EXPLORING ORDER AND DISJUNCTURE

A STUDY OF THE RELATION BETWEEN RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES OF INGOS AND NGOS IN NEPAL

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ABSTRACT

Results-based management (RBM) has become a central management policy to enhance aid effectiveness and achieve results of development interventions. This thesis examines the relationship between policy and practice and how this relationship unfolds in the context of RBM policy and the practices of INGOs and NGOs in Nepal. Based on interviews with development actors working in INGOs and NGOs in Nepal and within a conceptual framework derived from ethnographic studies of development, our findings suggest that a disjuncture emerges between development policy and practice, because of the marginal influence development policies have on practices, since practices are generated by other logics and rationalities than that of the policy. Our findings furthermore point to the issue that the disjuncture is rather unacknowledged due to processes of translation and brokerage within which development actors conceal the disjuncture and produce an appearance of order. This is shown to have negative impact on development since it results in a construction of a 'virtual reality', which poses problems for learning and evidence-based decision-making, and thus for the hope of making development aid more effective.

CONTENT

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil society organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
MfDR	Managing for Development Results
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBM	Results-Based Management
USAID	U.S. Agency for international Development
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation

1 INTRODUCTION

The international development sector[1] has received critique from various fronts; within certain academic circles for being a neo-colonial project and more publicly for spending enormous amounts of tax-payers' money without being able to show sustainable and positive results equivalent to the resources spent (Sjöstedt 2013: 143). Hence, the development sector has resorted to reformation of development policies as a response to the 'crisis' of development (Mosse 2004: 640; Escobar 1992: 20) and as a way to regain lost legitimacy and public support. Especially in the past two decades the international development sector has devoted great attention towards generating new global and more uniform policies (Mosse 2005a: 1).

One outcome of this process of reformation is the emergence of the 'aid effectiveness agenda'; an on-going, global initiative, and process of improving and making international development aid cooperation more effective and secure sustainable results and impact of the funds spent (Wood et. al 2011). Various meetings and forums have been held within the international community in order to address the concern of aid effectiveness. Among the most influential initiatives is the endorsement of the 'Paris Declaration' at the Second High Level Forum for Aid Effectiveness in 2005. The declaration is the centrepiece of the aid effectiveness agenda and entails five principles of partnership commitments, which donor governments and partner governments in the developing countries have committed to incorporate in their development strategies and policies (OECD 2005/2008). One

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[1] The term 'development sector' refers to all actors, agencies, institutions and organisations working with development ranging from grassroot to global and international level.

of the five principles is 'Managing for Results' (ibid. 7) and as such the aid effectiveness agenda has come to entail a strong incentive for implementing results-based management (RBM)[2]. RBM relies on the assumption that in order to be able to deliver better results, it is necessary to focus on results throughout the entire planning, implementation, and evaluation of development interventions (OECD 2004: 3). The management approach is simplest understood as a shift from a focus on input and immediate outputs, to a focus on outcomes, results, and their impact. In the 'Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's' (OECD's) venture on 'Managing for Development Results' (MfDR) the approach is defined as representing 'best practice' in the endeavour of improving the effectiveness of public management (OECD 2008b: 1). The principle and emphasis on the importance of managing for results have since 2005 been reaffirmed and further developed, among others in the 'Accra Agenda for Action' in 2008 and the 'Busan Partnership Agreement for Effective Development Cooperation' in 2011, and many OECD 'Development Assistance Committee' (DAC) member countries have since adopted RBM policies[3] (Eyben 2015: 845).

Critique of RBM

However, recent research on the implications of applying RBM within development[4], raises questions to whether this approach is feasible and whether it enhances effectiveness or rather has negative implications for development. Several scholars argue that change processes within a development context are often unpredictable due to a complex relationship between cause and effect; a relationship that RBM does not fully encompass. Demonstrating results on a short-term basis is another

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[2] We use the term 'results-based management' in a broad sense to collectively describe the various approaches, management systems and frameworks that focus on results of development interventions.

[3] We adopt a broad conception of policy in this thesis and justify this with David Mosse's (2004) reflection on the interconnectedness of policy as project design, policy models and wider donor agency policy: 'The justification for adopting a broad conception of policy here is the strong inter-connection that exists between project designs (causal theories, e.g., summarized in logical frameworks), policy models (frameworks and approaches, e.g., sustainable rural livelihoods) and the wider policy of a donor agency (e.g., participatory and poverty focused development). So, while much of the focus of the paper will be on policy as project design, model and approach, it will become clear (a) that these acquire form and win (or lose) legitimacy because they articulate (or fail to articulate) wider policy ambitions; and (b) that project exemplars are necessary to frame and sustain wider policy itself' (Mosse 2004: 640).

[4] Development is, in the context of this study, a social phenomenon and the sum of the social processes and institutional practices induced by actors who act to transform a society (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 24). As opposed to: 'actors and institutions who take development as an object or an end to which they devote time, money and professional competence' (ibid.).

challenging issue that the literature points at. The complexity of change processes moreover imply that it is challenging if not impossible to attribute results to specific development projects (Mosse 2005a; Eyben 2015; Sjöstedt 2013; Vähamaki et al. 2011).

Scholars furthermore argue that the increased focus on results has created a preference for familiar and conventional projects that are easier to measure, yet often less transformational and relevant. In addition, some claim that RBM causes an increase of the amount of resources required to comply with the policy, resources that are diverted away from the actual implementation of projects (Mosse 2005a; Eyben 2015; Sjöstedt 2013; Vähämaki et al. 2011).

These implications must inevitably also affect the work of organisations closer towards the implementation level of development work, because of the way that development aid is dispersed through project support to civil society organisations (CSOs). Hence, when donor country agencies adopt RBM it will indirectly influence their implementing partner CSOs. However, most of the abovementioned research has focused on the effects and implications of RBM on a bilateral level and in the context of development agencies. Little research has been published on the effects of RBM on the practices of civil society organisations, and especially on a local implementing level in the developing countries (Eyben 2015: 747). In the current research, focus seems to be on the policy and its implications - that is, whether RBM works or not. And more significantly, the relationship and processes between RBM policy and the practices it intends to direct are not examined in-depth or with a focus on the role of the development practitioner, their agency, and ability to respond to and deal with the implications of RBM policy.

Examining RBM in Nepal

We thus set forth to examine how development practitioners on an implementing level in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in Nepal experience the requirements of managing for results, what impact the demands for results have on their practice, and how their practices are shaped. We conducted interviews with altogether 19 INGOs and NGOs in Nepal and one consultancy on these issues. However, what the participating practitioners told us about their experiences and their practices left us rather puzzled. In the main part of the participants' accounts it is possible to identify two contradictory 'storylines' about RBM and the participants' practices. These two

storylines manifest themselves parallel to each other in the same interviews by the same participants.

