, as 'the ability to govern oneself at the collective level enhances social organizations of self-government, and therefore also the conditions for democracy' (Stehr 2016: 12). The feeling of empowerment occurs in the projects, when the people realise their opportunities to act as a group of equals to achieve the ends of wanted development. The people felt empowered, when a project was implemented successfully because they could utilise internal resources, they were not aware of before, e.g. social capital as the feeling of a "we" increased during

the project implementation. It should be mentioned though, that not all resources come out of social empowerment; water and power shortages were part of the everyday life in the small, distant villages, and generally distribution of physical resources is still a challenge.

Melissa Williams, working in the field of social psychology, notes how power is control over resources, and that people who have power will act more easily and quickly compared to people who do not feel empowered (2014: 1367). She also notes how the powerholders – be it political leaders or citizens – will satisfy their own needs before the needs of the group, if they see themselves as individuals rather than part of a group. When people see themselves as a part of a group, on the other hand, they will act in the group's best interest, as that will also serve themselves. She writes this in a context of exploring how power can corrupt, and also argues that power and leadership is not the same but belongs in the same field. A leader, she says, has control over the valued resources, and therefore, by definition, has power (ibid.), and she goes on by stating that a good leader uses his power to benefit the group.

> *The wise use of power involves exercising it in service of goals that are shared by subordinates […] (such as group achievement), rather than in service of the leader's own goals (such as personal wealth or status) (ibid.: 1366).*

This brings us back to the wants and needs from the citizens in Bangsing, who wants leader and elected representatives, who can bring them up. Being up means being brought up on a level equal to the powerholders, which I also showed in the example with the community buildings in Subchapter 4.3. The equality in the villages makes the people feel united and therefore their power is legitimised. This was expressed during an interview:

> *when more people make decisions together, it is a better decision, which have been discussed and thought about, and we know that it is a better solution when all can understand and agree to it […] When we make our own projects, we already want*

it to work, but when the project comes from the top [the government or state], we do not have ownership of the project and it is not completed.

This point, in relation to participatory democracy, is also made by Dahl (2006: 27) and Barber (1984: 117). The latter argues that the best decisions are made through common deliberation, and that 'the majority of the plain people will day in and day out make fewer mistakes in governing themselves than any smaller body of men will make in trying to govern them' (Barber 1984: 151). This is also related to the discussion regarding feeling related to the people you govern – if there is no relation, the governance will be accordingly distant (Baral 2008; Dahal 2014). There are some authors who argue that the common decision will not be better than the weakest link, and there might be better decisions for the people than those they can produce in inclusive participation (Achen & Bartels 2016; Dewey 1946: 60). The statement from the interview quoted above offers some explanation as to why the people think that they can make better decisions together as a group, than when the politicians decide which projects should be implemented, as they feel like they are part of the project and want their own solution to succeed. It also shows how local ownership creates sustainable solutions on projects that can therefore be completed, as opposed to top-down approaches that are not (Setälä 2014: 150; Chettri 2017: 16-17). It can be discussed in eternity, which form of governance is the best, and whether more heads actually do make better decisions than the individuals within the group can make on their own. Said with Dewey's words, 'it is absurd to expect the public, because it is called in no matter how eulogistic a sense the state, to rise above the intellectual level of its average constituents' (1946: 60). No matter what, the people thought that their decisions made as a group were better, because it gave them a feeling of being in control of their own life, unlike when they did not have any influence as individuals.

Power was having access to resources, and my informants felt more entitled to these resources, when they knew they had all participated in finding a solution and applying for money to achieve the realisation of that solution be it schools, community buildings, roads or water supply. Power is

> *a generalised medium of mobilizing resources for effective collective action, and for the fulfilment of commitments made by collectives to their constituents; it too [not unlike money] must be symbolically generalized and legitimized* (Stehr 2016: 72, square brackets in original).

Therefore, power can be said to be found in the local communities, when they experience increased access to the public resources. The placement of state in relation to the citizens thereby makes it possible for the people to exercise power by speaking up and demanding the power, they are entitled to through laws and regulations. At the same time, the community development does not lead to national development, as it stays local, since local groups sympathise more with themselves than with the nation. Different groups re-negotiate their history and culture through different practices and rituals, sustaining the group identity.

So, local empowerment gives them power to act and creates unity but is not beneficial for the creation of national identity (Friedman 1992: 837; Dahal 2014). I have mentioned in Chapter 4, how the relation to politicians is not only good, mainly because there is no real connection between people and politicians in Kathmandu. This is taken under investigation in the next section.

6.1.2. In a State of Power

The local empowerment and equality is a part of the experienced power and its place in Nepal. Another aspect is that of the power as something distant and central, belonging only to Kathmandu. Kathmandu is the capital, and it is in many cases the way of entrance to the rest of the country. It is also where the government is placed, and therefore it is a place of power. Milan told me one day, how the people in the cities had easier access to products, and that the same product would be cheaper in Pokhara than in Syangja, and cheaper in Kathmandu than in Pokhara, because the bigger the city, the cheaper the products. This created a cycle of benefits for people living in the cities in contrast to the poor living conditions with expensive products for the people living

in the villages and hill areas and away from urban areas. It is also the people living in the towns, who get access to emergency relief and services in general (Amnesty International 2017), and some backward people living in remote areas feel like the distribution of services, e.g. emergency relief, is unequal (Himalayan Times 2017). A colleague of mine told the same story, when we talked about the relief after the earthquake in 2014. The relief did not reach the ones in need, as the roads – or missing roads – made it impossible to provide services to people far away. These people far away happen to also be the poor and marginalised people because of the accumulation of resources in the capital.

The distance in social position and in place plays a role in how the national elections are perceived as having influence and meaning by people. My colleague Milan, said to me, 'Of course I will vote. I have to, because I am a Nepali citizen [...] But it makes no difference, because all the politicians are the same [corrupt]'. The same said Ram, more bound in reason than in opinion. 'All politicians are the same when they are elected. They spend so much money on the campaign, and then they do not have any more money, so they have to be corrupt'. The corrupt politicians were the ones far away enough to not be local, but local people could also end up in national or district governmental positions, and in that case, they were appreciated, as the ones who can bring the rest up, which I showed in Chapter 4. In my experience, there was a mistrust in the national system and in politicians you do not know. In opposition to this, there was support to the people selected from the local area, who could make a difference for that area and who was expected to promote the interests of the people there.

Unlike the democratic notion of *mati* (up), the physical placement on the top is not wanted by many in Nepal, as the mountainous places are out of reach for vehicles and thereby the people living there has bad access to the centres of power. My colleagues told me, when we talked about the date for the national elections that it had to be held on different dates for mountain, and hill and tarai regions, respectively, due to logistics and security management of the places of election. This was not the immediate problem, though it might seem problematic to have different dates for the election, as this can contribute to some people being more important than others or some part of the

election seem less needed (New York Times 2007). The problem was caused by the time of election. The mountain region had elections in the end of November, but many registered voters were not going to be able to vote, because 'at that time, many people from the mountains already moved down [due to low temperatures in the winter]', Ram told me. The other regions held elections in December, but were not migrating seasonally, and therefore voters could take part in the political decisions through voting.