Most of the participants stated that they had adopted RBM into their practices to varying degrees. They explained that managing for results and focussing on results throughout the project cycle allowed them to be more focused on their goals and it furthermore enhanced their effectiveness and the likeliness of achieving results. They stated that they were not too burdened by the demand for results and generally seemed to give accounts of how well their practices were going and how good their results were.

Yet in a parallel storyline the participants would also tell us about the many challenges they experience with RBM. From the practitioners' accounts, it appeared as if many of them are unable to make RBM policy practicable, and that their project management practices are not in accordance with the logics and normative expectations of RBM policy. Rather there seemed to be a disjuncture between RBM policy and the practices of the development practitioners.

This made us question the relationship between policy and practice and the role of development practitioners in this process. Why do the participants seemingly promote the RBM policy and conceal the fact that in most cases it is not possible for them to make the policy practicable? And if policy does not shape their practices, what then does? And how can we understand the role of policy if it is not to shape and inform practice?

Social processes of development

Scholars within the field of anthropology have recently argued that in order to fully understand how development works one needs to understand and examine 'the real mechanisms at work and [analyse] the social processes at stake' (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 26). Such approach entails and emphasises the important role of development actors, which for many years have been neglected in research on development (ibid. 167).

According to Anthropologists David Mosse and David Lewis, studying development practice with an actor-oriented approach

> facilitates understanding of the ways government bureaucracies and
> development organizations operate and the differences between their formal

> objectives and goals and those that emerge through the practices and strategies
> pursued by actors at different organizational levels. (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 9)

The theoretical orientation of recent ethnographic studies of development enables an analysis of the relationship between development policy and practice through examining the social actors and processes, the interactions, and the agency of development practitioners in the 'interface' between various actors, knowledge systems, and power relations. We intent to examine the development practitioners' accounts of their practices and experiences with RBM within this theoretical orientation. We wish to examine the relationship between RBM policies and implementing practices of INGOs and NGOs in Nepal and how and why a 'disjuncture' emerges. Furthermore, the theoretical framework allow us to examine how and why the practitioners seem to produce 'order' in their accounts; that is an appearance of compliance with RBM policy and promotion of RBM policy. This study will subsequently allow us to discuss the relationship between policy and practice and the wider implications this relationship might pose on development.

This leads us to the following research questions:

Research questions

1) How and why does a disjuncture emerge between RBM policy and the practices of development actors working in INGOs and NGOs in Nepal?

2) How and why do development actors produce order between policy and practice?

3) What consequences does this imply for development?

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will present the methodological approach and considerations for the research. First, we will give an account of the theory of science in order to clarify the ontological and epistemological foundation on the basis of which the research is carried out. Next, we will present our strategy for searching and reviewing literature. Subsequently, we will account and argue for our approach in relation to the production of our empirical data in Nepal and the interview methods applied. Finally, we will present the choice of theoretical framework that informs the analysis.

2.2 Theory of science

In the following section, the scientific theoretical foundation will be described. The aim is to explain the theoretical perspective on the basis of which the research question is considered, in order to clarify the ontological and epistemological premises that form the basis of the analysis. This is followed by an account of the specific choice of theory of science and the consequences that it entails for the research in question.

Our research takes its point of departure in a social constructivist perspective on the production of knowledge and research in general. A key element of social constructivism is its foundation in an ontological anti-essentialism. According to social constructivism, no absolute reality exists prior to having meaning ascribed to it, contrary to a positivist ontological understanding of 'reality'. This does not mean that social constructivism claims that a reality does not exist, but simply that reality

will always be mediated through different meanings, and that it is not possible to make a reference to reality that is not somehow constructed (Stormhøj 2006: 151). This also entails that various realities might exist simultaneously and these realities are never fixed or finished sizes, but may continuously be reconstructed and articulated in new ways (ibid. 67).

The ontological perspective in social constructivism is linked to a perception that language is constitutive of how reality is comprehended. This is because it is through language that humans construct reality. It is not possible to comprehend reality without thinking, which is processed through language, concepts, and categories (ibid. 16, 66). Thus, we can only comprehend phenomena through language, and how we understand a phenomenon is determined by how meaning is ascribed and constructed around this phenomenon (Dahler-Larsen 2013: 33).

Through the perspective of social constructivism, it is not possible, nor is it the goal to achieve universal knowledge. Knowledge is perceived as rooted in a specific historical context constituted of power, values, and interests. Knowledge is therefore subject to different interpretations and perspectives. In social constructivism 'true' knowledge is understood as a discursive construction and as the result of a power struggle between different discourses. Hence, what is accepted as 'true' knowledge is the result of a successful hegemonization (Stormhøj 2006: 19). By insisting that no knowledge is absolute and all knowledge is changeable, social constructivism has to continuously ask questions about the existing and prevailing knowledge, which is why the framework tends to foster a critical perspective.

Research done from a perspective of social constructivism often asks 'how' rather than 'what'. The purpose of our research is precisely to ask how and why the disjuncture between RBM policy and practice emerges, and how and why development actors produce practice and order. According to Peter Dahler-Larsen, the ontological and epistemological standpoint of constructivism enables the researcher to see the reality as it appears for those who are constructing it (Dahler-Larsen 2013: 33). By employing a social constructivist approach it becomes possible for us to examine the above questions from the accounts of the interview participants and how they experience and construct their realities.

Finally, as with any knowledge in the perspective of social constructivism, the knowledge that we produce in the research should neither be seen as universal, nor objective. Specific interpretation processes and perspectives determine the

knowledge that we produce. In order for outsiders to be able to assess the validity of the research, we find it important to ensure transparency throughout the research process. That entails explicating all of the choices and decisions made during the research process. Such reflections on the span and limitations of our research will further add to an assessment of the quality of the research (Fuglsang et al. 2007: 17).

2.3 Literature search

Part of the research process has been to carry out an extensive literature search, in order to be able to conduct the research on the foundation of the latest and most relevant existing literature. We have intended to be as thorough as possible in the search and review of literature and existing research, as we find it important to have access to and be familiar with the latest and most relevant existing literature on the research topic. This literature review has also served the purpose of contextualising the field within which the research question operates.

The literature review initially functioned as a way to access and get acquainted with the research area that we intended to study, with the purpose of identifying: what is known already, relevant concepts and theories, research methods that have been employed, and significant controversies or inconsistencies (Bryman 2012: 98). However, searching for and reviewing relevant literature has been done continuously throughout the entire span of the research.

By applying a stringent and thorough method for the literature review, we believe that our results and conclusions will be more representative, less biased, and more valid. On these grounds, we have conducted an extensive literature review on RBM within the development sector, the historical context of RBM, where it is implemented, what the results-based approach to development management implies, and what research exists on this approach. Furthermore, we have searched for literature that could help us understand and shed light on the relationship between RBM policy and the practice it is supposed to inform, and the way in which development actors are able to actively produce and shape their practices and produce order and disjuncture.