Even though it could seem as if the national elections did not mean anything, the campaigns and party-politics was a big deal. A day in Syangja, just weeks before the first election date, there was a meeting where the local party leaders would speak. The leaders from two merging parties, UML and Maoist Party, Ram told me, would give speeches. Everyone in Syangja was there, in front of the stage on the open space, it seemed. Nepali people decide rather impulsively, it seems to me; when something happens that needs their attention, everything else is dropped, and so it seemed to be with the people attending the speeches as well. All took the day off to be there and support the party. During the campaigns leading up to the election there were cars and motorbikes driving in the streets with party flags and symbols and loud music as well. This shows how, even with the mistrust in the persons who get elected, the political parties matter in the rising class- and group consciousness, also described by others (Hangen 2010: 17).

The voting process and national politics are paradoxical. People want to vote, because they are citizens, and expresses it as their duty as Nepalese people. At the same time, the national politics did not matter to the everyday life of a farmer in a small village far from Kathmandu; as one man said to me, when I asked what they discussed at their village meetings 'we discuss farming. We are farmers'. There was no reason to discuss big thoughts, as I also showed in relation to local democracy in Chapter 4. But from the point of perspective that all should be equally able to be included and participate, the distance in the country plays a role. The people from the mountain region needed to move in order to survive in the winter, making it impossible for them to live up to their duty and claim their rights as citizens, meaning that the distribution of

power is place-related, and that distance is a hindrance for creating unity and social interactions as well as shared power.

> *Closeness in the physical space opens up for closeness in the social space to play out fully through the fact that the accumulation of social capital is eased and helped on its way and, more precisely, through making it possible for meetings to continue which are either by coincidence or planned and are secured by going places where many people go* (Bourdieu 1996: 155, own translation).

The accumulation of resources is self-enhancing, as shown in the quote above, and as such the issue with one place having the power is not only true for Nepal, where Kathmandu is the capital and has most resources in the form of money, infrastructure, health and education to mention a few. I talked with my colleagues, about how the capital, if relatively too isolated and lacking possibility for distributing resources, can be a challenge for the unification of a country, and it is as if resources create more resources (Stehr 2016: 71). This is also happening in Denmark and is thus not only related to fragile situations or developing countries (Bennike 2017).

In this regard, it should be mentioned that the way we look at power is crucial to how the flow of power and resources can be understood. If we look at power as a zero-sum game, it limits the possibility for power to arise in new places, as there are then limited resources in some forms (as there can only be a certain amount of physical resources, e.g. oil or diamonds, Stehr 2016). If power is instead seen as a flow and relational, it is possible for power to expand (ibid.: 72-73), and this, I think, is partly happening in Nepal, when people are made aware of the existence of other capitals that can be put into use apart from money. Thereby, I do not see power as a zero-sum game in Nepal, even though some resources are not distributed and thereby not available as power in the villages. If power was more equally distributed by the state, it might lead to greater unification of the people, then sharing and taking part in the same resources.

But what does it matter if the state is of one united people? Is the nation-state an achievable and a beneficial way of governing Nepal? These questions cannot be exhaustively answered here but are important to examine in regard to good governance, national identity and empowerment through social inclusion in a nation-state on the rise. I will therefore address them in the next chapter.

6.2. State Fragility and the Nation-State

State fragility plays a role in the possibility of building national identities and thereby in creating citizens who feel part of the state community. The unity and fragmentation, both made possible in Nepal through empowerment, state power and local democracy, will be shown in the following.

National identity, as all identities, are based on stories, memory, common language, religion or looks, which is often in opposition to other groups with other identity markers or traditions (Barth 1969). The national identity and memory 'have no existence beyond our politics, our social relations, and our history' (Gillis 1994: 5). As I also wrote earlier, identity is a question about power to define oneself in a relation to others. The state, to become a nation-state, must create a community where everyone is feeling as part of the same imagined community, but in states where the unity is dissolved into different ethnic entities, there is a possibility for losing one's voice and becoming marginalised and powerless in defining and influencing one's own identity and agency (Kaldor 2004: 166). In Nepal, with the new constitution, one of the goals for the state is to

> *promote the national unity while developing mutual cooperative relations between the Federal Units by maintaining mutual cohesion, harmony and solidarity between various castes, tribes, religions, languages, cultures and communities […and] guarantee the overall human security system* (Constitution 2015: 31).

Multiple factors in development projects and general education are executed in a way that fits into the plan on creating inclusion and national unity; for instance, development projects as the SLP considers state-standards for who should be beneficiaries of the project, and children in school sing the national anthem every day and are taught the national language, Nepali, rather than their mother tongue. At the same time, being Nepali is also about being different. Whenever we talked about language differences – and we often did, as only some people in the office spoke other languages than Nepali, and therefore did not always understand the people in the villages – it was mentioned how the cultural diversity was a quality for the country, and how the languages were all important for the culture as a whole[3]. The differences between people is important in Nepal and is part of Nepali identification, and when my colleagues talked about the different groups we met with, they always noted things like 'Gurungs have a very strong culture and are smiling a lot' or 'Tamangs eat meat [as opposed to my caste]', 'we do not eat pork as they do' and so on.

The continuous articulation of differences created space between people, a space which was also existing in reality and not just in mind, and at the same time, the nationalisation of culture is still going on as shown above e.g. in education (Pigg 1992: 500-503), though the idea of the Hindu state is abandoned as of 2006. This can create further marginalisation of ethnic groups, as it can create monopoly 'to the few and the dispossession of all other, who are, in a way, thereby mutilated in their humanity' (Bourdieu 1994: 8). These factors of both physical and social distance do not create a foundation for approaching each other and creating an equal community, which is part of the political challenge connected to internal fragmentation of the country.

Memories, cultures, languages and living conditions have created a fragmentation of the country, and though fragmentation and fragility are not necessarily co-existing in all cases, there is some connection between the two. We have already seen, how the state has failed to deliver relief and services equally both in current time and through history, where only high caste people in relation with the king were given land (Wily et al. 2009), and this is a big part of a fragile state; namely that the state is not able or

willing to provide for the majority of the citizens (Buur et al. 2007). The plan for inclusion in the constitution and in development projects aims at ensuring that everyone can live a dignified life and feels secure and cared for by the state (Sharma et al. 2012: 1). But inclusion is related to being in the system, being able to communicate between different groups and being able to take part in governance. This connection or lack thereof between citizens and state has to do with creating strong national identities, as mentioned in the theoretical chapter, and thereby, fragility and fragmentation co-exist, as the system is not including all. There are different ways to further nationalisation and unification of the country, but factors working against it still exist.

In this chapter, I have shown how power is essential in identity-creation and negotiation, and how fragility of a state – also meaning that it does not have ultimate, legitimised power – hinders the sustained understanding of the nation as a community. There are still aspects of HS, which are enhanced in the local communities, but can it even be said to be HS, if only the local is secured? This relates to the question of both democracy and freedom, and challenges the idea on democracy as community; can one ever be free if everyone else is not free? These are the questions that I will bring up in the discussion in the next chapter.

[1] The governmental institutions, national as well as local, have obligations to support specific development projects, e.g. road construction, but the citizens have to apply for the support.
[2] The two largest cities in Nepal, Kathmandu being the capital and Pokhara attracting tourists. Both cities have airports, but only the one in Kathmandu has international flights.
[3] This is countered by e.g. Gellner & Karki 2008: 107.