Initially, we conducted a pilot search for literature and research on the area in question. This was done through regular Google searches, Google scholar searches, and by searching the Roskilde University Library's general database. When searching for literature through a search engine such as Google, it is essential to do a

thorough quality assessment of the various results and authors, since the results might be of varying quality and authenticity (ibid. 115). The pilot search generated many interesting results on relevant literature and provided us with an idea on useful and valuable search combinations that have proven useful in the further literature search. The pilot search also provided us with an idea on which academic journals and development research institutes, researchers, and authors, we gainfully could look closer at.

From that point on, we searched various academic sources, development research institutes, organisations and various development cooperation initiatives, OECD and so forth. We used key words and various combinations of these to find literature. The most used key words were among others results-based management + development + aid-effectiveness + development policy + policy and practice + practice + actors + impact evaluation etc. Another method we applied was forward mapping of literature, which entails carrying out a cited reference search that allowed us to view newer publications that cited a specific article or book of relevance to the topic. In the same manner, we also did backward mapping of literature, which is reviewing the bibliography of a specific book or article of relevance to our research topic.

The literature search has resulted in an account of the framework within which the research has been conducted. This framework will be presented in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. The literature search has furthermore resulted in literature and anthropological research on development practice, which constitute our research's theoretical orientation from which we analyse the field of development practice and policy.

2.4 Interviews with development practitioners

In order to study development and understand how development practice works, it is important to focus on the development actors' point of view and analyse and explore the knowledge and strategies of the social actors in relation to their contradictions and contexts (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 9). Hence, in order for us to examine how RBM policies affect the practices of development on an implementing level, we have chosen to examine the experiences of the development practitioners and the central role they have in shaping and producing development.

Our empirical data has been produced through conducting semi-structured interviews with development practitioners employed in INGOs and NGOs in Kathmandu, Nepal. We conducted altogether 20 qualitative interviews with practitioners employed in INGOs, NGOs and a consultancy.

2.4.1 Interviewing in Nepal

We chose to conduct our research among development organisations in Kathmandu, Nepal. One of us had previous experience with living in, conducting research, and working as an intern in Nepal. We deemed that this experience and familiarity with Nepal and the knowledge on the country's historical and cultural contexts and its developmental issues would be advantageous when accessing the field and understanding the context in which the organisations work. Furthermore, Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world and is classified as a Least Developed Country (World Bank 2016) and has received both bilateral and multilateral development aid for decades. This means that a broad array of development actors (INGOs, local NGOs, international agencies etc.) are present in the country and have been for many years. Firstly, this made Nepal an interesting choice of field to conduct our research and successively, we deemed that we would be more likely to have fruitful encounters with a satisfying amount of development actors because of the amount of organisations present in the country.

2.4.2 Selecting participants

We chose to focus our research on Nepalese NGOs and INGOs present in the country. According to a literature review of existing research (see Chapter 4) we found that not much research had been carried out on how RBM policies affect and influence practice on an implementing level, rather the research on RBM that we are familiar with, deal with issues within development agencies in donor countries.

We believe this has enabled us to get an insight into the practice of development actors that are working closest to the 'ground' level and with the implementation and management of development projects. Researching this level in regards to RBM has enabled us to examine what is at stake when the participants adopt an RBM framework, how they experience RBM, and shed light on how the apparent disjuncture between RBM policy and practice manifests itself. It has furthermore enabled us to examine how and why development practitioners on an implementing project level produce an appearance of order and compliance with policy and what

this implies for development. Furthermore, we believe that there has not been sufficient research that examines these aspects on an implementing level prior to ours.

Initially, our interest was to conduct an ethnographic study of one or more NGOs and INGOs in Nepal on their practices and experiences with RBM. We wished to observe the work within the organisation, conduct interviews with various actors at different levels, and participate in fieldtrips, monitoring and evaluation (M&E). However, we eventually had to abandon this initial idea of conducting ethnographic fieldwork and re-think our research and methods. This was due to difficulties of accessing the field, which meant that we did not manage to establish an early contact with an organisation that was interested in participating in such a study. Instead of an ethnographic study of the practices of one or two organisation, we aimed at conducting semi-structured qualitative interviews with representatives from various INGOs and NGOs to learn about their practices, experiences, and opinions on RBM.

Our method for selecting organisations was purposive, which entails selecting participants that meet specific criteria, which will allow the research question to be answered (Bryman 2012: 418). However, we deliberately chose not to apply numerous selection criteria. Especially in the beginning, we wanted to have an open approach and see where this would lead. However, there were some basic criteria for the selection of INGOs and NGOs. First of all, both INGOs and NGOs had to have a webpage where we could read about what kind of work these organisations do and find contact information. Secondly, they had to have an office in Kathmandu, since we were unable to travel outside of the city and the valley due to a long lasting fuel shortage in Nepal. Thus, we had to focus on organisations that we could physically access within the capital.

A third criteria, for the NGOs in particular, was that they had to receive funding from either some of the more well-established global INGOs or from international development agencies. The reason for this criteria was to increase the likelihood that the organisation would manage and report in relation to results, since many of the global, well-established INGOs or development agencies, require RBM of their implementing partners, the NGOs, in one form or another. Yet, this was not a criteria for which we could not be flexible, which meant that a few of the NGOs did in fact not receive funding from such donors. The list of INGOs was made up of some of

the most well-established and well-known international development organisations, of which we already had some knowledge and familiarity with.

We also used the method of snowballing in the process of selecting some of the organisations. After the first few interviews with representatives from NGOs, we asked if they could refer us to similar organisations that might be interesting for us to meet with and talk to. This led us in the direction of a few NGOs, which we otherwise might not have found. We also used the snowballing method online. Reviewing the webpages of some of the INGOs and NGOs made it possible to identify some implementing partners of the INGOs or the funding partners of the NGOs. Through a combination of these methods we were able to make up a list of INGOs and NGOs, which we could then approach with our inquiry.

2.4.3 Establishing contact with participants

We contacted INGOs and NGOs, shortlisted during the selection process, first by phone and second by sending them an explanatory email with our enquiry to schedule for an interview. When we contacted the organisations we briefly introduced ourselves and our inquiry. We informed that we were students from Denmark conducting research for our Master's thesis on the practices and experiences of organisations in relation to RBM. We furthermore explained that we were interested in meeting with a representative from the organisation to talk about their practice and their experiences with RBM in relation to project planning, M&E, reporting to donors etc. Providing the organisations with this information, we to some extent let them decide with whom we ought to talk or make further contact to. If they seemed to be in doubt, we suggested that it could be someone in charge of M&E, reporting, project planning etc.