7. THE RELATIVITY OF HUMAN SECURITY

'Democracy is the system in which all have right to the same opportunities without bias,' one of my informants told me, as I have also mentioned earlier. But how can "all" get the same opportunities and how can a system ever be completely without bias? In a democratic state, a goal must, by definition, be that all can participate. But can all participate, if not everyone is on equal level in development and freedom? And in which ways can freedom, HS and development happen on a local or global level? This is what I want to discuss in this chapter.

> *The right to freedom of speech has little real substance if, from lack of education, you have nothing to say that is worth saying, and no means of making yourself heard if you say it* (Heater 1994: 13-14).

This quote shows one of the biggest challenges regarding the topic of this thesis. Even if all had access to participation in decision-making, it is not possible to guarantee that all would be able to speak. There is always a majority, and there will probably always be; this will often result in a minority left unheard (Dewey 1946: 207-108). As shown in the presented theory in Chapter 3, the UNDP framework for HS has a special focus on how every person should be equal in order for all to feel secure, and that it is often marginalised groups such as religious or ethnic minorities, who end up in a position of suppression, and therefore also end up being less secure than majority groups. As the framework is holistic and focused on the individual, it is a matter of international interest that all are secure, developed and democratic (Buur et al. 2007). If HS should be all-encompassing regarding who should be secure, it fits with the idea that only if all are equal, then democracy and – in this case – development can happen (Gasper 2005; McLaverty 2014). The interconnectedness between the three has been shown throughout the thesis, but with the reservation that "the state" can be any official institution that holds legitimate power through access to resources; in this case meaning that the local can be a state within the nation-state and within an implicitly understood larger society – be it the nation or the international community. Multiple

examples have been put forward to show how the people in the villages experience the existence of democracy and development in their local communities, but the local stays local and as such the experience of security is connected to being part of a municipality or district and not connected to a nation-state and not near being part of the imagined international community – even keeping in mind that the international society provides a substantial amount of money and resources for Nepali development (Sharma et al. 2012: 11). This leads us back to the question on connections between different aspects on HS, and to which degree a complete HS is needed in order for a partial degree to be established.

HS is many things and can be understood broadly or narrowly as for example freedom from fear, or freedom from fear *and* want and a life in dignity, respectively (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy 2007; UNDP 1994). This differentiation can be said to have more or less significance, but it is important for more than one aspect of this discussion. Firstly, the understanding of HS as either broadly or narrowly understood is relevant to discuss. Secondly, freedom is a relative concept, and therefore we must look into how it is understood in this context. Freedom can be freedom *from* or freedom *to* certain actions and things (Stehr 2016: 63), and in addition to this it is relative in the sense that one's freedom depend on others restraint or power. I will discuss these different perspectives, as they are important both when it comes to democracy, development and security. The following will elaborate on the distinction between broad and narrow approaches to the framework.

7.1. A Hierarchy of Securities?

If HS can be understood in degrees, so to speak, then it can somehow be said to align with models such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1943), as the needs that are most basic – food, water, sleep – will be the needs, which are sought for firstly, and until they are satisfied, the human being will not be motivated to look for achievement of "higher" needs, which, in the order given by Maslow, include safety, love, esteem and self-realisation. All steps on the ladder towards the self-realisation are motivated

and motivating, meaning that the human being will always be seeking the next possible step after fulfilment of the latter (ibid.: 370). This would mean, in relation to the HS, that some aspects of security such as food, health, personal and economy would have to be achieved before the rest (political, community and environmental). By this, I do not assume that Maslow's definition of basic needs is the same as a narrow understanding of HS (ibid.: 383), which is only natural as the subject is different and the article written in a different time and security context than the one we are currently in.

What can be taken into the discussion, though, is the idea that some things need to be secured, before others can be achieved. It could, following this logic, be reasonable to assume that there is no need to talk about democracy or political security, if the context is an ongoing war, where food is rationed, and bullets and bombs are in the air. If water is unavailable, is it possible to discuss the need for love and compassion or, in a HS framework, community security? A thing to remember here is that security is way more often than not only talked about when it is not there (Baldwin 1997: 13). If there is lack of water, we want to find water, and is the problem about equality, then that is what we seek. This is seen in many contexts regarding problem-solution, but with the difference that when we talk about for example solution models, there is an ideal that we want to realise, when the solution is applied (Jöhncke et al. 2004). This ideal is more confusedly defined within the HS framework, than might be the case regarding other circumstances, which is also, as mentioned in Chapter 3, an issue (Baldwin 1997).

I have shown ambiguity earlier about the connectedness between different spheres of security as well as between capitals and accumulation of resources, to investigate to which degree political equality is achievable in an unequal economical setting. If all aspects of HS must be in place for any of them to be actualised - as some argue is also the case regarding democracy and equality respectively - then how can HS ever be achievable in a post-conflict or fragile setting where you need to start from scratch? On the other hand, if the different aspects of HS are in a hierarchy of prepotency as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and some securities need to be established before others,

it means that we can never attack the issues regarding for example political security, if health, food or personal security is not achieved first.

There might be a way out of this, though. I believe that to some degree, people need basic needs to be fulfilled before others can be attended – i.e., if bullets fly, it seems irrelevant to talk about pollution before addressing ceasefire (see Owen 2008 on prioritising securities). There might be exceptions, and I think these relate to the fact that there are different aspects of every single security. When it comes to food security these aspects are access, availability, utilisation and stability, as I have shown earlier, and these are partly applicable to other securities (Scialabba 2007). I have brought this up regarding both access to physical resources and to more abstract resources, as political and community security. Sometimes access and availability are improved, and even if utilisation and stability are not guaranteed, there is a potential for further development of a situation towards HS. When relating utilisation to democracy, I see it as the way in which one is able to participate and enjoy the rights that are made accessible and available. RTI exist, even if it is not utilised. The issue of utilisation does therefore not regard the possibility for actual use of RTI, but rather regards equal possibility to take part and speak up, as mentioned before (Heater 1999: 13-14).

The issue of achieving securities in a specific hierarchical order has more perspectives than the above-mentioned, and one is related to the correlation between development and knowledge, which also allows me to elaborate on the quote that began this chapter. We have seen that development is to always improve and get better. This is related to knowing more, which is turn is making you able to also act more, and sometimes to take more part in political decisions (Stehr 2016: 9; Chettri 2017: 17). This being said, it should also be mentioned that just because people are educated, it does not mean that they will automatically be better or more rational participants in democratic contexts (Achen & Bartels 2016: 4, 37). In the following, I will turn to the subject of knowledge in relation to development and participation.

7.2. The Importance of Knowledge

Knowledge and education are often highlighted as important for development to happen (Burgess 2016; Sharma et al. 2012; Dilli et al. 2015). Knowledge and educational level has also been brought up in this thesis regarding the possibility to take part in democracy and decision-making. I have shown how democracy can exist even if not all persons are educated, but this was on the premise that the human nature is to be a social being and that and if you are in a community, then what is best for the community is also best for you – and vice versa (Durkheim 1956[1922]: 76, 78). If this assumption is true, participatory democracy will bring forth the best solutions for the community, even when some are less educated than others, but only if all participate and are acknowledged as equally worthy of speaking. However, this cannot be transferred into meaning that development will come, simply because it is the best for the community, even though similarities between democracy and development have been shown in chapters 4 and 5. Development has different aspects, and both the Nepalese and the theories support this, both regarding development within the human being and regarding physical improvements of the surroundings. In both regards, knowledge and information is a way towards action in development, but does this mean that educated populations have more security than communities with high levels of illiteracy, then? Or how should education be measured?

Tomer suggests that when you have a broad approach to human capital including education, then this is a part of human development, stating that multiple factors are important for development, one part or capital cannot stand alone (2016). Simon Burgess notes that 'education affects your earnings, your employability, and your chance of succeeding in life […] and other aspects of a good life' (2016: 2), again blurring the line between development and security, as the definitions of the two overlap. Yet it clarifies how education is proportional to being developed and – with some interpretation – living a life in dignity, as some HS definitions also encompasses (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy 2007). How can knowledge mean a better life? Maybe it has to do with knowledge being more than academic education. Maybe knowledge is about being developed as a human being rather than as a schooled person.

The people in the villages were happy that their children were educated, as they thought it would make them more successful, but they wanted for themselves to be able to develop in the areas that mattered to them and not, for example by excelling in mathematics or reading. Knowledge becomes a wider frame that has to do with development, and therefore the two are connected. At least that is one theory which addresses the need for a broader understanding of what education and human development has is common (Tomer 2016).

Generally, it is fair to assume, that places with more peace and equality have better educated people, as resources can easier be distributed towards education than in countries with conflicts or wars (Sharma et al. 2012: 3). Does education or peace and prosperity then come first? This question cannot be answered here, but it adds to the discussion of achievement of HS, because it shows how HS is a complex concept, which needs more than standard solutions to be ever achieved – if complete security is even achievable – and cannot be said to be only a question about level of education, equality or anything else by itself, but is instead a web of interrelated factors, all working together to set the individual free to life its life in dignity. I want to address this freedom briefly in this discussion as well. I cannot answer the question about whether HS can be achieved gradually, or if all aspects have to be present simultaneously, but some aspects of the discussion hereof have been presented to show the complexity of the framework and its use. This is due to the fact that the aspects are interrelated and mutually enhancing, but at the same time, everything cannot happen at once. But whose responsibility is it then to choose which types of development will happen, and with what means? And what is freedom even? This will be discussed below.

7.3. Which Freedom – and for Whom?

Because freedom is a relative concept, it makes both freedom and of HS difficult, if not impossible, to define without context. The aspect of freedom regarding HS is mostly related to the dichotomy between having freedom to and freedom from things. If security is absence of threats, or 'the absence of threats to acquired values' (Baldwin 1997: 13), then the freedom is freedom from being suppressed, from starving or from war,

and it is freedom from losing power. It is a negative definition. Defining freedom as a freedom to, is in contrast, a positive definition. The negative definition offers one way of looking at security, whereas a positive definition allows for a more proactive approach in HS and development work, as it is turns the framework into being preventive rather than only responsive. It allows for it to be used in stable contexts and as a sustainable framework instead of a rebuilding tool for fragile settings.

It is still to be kept in mind, that security is always provided for someone by someone, and these someones' relations matters in relation to which freedoms come into play and how the HS can or cannot be said to be achieved from the provider's and/or the receiver's point of view. Often, the donor or provider of services – in this thesis understood in a broad sense including democracy-building, peace-keeping and emergency relief amongst others – is the one to decide when a project is successful or the opposite (Macrae et al. 2002: 4). This can result in fewer experienced benefits, than if the local people had been involved in the decision-making. The Nepali case is just one of many, where democracy and nation-building is a top priority. Donors have played a big role in constitution-processes and money is flowing to the country for emergency relief in relation to the earthquake and the recent flooding in the area. This is also the case with the projects of ASK that I have been part of. The implementation is local, and all people in the organisation are Nepali, but it is at the same time funded by donors from outside the country, and by funds who have (political) agendas as well. No matter who funds a project, they are the ones who gets to choose what the money is spent on. If the donor – interchangeable with "provider of services" – disagrees with a project, they simply stop supporting it. This balance of power can sometimes mean compromises for the way of life that was there in the first place. This change can be for the better, but it can also destroy a society, if the context is not understood by the donor. This can for example happen, when donors from democratic societies want to implement democracy in a new context, because it is accepted as a beneficiary solution in their own country (Achen & Bartels 2016: 55).

Then the question arises: Is it better for every country to have democracy? Some might think that it is, but maybe other types of government actually produce better

outcomes when looking at specific aspects (Ross 2006), and then, who are we – or anyone – to decide what other countries should do? What works in one context might not work in another; for example, nation-building in a country based on differences rather than similarities is different than it would be in most European countries, which have been nations based on ethnic similarities for centuries, for example Denmark (Dahal 2014; Togeby et al. 2004: 351, 336). If the point of establishment is different, we cannot expect the outcome to be the same, which has been discussed elsewhere regarding nation-states based on the rise of a greater community and security versus the ones based on the want to have what other nation-states have (Otterbein 1997: 264).

This is relevant to this thesis, as the case of implementing democracy in Nepal is also influenced by how democracy is done elsewhere. The deliberative democracy is bound up on state standards and wishes, which are again influenced by donor money, and as a result all development projects in Nepal generally have to live up to standards of inclusion of marginalised people in some way. This is also a way of creating power relations between people, even if the goal is to minimise differences, as has been shown with examples regarding caste and structure in the society. But if democracy is freedom, then is it even an issue if everyone has it? It should not be, but the challenge exists, because of the before-mentioned lack of inclusion in a supposed-to-be-inclusive system of governance. The opening quote of this thesis by Stehr about freedom and democracy as never fully happening points to some of the issues brought forth in this chapter of discussion. By stating that democracy and freedom have never been truly realised, it also says that democracy can never be complete liberty or absence of authority, and it puts democracy equal to freedom (Stehr 2016: 16-17). The question remains if either will ever be realised. This leads to a point of change in subject regarding how communities and understanding of group identity relate to achievement of democracy as well as of freedom, development and HS.

For democracy and HS to exist, the citizens must realise their role in a bigger picture, and as being part of a community, as active citizenship is needed in both frameworks. This in itself means that we assume that the want to choose for oneself is universal. Even if we did not establish that all securities must arise or exist simultaneously for

HS to increase, some things are important in its creation or stability, for example that all agree to everyone else deserving the same amount of security, thereby giving everyone the same liberty to choose. This can also be difficult, if the society is not a community (Dewey 1946: 98), but the aspect of freedom being keen in both democracy and HS leads to the thought that freedom is what is sought for, even if we cannot define the concept clearly.

When democracy is freedom and HS is freedom, can the two be said to demand the same of individuals as active participants in the society, as citizens in a community? I do not believe that democracy and HS are the same, but they still have similarities regarding the context in which, they can exist. We have also seen in the thesis that even with similarities, there are differences between the two, but because of the convergence of the two in the concept of freedom, they are relevant to compare and discuss in relation to each other. HS is based on the idea that the individual should be the one to be secured as part of an international community. As shown, the state is often the service provider, as it is the legitimised power, but on the other hand, some argue that the state is the only hindrance to creating HS, as it is enforcing the national identities and divisions between people on a global scale (Baldwin 1997: 10-11; Owen 2008: 445-446). On the other hand, the state is often depended on by the international community in security situations, leading to an expectation about the state taking on western or democratic standards for state-building, which I will discuss shortly (Andersen 2008). If this is the case, and the state is originally only there, because a public needs it (Dewey 1946; Hobbes 1997[1651]), then maybe Dewey has a point in saying that the community has not been able to follow the internationalisation and globalisation that has come with the industrialisation (1946: 98).