This process resulted in interviews with 19 organisations and one consultancy that conduct M&E for organisations. The interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes. Some of the participants were employed within a department engaged only with M&E, reporting, learning, etc. This was mostly the case within the INGOs and bigger NGOs, who have the capacity and resources for such departments or specific M&E staff. In other organisations, mainly the smaller NGOs, the participant was often the person in charge of the organisation, such as the President or Executive Director. According to Rosalind Eyben and Irene Guijit, whether a practitioner experiences the results and evidence agenda as positive or negative heavily relies on that

person's organisational role and on their respective organisations' location in the aid nexus (Eyben & Guijit 2015: 326). The results from a survey carried out by Eyben and Guijit, suggests that academics and consultants were generally more negative towards RBM where as people responsible for M&E in the organisation were generally more positive (ibid. 327). As such, the limited dispersion of participants' position within the organisations and the organisations' position within the aid chain might have created limitations with regards to whose perspectives are represented and hence the inferences we can make from the interviews.

The NGOs that we selected work within the areas of advocacy, capacity building, and rights and empowerment of various marginalised groups, such as women, Dalit, unskilled workers and disabled people. The INGOs selected work within a broader scope of development areas, such as education, health, rights and empowerment, women's and children's right, peace building and to some extent service delivery and humanitarian aid.

We had beforehand anticipated that the organisations would be busy and perhaps not be able to prioritise a meeting with us. In spite of this, we generally experienced a genuine interest and desire among many of the participants to be able to meet us and contribute with their experiences to our research. A few representatives even took the time to meet with us in their private time outside of office hours in order to participate in the interview.

2.4.4 Semi-structured interviews

As we were interested in examining how the individual development actors have experienced RBM from their point of view, we chose to use the method of qualitative interviews, since the main feature of the qualitative interview is to investigate the participant's point of view (Bryman 2012: 470). The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, which enabled a certain amount of flexibility, both for us as interviewers and for the participants. With a semi-structured interview we sought to obtain descriptions of the participant's perspectives and experiences with regards to the demands for RBM and how they would conduct their practice. The semi-structured interview allows room to pursue topics of particular interest to the participant as the interview goes along and to follow interesting lines of inquiry that may come up but were not anticipated (ibid. 471). The flexibility thus allowed for the participants to take more control over the interview situation by letting them talk

about what they think is relevant and important. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview fosters an interview situation that is less formal, which we find important, because an informal environment is likely to encourage the participants to open up during the interview and speak honestly and without reservations about their experiences, their daily practices, and their opinions. To some extent, a semi-structured interview makes it possible to frame the situation as a conversation between us and the participants, unlike a formal interview where we ask the questions and the participants respond. By employing this method we aimed to create a room where the participants could freely express their views and experiences in their own words:

> The qualitative interview is a key venue for exploring the ways in which subjects experience and understand their world. It provides a unique access to the lived world of the subjects, who in their own words describe their activities, experiences and opinions. (Kvale 2007: 9)

Semi-structured interviews with individual development actors working in INGOs and NGOs, allowed us to get a glimpse of what occurs in the organisations and how the project management practices takes place. The development actors' accounts of their activities, experiences, and opinions on RBM, has enabled an analysis of how RBM affects and influences their practice in relation to project design, implementation and M&E, and furthermore how they shape and produce practice.

2.4.5 Positions and power relations

Through our encounter with the various organisations and their employees, there seemed to be different power relations at play. The positions of us as researchers, interviewers and outsiders and the participants as practitioners and insiders, were established and came into play in various ways during the interaction between us and the participants; from the first encounter on the phone or by email to the interview situation. Some participants wanted our help and advice; others saw us more as outsiders and were very calculable in relation to what they were allowed to say and what not, they had to clear the interview with their superior and know the questions up front; others doubted their knowledge and what they could possibly contribute to our research.

This encounter with the participants and the interactions and relations between the participants and us has influenced the interview situation and the data that was

produced. The interview situation, what the participants have told and chosen not to tell us about, in which ways they have explained about their experiences, how honest and straightforward their accounts have been etc. are all influenced by the relation and interaction between us and the participants. Sometimes an unequal power relation has been established where we have been seen as experts. Such a relation could have influenced the participants' willingness to share difficulties or less rigorous practices, other times the power relation has been more equal. In some interview situations, the interaction between the participants and us quickly became friendly, loose and joking. In others it was formal and more structured and the participants would answer in short statements and not in detail, and then wait for a new question from us. According to Anthropologist Bernedetta Rossi:

> it has been argued convincingly that claims to objectivity miss the point, and reflexivity can only be achieved by subjecting the position of the sociologist to the same critical analysis as that of all other actors […] The sociologist as well as the subjects of sociological analysis are all engaged in providing positioned interpretations; what changes is their situated perspective in relation to the events. (Rossi 2004b: 6)

The researcher should not pretend to have a 'God's eye' position; 'Self-reflexivity with regard to the positioning of the researcher throughout fieldwork finds its counterpart in an awareness of the ways in which one's writings fit into the wider arena of multi-vocal representations concerning the object of research' (ibid. 7). A part of the research and analysis of the participants' accounts has thus been to disentangle 'dense webs of already existing representations, some of which are likely to have been produced by the subjects themselves' (Marcus 1999: 23 cited in Rossi 2004b: 7).

2.4.6 Interview setting

Another aspect, which we have reflected upon in relation to the data that was produced, was the context in which the interview took place and its influence on the course of the interviews, what was shared and what was not, how honest the participants were, etc. Depending on the interview setting, the participants might have been more or less reluctant to share information with us. In some cases the interview took place in a setting were other staff in the organisation were able to eavesdrop. In such settings the participants to some extent seemed less free to answer and give their honest opinion and would often give us more standardised

answers. Whereas when the interview took place in a more private setting between the participant and us, they did not seem to put greater consideration into the consequences of what they said, since it would stay between them and us.

2.4.7 Interview guideline

The interviews were carried out with an interview guideline, which consisted of specific topics and questions that we intended to cover during the interview. The topics in the interview guideline centred on the organisations' experiences and practices within project planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reporting and relationships with donors/partners.

The guideline was not followed in a stringent, chronological way. Instead we asked the questions in the order that appeared natural in the interview situation and in relation to what the participant chose to talk about. This means that questions were not necessarily asked in the order in which they appeared in the guideline, nor always following the same phrasing. The guideline was used in a flexible way. In that, not all questions were asked in case the participant had already covered the topic of a question in their account of practice. The interview guideline furthermore remained dynamic during the course of our fieldwork. Before and after every interview, to a great extent after the first handful of interviews, we would revise and make the questions more optimal and rephrase questions if needed. Before we had finished conducting all the interviews, we started transcribing the first handful of interviews, which allowed us to reflect on the interview situation, on which questions worked well and got the participants to share and reflect, and which did not work so well. This enabled us to revise our method and approach for the subsequent interviews.

According to Svend Brinkmann and Steinar Kvale, the main questions in an interview should be descriptive. The interviewer should use 'what' and 'how' questions rather than 'why' questions, since 'why' questions in an interview situation might lead to the participant's speculative explanations (Brinkmannn & Kvale 2015: 159).

Some questions were designed to lead to a more descriptive and explanatory replies, and function as a way to get the participants to speak freely and explain about their practices. An example from the guideline is: 'Could you describe how you use the results from monitoring and evaluations?' Other questions require more reflection

and demanded that the participants share their opinion, such as the question: 'How do you feel about external evaluations?' or 'How do you feel about the focus on showing results?' Furthermore, the guideline entails questions that try to bring attention to the interplay of the policies and the 'reality' of the organisations' practices and the actors' everyday work. An example of this from the interview guideline is: 'DO you experience any challenges in regards to complying with RBM?' or 'Do you feel that the monitoring and evaluations reflect the practice and reality of your work?'

All the interviews were carried out in English without the need for a translator. In most of the INGOs and NGOs, at least on a written level, English was the primary working language. Therefore, it was not an issue for most participants to understand the questions and express themselves in English. However, to a few participants, it appeared to be challenging to express their opinions and reflections in a foreign language. In practice, it meant that we sometimes had to ask the same questions more than once and rephrase. And still sometimes the questions were misunderstood or not understood at all. Hence, to some extent a language bias is present, as it is possible that some participants would have been able to express themselves differently and talk about their practices in a different way, had they been allowed to express themselves in their mother tongue.

2.4.8 Ethical considerations

Before initiating any interview we ensured that we had given the participants sufficient information about the research process and the topic to make a decision about whether they wanted to participate or not. This entailed explaining that we were conducting research for our Master's thesis on how RBM of aid impacts organisations working with development in Nepal, and how the management practices, such as M&E, reporting, and the relations between them and their donors/implementing partners, are influenced by this management approach. As such, we did not carry out any interviews without informed consent from the participant.

Furthermore, for the participants to be able to have confidence in us, we chose to anonymise the names of the participants and the organisations in which they work and thus not compromise them and their employment in any way. We do not believe that making the participants anonymous has any negative effect on the

discussions and conclusions of our analysis as our research questions and aim do not rely on any individual participant or organisations' perspective. Before initiating the interviews, we informed the participants that we would make the interviews anonymous in our report. Furthermore, we found it important to let the participants know that we would share our final report with them, which might have made them feel more comfortable by knowing that they would be able to read the end results.

2.4.9 Transcribing the interview

We chose to record and transcribe all of the interviews we carried out. This allowed us to pay more attention to what the participant said during the interview and follow up on interesting points they made instead of having to concentrate on writing down notes. According to Bryman (2012: 482), recording and transcribing interviews help correcting limitations of memory and enables a more thorough examination of the participants' replies and accounts. Thus, although time-consuming, the transcriptions have made it easier for us during the process of analysing the data to 're-visit' the interviews and examine the details of what was said and not said.

2.5 Choice of theoretical framework

We will argue that our research inscribes itself into the field of both anthropology and (qualitative) sociology, as we intend to empirically examine the social and institutional processes of development practice (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 23). According to Anthropologist Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, anthropology and sociology cannot be separated or opposed to one another within this field of study, as far as they are understood as two social sciences that are 'the end product of rational procedures of empirical research' (ibid.).

The theoretical framework that we apply to understand the development practitioners' accounts of their practices, is to a large extent derived from the work of anthropologists, who have examined development. Anthropological studies of development have often combined methods, theoretical perspective, and epistemological understandings from both sociology and anthropology into a socio-anthropology (ibid.). Researchers within this branch of study have been dedicated to examining the dynamic and complex relationships of the development actors and the way they produce and shape development practice.

Within this framework, we understand development practice and meaning as produced and negotiated by a multiplicity of actors with various positions, agendas, interests, and knowledge, and practice as the end product of these multiple interactions (ibid. 28). Studying development thus involves studying this field of social interactions.

More specifically, we derive our theoretical orientation from recent ethnographic studies of development, which Mosse defines as a 'new ethnography of development' (Mosse 2004: 644). This perspective enables an analysis of the social processes, the interactions, the agency of development practitioners, and processes of negotiation of meaning, which takes place in the interface between various actors, knowledge systems, and power relations. It furthermore offers a specific understanding of the relationship between policy and practice and suggests that this relationship is constructed through the social relations, interactions between actors, and 'translation' processes. This theoretical orientation will be elaborated further in Chapter 5.

Although our study does not mirror or reflect an ethnographic study, we can analyse the practitioners' accounts of their development practices and experiences within a theoretical framework derived from recent ethnographic studies of development. Anthropologist Cecilie Rubow argues, that the semi-structured interview and its performative character constitute a valuable source of information in an ethnographic study. She further argues, that it has become more legitimate to ask people about their lives in an anthropological study, for example through an interview, and not only to 'observe' lives through participatory observation, which has been the classic method in anthropology (Rubow 2010: 227).

There are of course limitations when practices are examined through interviews and accounts of practice, compared to participatory observations of the practitioners' practices. Critics might argue that the interview cannot produce the same knowledge and insight as participatory observations (ibid.). However, we will argue that we can examine the interview situation and the accounts given during the interview as a reflection of the development practitioner's everyday practices.

3 RESULTS IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT

In the following chapter we will contextualise RBM in order to understand what it entails on a policy level and how development actors are influenced and encouraged to manage for results. Firstly we will examine the history and origins of RBM within the development sector, as we believe a historical framework has significance for what RBM entails and for how it is used today in the development sector. Subsequently, we will present a more normative conceptual framework of how RBM is defined in the policies of MfDR and which elements it is expected to entail in a more practical perspective. Finally the chapter will present the existing research on RBM within development, focusing on the critique of the approach and the challenges it poses.

3.1 History and origins of RBM

The following section will briefly trace the origins of RBM by taking a look back on history on the public administrative reforms and approaches that are likely to have had a contributing effect on the emergence of RBM within the development sector. Furthermore, we will show that the explicit focus on results can also be linked to the broader critique of development aid, the emergence of the 'Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) and the 'aid effectiveness agenda' and its quest for delivering better and more effective development aid.

3.1.1 Early administrative reforms

Eyben traces the epistemology of RBM back to the beginning of modern economics in the late eighteenth century when capitalism was expanding and Western Europe was industrialising and colonising a large part of the rest of the world. Alongside an expanding public sector, a concern with how to create incentives for public officials to deliver value for money arose, and so did the principle of 'payment for results', which emerged in nineteenth century Britain's school system (Eyben 2015: 773). Here schoolteachers were paid in accordance with the achieved results of the students, with the intention of creating an incentive for the teachers to deliver and perform their best (ibid.). This reform of the administrative system draws on the principal-agent theory; a theory which also influenced the later 'new public management' reforms which we will show below (Hood 1991). The principal-agent theory claims that the agent (the one who manages or implements) needs incentives to perform a good job for the principal (the one who invests); the agent will only perform his best if doing so will benefit him and his interests (Eyben 2015: 755). Thus, incentives have to be created for the agent in order to improve overall performance and enhance the likelihood of achieving good results of a job done. This theory of human behaviour underlies many of today's management systems, which aim at enhancing performance and effectiveness, and is thus also inherent in the RBM of development (ibid.), as we will further show below. Nonetheless, in nineteenth century Britain, the 'payment for results' approach was abandoned due to its unforeseen increase in the administrative costs of verifying results and because of a negative impact on the student's education (ibid.).