The world is getting more connected and everything is – to a larger degree – affecting more people in the world. As such the concept of security has, with the notion of HS and its implementation in foreign and national policies, attempted to follow the development in other spheres of society, for example related to new forms of wars or increasing migration (Kaldor 1999; Eriksen 2007; Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy 2007). But is an all-encompassing security-framework needed? And should it be for all, to be for

some? Perhaps the international relations and connections that exist make insecurity more relevant to overcome for all of us as citizens of the world, but at the same time, as we have seen with village communities, the national identities and regional belonging can be too big a challenge for the establishment of a global community. If that is the case, we are back to the question of who is seen as equals due to being a part of a possibly only imagined community, thereby evoking emotions and empathy with other people within it (Anderson 1983; Dewey 1946: 213). The democracy in Nepal functions, according to my informants, on a local level, and the distribution of money within the local community benefits all, if it benefits someone. This is so because of their connection to each other, and to the village as a community. It all seems good, but also counters the idea on partaking in a national or global community. The challenges we face in the world, are often affecting more than one country, and political decisions and goals are made on a global basis, for example with United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations n.d.). These, like HS or human rights, are put into force as universal solutions or frameworks, and even though taking local contexts into consideration in development situations, implementations sometimes fail because an input is expected to create a specific output in one place, because it did so in another (Dahal 2014; Porter et al. 2013).

On the one hand, the want to create freedom and sustainable solutions through processes already known to work is functioning, because sometimes a push in the right direction is what it takes to move on from a conflict situation, as mentioned earlier about expectations to the state (Andersen 2008; Porter et al. 2013: 316). On the other hand, 'rapidly building confidence through the delivery of justice and security services does not help much when the problem has been the lack of understanding about how to achieve that' (Porter et al. 2013). This critique of interventions hits the nail on the head regarding solutions that should fit all purposes. Local implementations of "universal" solutions can create new outcomes and reshape the ways in which frameworks or solution models can work, as for example seen with democracy in this case, but only with an in-depth understanding of the local context.

This discussion has taken up topics regarding the implementation of democracy and HS, and even though not coming to clear conclusions, I have elaborated on the implications of using a framework that is supposed to work on a global scale and be implemented universally. We have seen how power and relations play a big role in the implementation of development, and how fit-all-solutions can be both a challenge and a possibility to change a given framework. The discussion has also shown how contested concepts are often critiqued, and why they should be, but on the other hand also, how a globalised world with many common challenges needs a common ground for problem-solutions that can be locally interpreted – for better or for worse, but always for change.

8. CONCLUSION

This thesis has taken up the topic of local democracy as community in a post-conflict, newly declared federalisation. The main argument of this thesis is that by doing democracy as community, citizens can achieve some degree of security through development without conflict, even when the nation-state is fragmented. The group identification within the villages and the power that lies in defining who you are and what you can do, contributes to an experience of liberty and enhances the possibility for creating an equal community through development. There is, however, always another side of the coin, which should not be forgotten. This relates mostly to the aspect of human security dealing with national and global participation of citizens and to fragile states. The bigger picture, in this case being the want from the state and government for a national social inclusion and a national Nepali identity, is challenged by the local solutions and group identities, which has also created fields of tension in the past. However, this has not been the object of the study, taking a more one-sided approach, namely from the citizen point of view. This approach has made it possible to examine new understandings of democracy and development, respectively, and their contribution to empowerment and human security. Some of the main findings are presented here.

Democracy, at least in this thesis, means equality and inclusion and participation of all, and this participation is made possible by several factors: One is the strong relations within the community, creating a united force acting towards development of all people and surroundings in the village, be it water, roads or farming equipment and -techniques. Another is breaking the vicious circle of lack of development and lack of security reinforcing each other. To overcome this, knowledge about citizen rights and realisation of available resources within the villages are both bringing equality on the table, making the establishment of a democracy based on equality easier. Trust plays a crucial role in this, and as personal relations are already a major part of being Nepali, the strong trust and dependency-relationships are utilised in creating democratic communities. Complete equality in all aspects of life is not reached, and as shown earlier is not a realistic goal for anyone anywhere in the world (Stehr 2016: 16). It is on the

other hand possible to iron out some differences that has been created with the feudal structures in society that has created both social, structural and economic inequalities. If some of the differences can be brought to a minimum, it means that people, who has before been part of different and irreconcilable groups, can get closer to each other, figuratively and also physically, e.g. by better infrastructure, by being on an equal level in talking and in situating, as seen with the example of the community buildings in Chapter 4.

Being on an equal level is important for my informants, who often talked about being *mati* (up), entailing an experience of equality in social relations and participation, and choosing local leaders who can make sure that more people got placed higher. This, however, is also connected to a mistrust in the things and people who are out of reach. The information about rights provided in workshops from ASK have made the citizens aware of how to approach the system, and the community security means that they have reached a state where they know, they can speak on the same level as someone else; i.e. the women and Dalits can participate and speak their mind as good as a man or a government official. The distance in space and social position was somehow reduced with the restructuring of the country and by enlightenment about rights. The decrease in distances gave a possibility for the citizens to approach government offices and officials, and to apply for and demand funds and development of different kinds. This generated more resources in the village, leading to a greater feeling of empowerment, again leading to improved possibility of taking action and contributing to enhancing one's own and the community's development (Williams 2014).

Development is thereby both to achieve and to exercise power and is contributing to people being able to earn their own living as well as seeing the village in general develop. Following United Nations Development Programme's framework of human security, this sets people free and make them able to contribute more to 'their own development and that of their communities, their countries and the world' (UNDP 1994: 24). To live in dignity and freedom is, as has been discussed in Chapter 7, difficult to define finitely. The people in the villages did not have an end goal for what development should bring, other than it should be to live better, always. This fits with the

idea of a stable life and also with the idea of resources generating more resources and capitals leading to more capitals (Bourdieu 1986).

I have shown in this thesis that development depends on power and knowledge. Shown by analysis and discussion in the thesis, knowledge is, amongst other things, understood as ability to act, and as both information and development, according to my informants, mean actions more than they mean words and promises, knowledge seems to be of major importance, when understood in this broader sense. It also encompasses a social aspect, as all action is relational. By this, I mean that the difference in power between people is crucial for determining the possibility for action, and in relation to this, an important finding is the correlation between the physical and perceived distances between people, and how these seem to overlap.

Distance in social position and in space is related to how people interact and connect. Group identity is based on ethnicity, language or common ideas about the past and/or the future (Friedman 1992), and the fragmented and fragile state has, as shown in Chapter 6, contributed to a salience in ethnic identities, as the state is not able to spread an awareness of a common Nepali identity. This could seem negative, as the idea of the nation-state is normally in close connection to democracy (Andersen 2008), but in the case of Nepal, the group identification and feelings of belonging contribute to the processes of participation in democratic decisions.

This thesis has been based on a broad understanding of human security and of democracy. This allows for the concepts to be explored contextually and in new settings, which has contributed to comparisons and interrelations of concepts which are not otherwise comparable but merely seen as sometimes dependent on each other. Human security is often sought for, when it is not there and often implemented in fragile situations as a freedom-from framework. Oppositional, its emergence as democracy and development in Nepali villages is related to a freedom-to approach, making it possible for some of the aspects of security to exist, even when others are still to be achieved.