3.1.2 New Public Management and results

Eyben moreover identifies several public administration approaches which saw the light of day throughout the second part of the twentieth century and which can be seen as precursors of RBM; one of these being 'New Public Management' (NPM), whose management methods and doctrines are traceable in today's RBM within the development sector (ibid. 783). NPM first emerged in the late 1970s and from there on gained popularity within public administration well into the 1980s and early 1990s (Hood 1991: 3). Christopher Hood, an English Professor and researcher, introduced the concept of NPM in 1991 in his influential text 'A Public Management For All Seasons?' He emphasises that NPM is a loose term that broadly describes a

set of related administrative doctrines (ibid.). Hood describes seven of NPM's commonly agreed administrative doctrines. From at least two of these, it is possible to trace some of the components of today's RBM within development. The first is the doctrine of having 'emphasis on explicit standards and measures of performance' which involves defining 'goals, targets, indicators of success, preferably expressed in quantitative terms' (ibid. 4). According to Hood, this doctrine is typically justified because a 'clear statement of goals' is believed to enhance accountability and a 'hard look' at objectives is required to secure efficiency (ibid. 4). The other doctrine requires a 'greater emphasis on output controls', which can entail 'resource allocation and rewards linked to measured performance' and 'breakup of centralized bureaucracy-wide personnel management' (ibid.). This doctrine is justified because of a 'need to stress results rather than procedures' (ibid.). Other components of NPM that seems traceable in today's RBM, are the emphasis on 'enhancing competition within the public sector' and the 'need to do more with less' (ibid.). NPM has become widely used in most OECD countries as the leading management system of the public sector and in that sense thus spread to the countries' management of the development sector as well. Through the management of development aid, the NPM doctrines have also been 'exported' to the developing countries (Eyben 2015: 783). As a part of the spread of the usage of NPM systems, the strategy of rewarding performance and delivery through the 'payment by results' method has emerged once again as an administrative approach and tool to increase the incentives of the 'agents' to deliver better results for the principal within the public sector (ibid. 793). Such an approach has been implemented within development work as well, for example through the Danish Parliament's implementation of the 'resource allocation model'. This model allocates a certain percentage of the total development aid funds given by the Danish Parliament to the Danish civil society organisations working with development in 'the South', on the basis of the results that they are able to achieve in development projects and programs. An element of RBM is also to create positive incentives for the development actors to engage with RBM and achieve results by reward, as will be elaborated below. The argument that NPM and its doctrines have contributed to the emergence of RBM within the development sector, an argument which Eyben (2015) likewise puts forward, is given when looking at the similarities between the doctrines and methods of NPM and the principles that RBM entails.

In the following section we will introduce the critique of the development sector for not delivering and achieving results and argue that this critique likewise contributes to the need for a new management approach that could address the lack of results and enhance performance. By introducing RBM, inspired by the doctrines of NPM methods, the development sector has been able to address the critique.

3.1.3 Critique of development aid

The debate on 'whether development aid has contributed to development or not', has been flourishing on and off for many decades within the policy and research field (Sjöstedt 2013: 144). We will argue that this critique can be seen as a contributing factor to the emergence of RBM within the development sector and its importance on effectiveness, performance, and achieving and documenting results.

Martin Sjöstedt writes that several critical studies emphasize that development aid has not led to the desired economic development, whilst others show that aid works as a medicine; it 'aids' and is good in moderations, yet if used excessively, will cause harm (ibid.). Other scholars are more pessimistic about the whole paradigm of development. One position within this critique is the so-called post-structuralism that casts a gloomy light on development and questions its very feasibility and desirability (Escobar 2000: 11). These critics view development as 'dead' or at least as miserably failed (Escobar 1992: 21). Arturo Escobar, a leading critic representing the post-development school, calls it the '"crisis" of development' (ibid. 20), and calls for a new paradigm beyond development that 'transcends development's dependence on Western modernity and historicity' (ibid.). Escobar criticises development for being 'an invention and strategy produced by the "First World" about the "underdevelopment" of the "Third World", and not only as an instrument of economic control over the physical and social reality' (ibid. 22). According to Escobar, it is through development as a hegemonic discourse, that the part of the world outside the 'West' has been produced and more importantly have produced themselves as underdeveloped; 'thus marginalizing or precluding other ways of seeing and doing' (ibid.). Escobar's critique represents one school of thought within the more academic critique of development.

The critic and debate whether development aid works or not was previously secluded to an academic audience, but has slowly moved into a more public sphere (Sjöstedt 2013: 143). Sjöstedt argues, that with the publications by economist William

Easterly, especially his 'White Man's Burden' from 2006 and Dambisa Moyo's 'Dead Aid' from 2009, the debate about aid and its failures reached a broader and more public audience (ibid. 144).

Easterly criticises development aid for its lack of results. He writes that although trillions of dollars have been spent on development work within the past fifty years, the results of this expenditure are not visible and people in large parts of the world are still living in poverty (Easterly 2006: 4). There are several trends among the international aid bureaucracies that Easterly identifies and criticises. Some of the issues he focuses on are that the aid bureaucracies produce too many glossy reports and low-return observable outputs and less high-return activities (Easterly 2002: 226). Furthermore, the development sector engages too much 'in obfuscation, spin control, and amnesia (like always describing aid efforts as ''new and improved'') so that there is little learning from the past' (ibid.).

The critique which Easterly and others put forward and the pessimistic and doubtful outlook on development that it nourishes can be argued to have spiked a desire and ambition to deal with the shortcomings of development and be able to achieve and document positive results and impacts of development aid. In an American context Andrew Natsios, former Administrator of USAID, identifies various reasons for the emergence of the emphasis on measurement and results. He writes that the results-agenda emerged on the basis of suspicion by policy makers in Washington that foreign development aid 'does not work, wastes taxpayer money, or is mismanaged and misdirected by field missions. These suspicions have been the impetus behind the on-going focus among development theorists on results' (Natsios 2010: 40). According to Sjöstedt, the critique and the opinion on development aid, which it gave rise to among the taxpayers and public, induced a need for extensive reforms of policy and strategy, as 'the international aid industry desperately needed a new story' (Sjöstedt 2013: 146). The sector was faced with stricter requirements and priorities because of the lack of results to show for the money and resources disbursed (ibid.). It can thus be argued that the crisis of development became contributory in a reformation and reorganisation of the 'aid architecture' (ibid. 145), among other contributory systemic and theoretical changes. The new architecture of aid refers to new ways of dispersing aid through new means of development, different aid modalities and various co-operation modalities between donors and recipients. Simply defined, the new aid architecture signifies a shift from

conventional project investment, where aid is dispersed as 'gift', to focus on policy reform where aid is dispersed as contract (Mosse 2005b: 3). The new 'aid architecture' has furthermore entailed a greater emphasis on the importance of results, effectiveness, and impact. It can thus be argued that the changes and developments within the aid architecture have contributed to the emergence of RBM.