This thesis is not seeking to conclude on how to do human security, or to say that every democratic development in Nepal is the "right way" of doing things. It does,

however, offer an understanding of how normatively described and understood concepts can be locally negotiated towards reaching new standards for development, security and equality, and how changes can happen, when people realise and make use of resources in new ways. The human security framework established to ensure security for every individual can meet challenges both due to globalisation and the ever-expanding understandings of greater communities and due to the opposite, shown in the case of Nepal, where local belonging becomes a hindering to seeing the bigger picture. This does not mean that it cannot exist on different levels, which is a note to end on; one concept, despite – or maybe even because of – being without a universally agreed upon definition, can work both locally and globally, maybe even simultaneously, and maybe without other coherence than the use of the same words and a goal of creating change towards a better world.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Map of Nepal showing the districts Kavre (yellow) and Syangja (red). The colours represent the Development Regions of the old structure in the country.

Appendix 2

Description	Old structure (pre 2015)	New Structure (post 2015)
Development Regions	5	0
Zones	14	0
Provinces	0	7 (Not yet Named)
Districts (District Development Committees)	75	77 (District Coordination Committees)
Metropolitan Cities	1	6
Sub - Metropolitan	4	11
Municipalities	212	272
Village Development Committees	3157	0
Rural Municipalities	0	477

Overview of the restructuring of Nepal. Notice how Village Development Committees are replaced by Rural Municipalities, which are larger units. Additionally the 5 Development Regions are replaced by 7 Provinces, as well as the Zones are no longer used as entities. Credit: ASK Nepal

Appendix 3

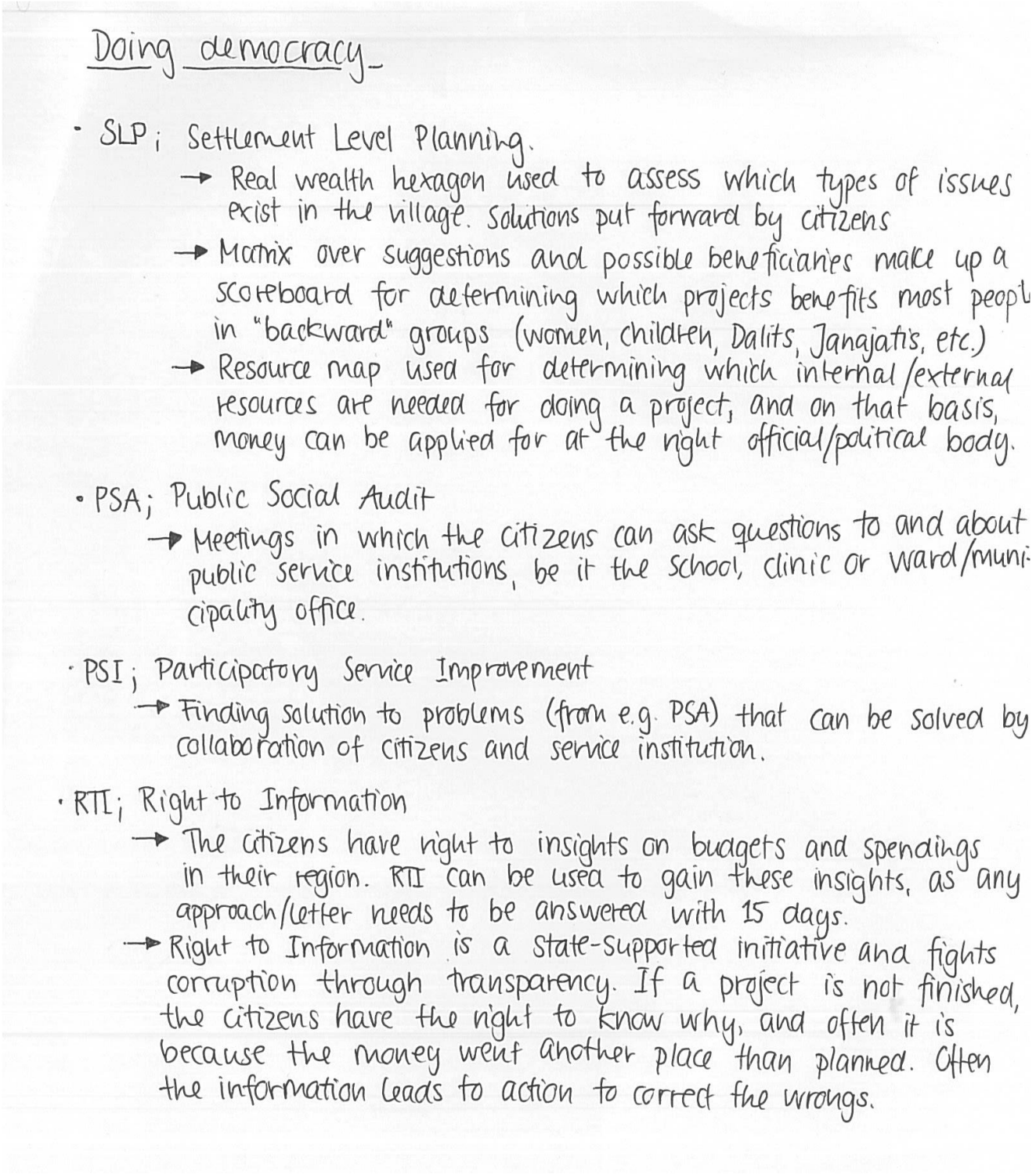
Credit: ASK Nepal

PGS (Participatory Guarantee system):
In Participatory Guarantee system certification system certification process of organic product is organized and managed as per local surrounding through the participation of producer, consumer and other related stakeholder. IN PGS certain criteria is developed and different rule regarding organic production and different terms for producer should be clearly known. The criteria can be developed in base of national and international criteria. All the terms for the stakeholder should be made with the participation of stakeholders. It takes some more time but it is important thing that all stakeholders (producer, processor, marketer, and consumer) develop we feeling, feeling of ownership and also feeling of commitment for the whole system and the criteria can be revised as per the national and international certification body if the stakeholder wants. Primary stakeholders are producer and consumer (marketer) but other organization can be involved in it like government offices, nongovernment offices or private offices.

Internal Control System (ICT):
In Internal Control System to reduce the cost of certification and to increase accessibility of certification to all small organic producer all the organic producer are organized in group and certification is done by the producer. In this system organic certification body (outer) made a certification management committee with in a group to audit yearly activities of farmers.
Organizational Structure
1. Certification body
2. Group
a. Internal Approval Committee
b. Internal control system management committee
c. Evaluation and monitoring
Internal control system management committee has coordinator who handles internal inspector and technical facilitator which both help producer farmer or group.

The two different types of Organic Certification in Nepal. The PSG is preferred by ASK in their project, as it is easier and cost-free, and promotes trust and community-feeling.

Appendix 4

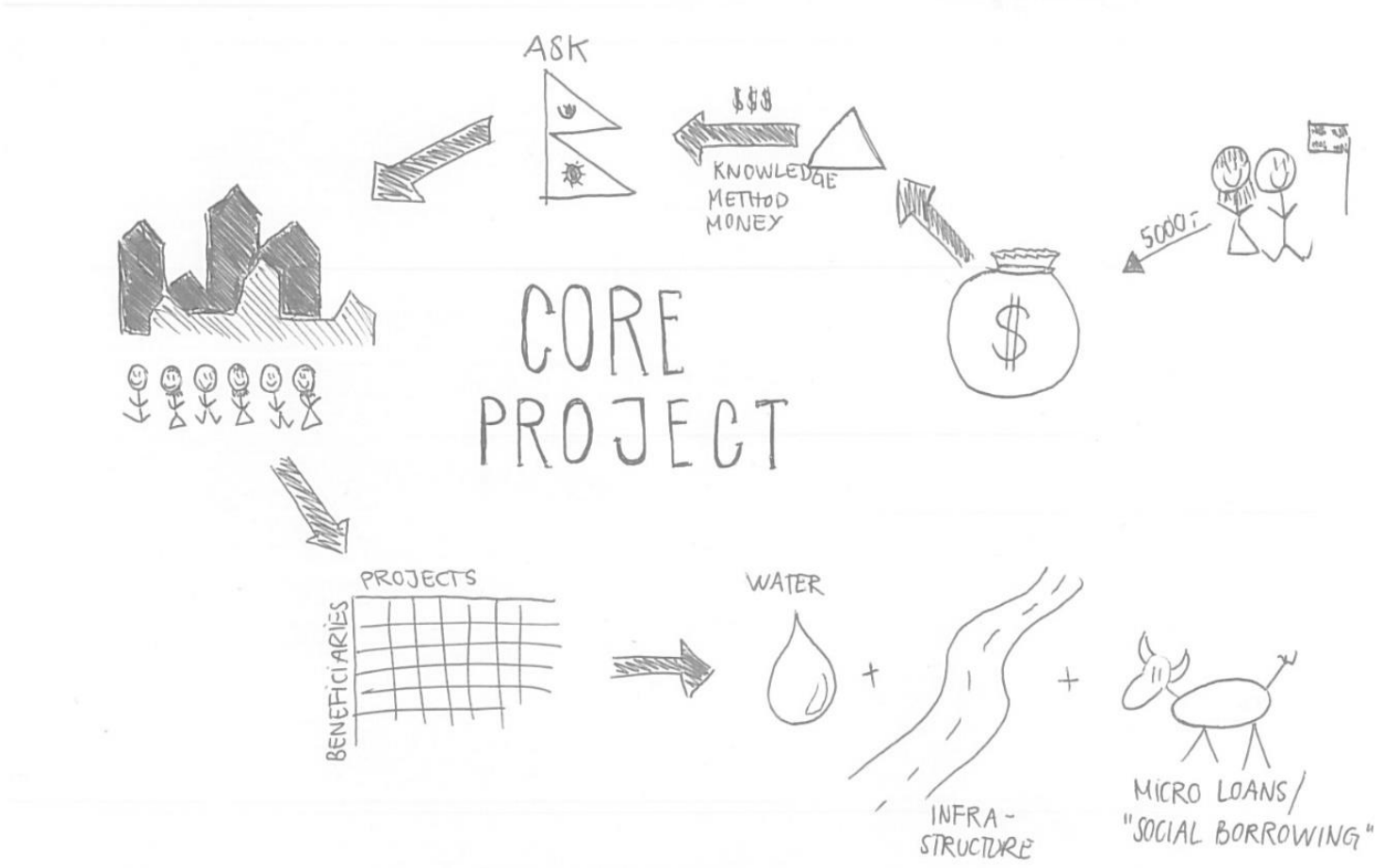


Doing democracy-

- SLP; Settlement Level Planning.
  - → Real wealth hexagon used to assess which types of issues exist in the village. Solutions put forward by citizens
  - → Matrix over suggestions and possible beneficiaries make up a scoreboard for determining which projects benefits most peopl in "backward" groups (women, children, Dalits, Janajatis, etc.)
  - → Resource map used for determining which internal/external resources are needed for doing a project, and on that basis, money can be applied for at the right official/political body.
- PSA; Public Social Audit
  - → Meetings in which the citizens can ask questions to and about public service institutions, be it the school, clinic or ward/municipality office.
- PSI; Participatory Service Improvement
  - → Finding solution to problems (from e.g. PSA) that can be solved by collaboration of citizens and service institution.
- RTI; Right to Information
  - → The citizens have right to insights on budgets and spendings in their region. RTI can be used to gain these insights, as any approach/letter needs to be answered with 15 days.
  - → Right to Information is a state-supported initiative and fights corruption through transparency. If a project is not finished, the citizens have the right to know why, and often it is because the money went another place than planned. Often the information leads to action to correct the wrongs.

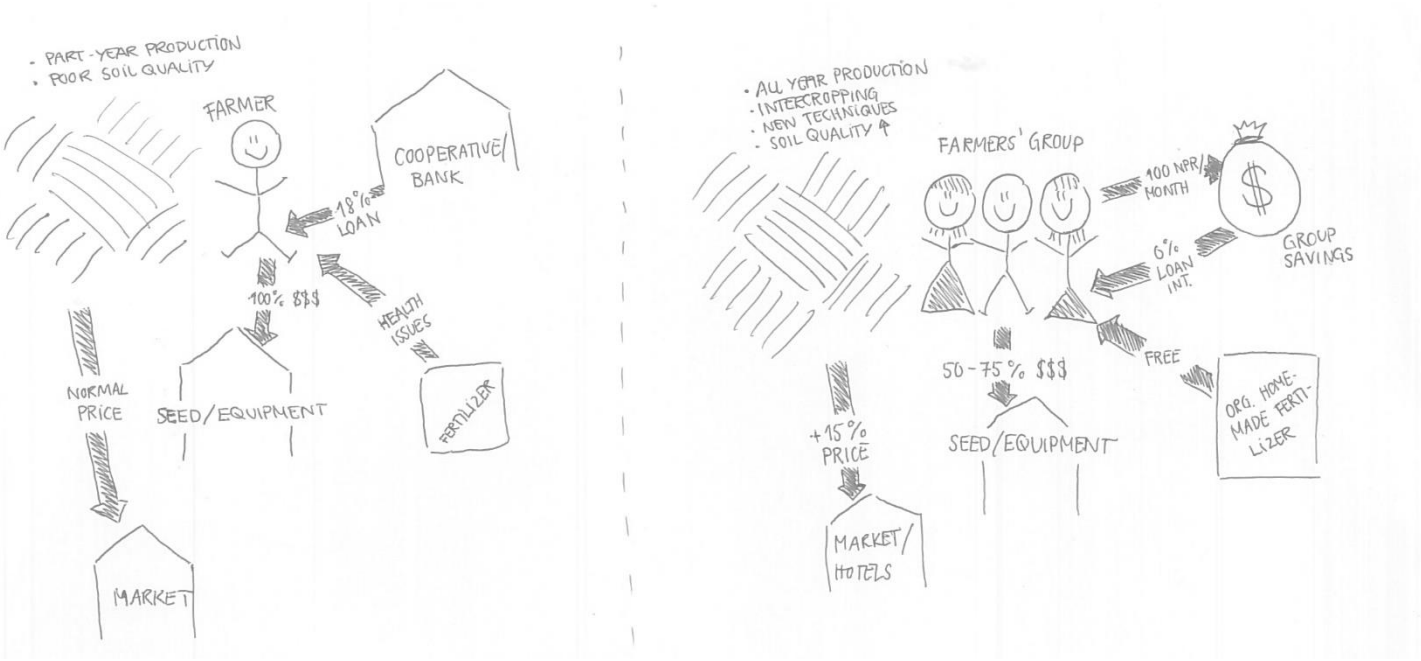
Field Notes; Different aspects of the Doing Democracy Project. The RTI and SLP are the ones most used and the ones the citizens know most about and can use.