3.1.4 Reformation of the 'aid architecture'

In addition to the critique of development there was also optimism; the idea of relieving the poor populations from their 'underdeveloped' state and creating economic as well as social development for all, did not altogether lose its legitimacy nor was it abandoned. Jeffrey Sachs, an American economist and optimist of development aid, argued for a 'big push' where the proposed solution was 'to scale up aid and send more money.' (Sjöstedt 2013: 145). What happened in the early 2000s was exactly a scaling up of the efforts within the development sector, at least on a policy level, when the international community came together and conveyed the MDGs and broadly agreed to collaboratively focus and aim to reach the same eight goals for development and for reducing poverty (United Nations 2015: 4). The MDGs signify an important aspect of the new aid architecture, since, as Mosse argues, the international commitment to poverty reduction frames the new aid architecture (Mosse 2005b: 3). The MDG initiative furthermore reflects an emphasis on the desired results and targets for development rather than the means to reach these targets. Thus, an RBM approach to development aid became pertinent, since such a management strategy is believed to enhance the likeliness of reaching the desired results. As such, the MDGs have also contributed in the emergence and omnipresence of RBM within the development sector.

Furthermore, along with the agreement on the MDGs it became evident that development aid delivery and the cooperation within the development sector had to become more effective if these goals were to be reached before the year 2015, as was the commitment (OECD 2016). In order to address the lack of results and sustainable impact of development aid and to 'step up efforts' to meet the ambitious MDGs, what has become known as the 'aid effectiveness agenda' emerged (OECD 2016). Broadly defined, the 'aid effectiveness agenda' was initiated to restructure the way development aid is dispersed and managed, and to establish new principles for the cooperation between development stakeholders in order to make development aid

more effective. Within this agenda there is furthermore a strong incentive for introducing RBM, as we shall show in the following paragraph that focuses attention on the aid effectiveness agenda and its emphasis on managing for results.

3.1.5 Results in the context of aid effectiveness

The policy documents of the aid effectiveness agenda, the Paris Declaration and the succeeding agreements, are interesting to examine because of the vocabularies and ways of thinking, in our case about managing for results and aid effectiveness, which they generate, reproduce, translate, and set in motion (Morrell & Hewison 2013: 61). This section will therefor shed light on the emergence of RBM within this agenda.

According to Eyben, the International Conference on Financing for Development held in UN auspices in Monterrey, 2002 was a turning point in that the focus on results since then spread widely through the international development sector (Eyben 2015: 843). A year later in 2003, the OECD/DAC led Joint Venture on 'Managing for Development Results' (MfDR), and in 2004 at the Second International Roundtable on 'Managing for Development Results' in Marrakech, it was accentuated that in order to address the growing emphasis of achieving better results of development aid, it was pivotal to develop and encourage 'management systems and capacities that put results at the center of planning, implementation, and evaluation' (OECD 2004: 3). OECD furthermore writes that the push for a results-based approach to managing development has been different for developed and developing countries respectively:

> In developed countries, this trend has mainly been driven by growing public demands for information combined with increasing spending constraints. Developing countries, on the other hand, have been pushed mainly by the call for the efficient use of resources for poverty reduction and policy reform. (OECD 2008b)

In 2005, the second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness was held in Paris, which followed up on the declarations adopted at the first High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Rome and the core principles of the Second International Roundtable on 'Managing for Development Results' in Marrakech. The meeting culminated in the 'Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness', which has become a milestone in the aid effectiveness agenda. The declaration can be seen as the

culmination of many years of attempts to improve international development aid and make it more effective, and to secure a lasting impact of the aid funds spent (Wood et. al 2011). The Paris Declaration builds on five principles of partnership commitments that have to be honoured in order to achieve more effective development. One of the five principles is 'Managing for Results', which in the declaration is defined as 'managing and implementing aid in a way that focuses on the desired results and uses information to improve decision-making' (OECD 2005/2008: 7). Furthermore, the concern with ability to manage for results is seen as central for making aid delivery and management more effective, since the ability to plan, manage, implement, and account for results of development interventions is expressed as critical in order to achieve the desired objectives and targets (ibid. 4). This proposition further entails a certain view that without RBM, development objectives will not easily be achieved.

Following the meetings on aid effectiveness in Rome, Paris, and Accra, the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid effectiveness was held in Busan in 2011. The agenda of this meeting was to discuss the progress on implementing the principles of the Paris Declaration. At this meeting it was stressed that in order to meet the targets of the MDGs and further achieve long-term development results, immediate action and implementation of the principles were needed (OECD 2011). Again, managing for results were emphasized as pivotal in order to achieve greater aid effectiveness. The principle was stressed to guide the cooperative action to:

> Strengthen […] efforts to achieve concrete and sustainable results. This involves better managing for results, monitoring, evaluating and communicating progress; as well as scaling up our support, strengthening national capacities and leveraging diverse resources and initiatives in support of development results. (OECD 2011:3)

The Fourth High Level Forum culminated in the signing of the 'Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation', which for the first time established an agreed framework for a broad scope of development actors and modalities which embraces South-South cooperation, the BRICS, civil society organisations and private funders in addition to the 'traditional donors' (OECD 2016). At the Busan Forum it was acknowledged that a complex development architecture exists and that new actors in development co-operations, for example South-South co-operations, and various aid modalities have become important within the development sector

and thus need to be included in the 'aid effectiveness agenda' in order to make all aspects of development aid more effective.

Furthermore, although the policies of the aid effectiveness agenda do not directly apply to civil society organisations, such as the INGOs and NGOs working in Nepal, the Paris Declaration and the succeeding agreements on aid effectiveness evidently influence and impact civil society organisations and the ways in which they are required to work and manage development projects. This is because development aid is largely dispersed as project support through civil society. The principle of 'Managing for Results' has contributed to place RBM high on the international development agenda, and since the commitments made in the Paris Declaration, most OECD/DAC member countries have developed RBM strategies, including Denmark (Eyben 2015: 845). When donor countries adopt and incorporate the principles and commitments of the Paris Declaration, such as the principle of managing for results, it indirectly impacts the implementing civil society organisations working in the developing countries, such as the INGOs and NGOs working in Nepal. They are influenced by these policies and requirements to manage for results. Most project support entail conditions and requirements for accounting for results, impacts of the projects and demonstration of 'value for money' in order to demonstrate accountability. The tendencies to aim at results and adopt an RBM framework thus trickles down the development sector through the various aid modalities, and in varying degrees, affect the way development actors in the sector are expected or required to manage and account for their work. In the analysis of our empirical data below we furthermore show that the agenda of RBM and the emphasis on showing results of development interventions influences the INGOs and NGOs working in Nepal.