Appendix 5



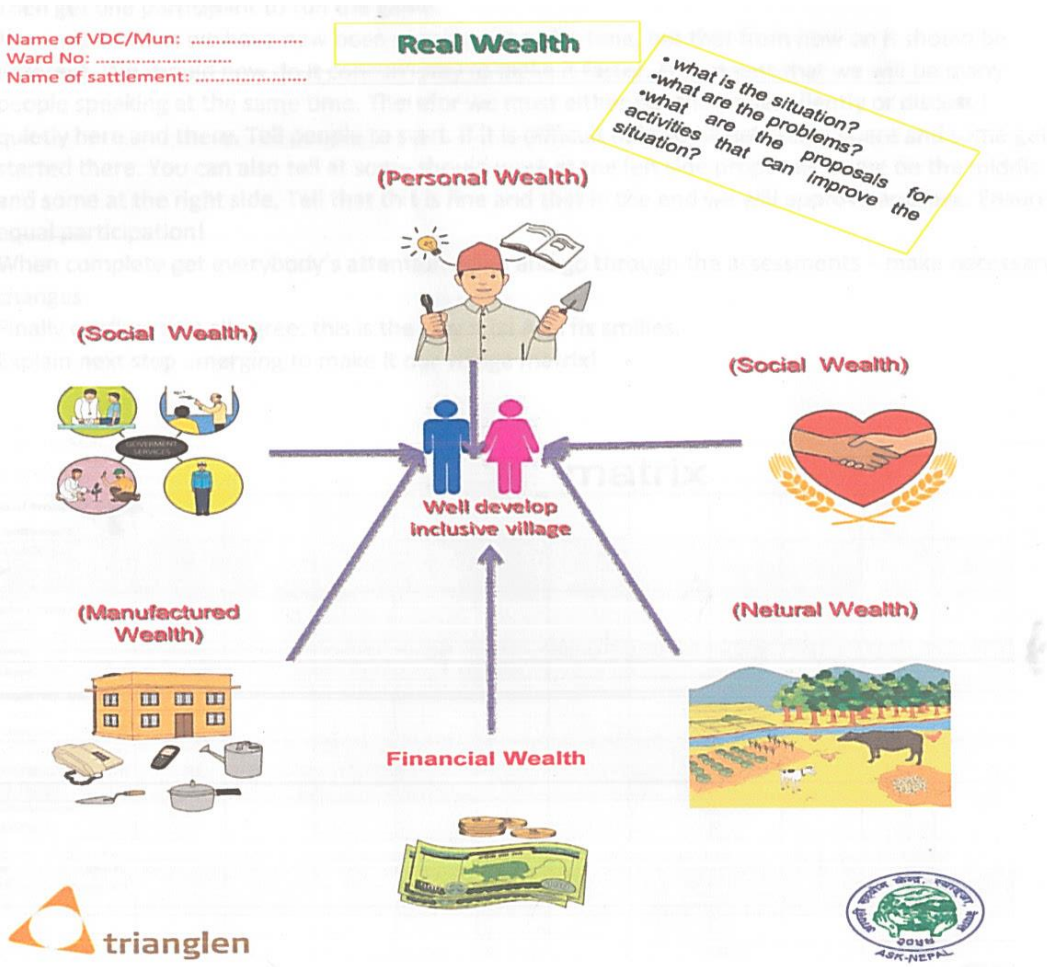
Field Notes; Different steps of Settlement Level Planning Process from Danish donations to implemented projects.

Appendix 6



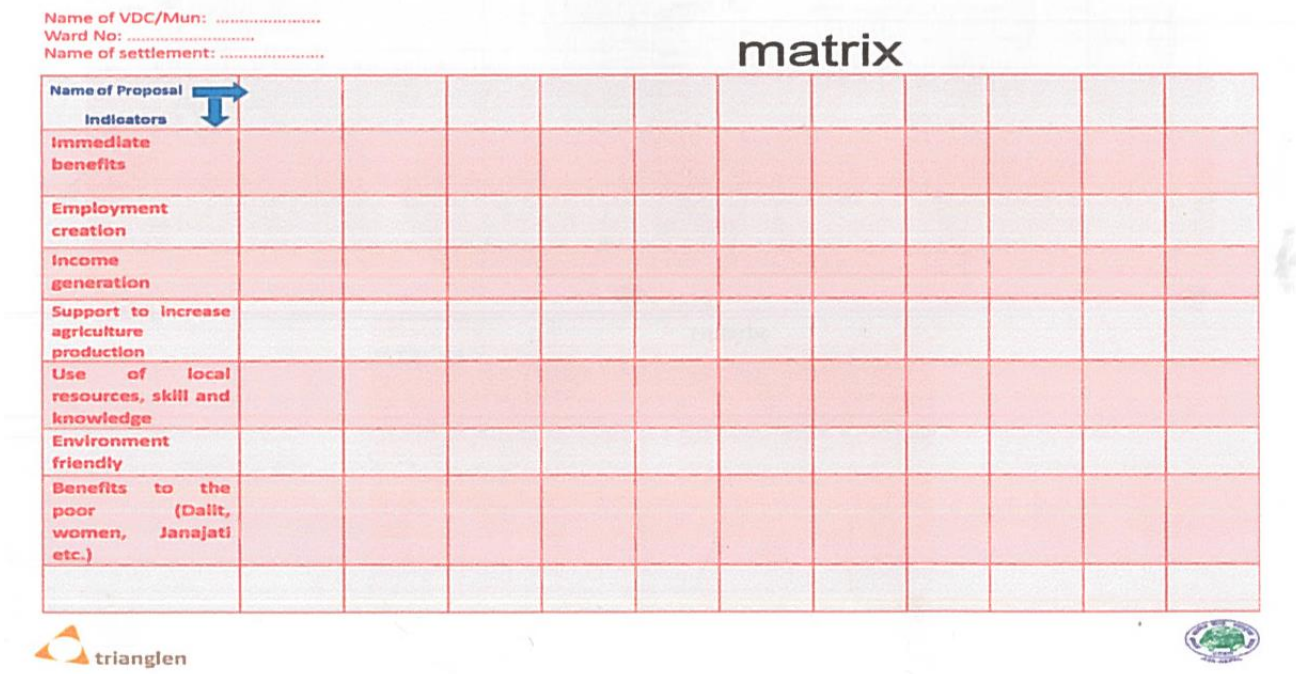
Field Notes; On the left: Single, conventional farmer. On the right: Organic Farmers' Group.

Appendix 7



Different capitals that can be accumulated or achieved. The figure in the middle symbolises the inclusive and developed community, reached when all forms of capitals are present. From the teaching material used in the workshops by ASK.

Appendix 8



Name of VDC/Mun: .....
Ward No: .....
Name of settlement: .....

matrix

Name of Proposal / Indicators											
Immediate benefits											
Employment creation											
Income generation											
Support to increase agriculture production											
Use of local resources, skill and knowledge											
Environment friendly											
Benefits to the poor (Dalit, women, Janajati etc.)											

trianglen

Model of the matrix used for point system during the Settlement Level Planning (SLP).