According to an independent evaluation of the Paris Declaration from 2011, the declaration has overall contributed to the strengthening of uniform and established norms and standards of better practice and development cooperation (Wood et. al 2011: xi), yet in the practical implementation of the principles, development actors have had to grapple with how to measure aid and its results in a rapidly changing world, among other concerns (ibid. x). These findings could indicate that the actual feasibility and applicability of the principles and commitments of the Paris Declaration in development practice is limited.

Such difficulties in actually making the principles practicable are not surprising when looking at the way the documents define and describe the principles and their relation to aid effectiveness. We will argue that the Paris Declaration and the succeeding policies on aid effectiveness can be characterised by a vague and unspecific language. To some extent, the policies are based on a set of unstated presumptions; presumptions about the causal relationship between the five principles and aid effectiveness. It is for example, poorly argued how and why management for results will secure greater aid effectiveness; instead management for results is framed as a management method that is unquestionably good. Furthermore, precisely because the claims set forth in the aid effectiveness policies are not substantiated, it allows for a range of different interpretation of the meaning of the content (Dabelstein 2007: 2).

However, we will argue that it is not surprising that the 'Paris Declaration' and the agreements of the other 'High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness' contains several unsubstantiated claims. This is because they are international declarations and agreements whose content has been negotiated among many different stakeholders and actors, and thus represents what the different stakeholders were able to agree on. We will argue that the policies are not to be seen as a representation of 'best practice' or as an action plan for development actors to follow and implement, rather the policy documents should be viewed as the outcome of political processes, where consensus and political power structures has played a part in the shaping of the agreements. The implementation of RBM might be questioned or scrutinised because of the way it has become part of the agenda as an unspecified policy that does not necessarily have much applicability and link to the real practice of development. In the analysis of this thesis below, such exploration and discussion of the relationship between the RBM policies and the practice will be elaborated further.

In the following section, we will however provide a more specific conceptualisation of what RBM systems entail by combining various definitions and concepts of the management approach, as it is most often defined.

3.2 Defining RBM

From tracing the origins of the emergence of RBM within development, we find it necessary for the research to further define and provide a conceptual framework on how RBM on a normative policy level is articulated and defined. The Joint Venture

on MfDR, a subsidiary body to the 'Working Party on Aid Effectiveness' hosted by the OECD/DAC, has addressed the principle of management for results in a more elaborate way than the Paris Declaration and the succeeding agreements. The documents and guidelines that have been produced within the MfDR venture, provide a broad and more specific conceptualisation of RBM, what it entails, and which actions this approach suggests development actors should take in their management of development interventions. In the following section we will thus provide a conceptual framework of what an RBM system entails on the basis of the MfDR documents 'Draft Policy Brief' (OECD 2008a) and 'Information Sheet' (OECD 2008b), supplemented by the documents endorsed at the Second Roundtable on 'Managing for Development Results' in Marrakech (OECD 2004).

The purpose of the MfDR venture is to guide the implementation of results management and make managing for results practicable. In the MfDR policies, managing for results is described as a management system widely seen as representing 'best practice' and as the most efficient way of managing development and improving effectiveness (OECD 2008b: 1). Briefly defined, RBM is a management strategy that focus on improving performance, setting and defining goals and targets, and focusing on these at all phases of the development process in order to achieve these (OECD 2004: 8). Within an RBM approach, focus has shifted from input, activities, and immediate outputs to a pervasive focus on the desired and measurable goals and results of an intervention (OECD 2008b: 1). In the MfDR policies the results-approach is articulated as a change in the way of thinking and acting throughout the process of a development intervention in order to enhance performance and expand accountability (ibid. 2; OECD 2008a: 1). Thus, RBM is not just a simple tool to implement in practice to enhance performance, but also entails a change in mind-set:

> Managing for results involve a change in mind-set - from starting with the planned inputs and actions and then analysing their likely outcomes and impacts, to focusing on the desired outcomes and impacts (for example on poverty reduction) and then identifying what inputs and actions are needed to get there. It also involves establishing baselines and identifying upfront performance targets and indicators for assessing progress during implementation and on program completion. (OECD 2004: 7)

A proper performance culture has to be established and certain internal preconditions, such as sufficient capacity and strong leadership are essential in order

for a development organisation to adopt an RBM system (OECD 2008b: 2). It can be challenging to establish a performance culture, and the MfDR policy therefore suggests donors to establish internal procedures and performance-based incentives that will reward employees 'for achieving sustainable and long-term return on investments, and not simply for accounting for the use of donor resources' (ibid. 3). Creating positive incentives for the development actors to achieve results and show value for money by rewarding them is believed to enhance performance and make the likelihood of achieving results even greater. This way of arguing derives its theory of thought from the principal/agent theory, which the NPM system likewise derived its theory of thought from as stated above. Creating performance-based incentives is also regarded as a way to enhance accountability (OECD 2008a: 4). Furthermore, the MfDR policies articulate that performance-incentives have to be positive and not only reward results achievement and penalise failure, since such practice will make candid reporting and the opportunities of learning from failures hard to achieve (ibid.). The MfDR policy (2008b) defines five core stages that RBM involves, which are:

1. Setting goals and agreeing on targets and strategies;
2. Allocating available resources to activities that will contribute to the achievement of the desired results;
3. Monitoring and evaluating whether the resources allocated are making the intended difference;
4. Reporting on performance to the public;
5. Feeding back information to decision-making (OECD 2008b: 2)

The desired results of a development intervention have to be kept as the main focal point during the planning of inputs and activities and 'results chains' have to be established. The results chains are supposed to define and illustrate the expected causal relationship between different elements in a development intervention over time. Results chains are 'logic diagrams showing the strategies and assumptions linking inputs, outputs, outcomes and the impacts to which they contribute' (OECD 2008a: 2). The use of results chains is expected to 'improve planning, increase attribution of results to interventions, and systematize performance monitoring' (ibid.). The logical framework approach is a tool often used for establishing and visualising such results chains.

The logical framework approach is a management tool for planning and documenting projects and entails descriptions of all activities, outputs, purposes, and outcomes/goals of an aid project (Natsios 2010: 16). The logical framework was developed in the late 1960s by USAID and has been adopted by many donor country development agencies, development organisations, and large NGOs, and is still widely used today for programme and project management (ibid.). The main part of adopting an RBM system is to be able to track and measure progress or change. In order to be able to measure whether the goals or objectives of an intervention have been reached, a performance monitoring and evaluation strategy has to be established in the planning phase along with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound indicators; the so-called SMART indicators, which will enable monitoring and measuring of progress and change. For each objective or goal, SMART indicators that specify what is to be measured have to be defined. The end goal should be 'a sound results-based management system that includes specific, quantifiable indicators connected to a timeline with baseline data and periodic assessments of project and program performance against defined targets' (OECD 2004: 7).

A central issue of an RBM system is however to understand how or by what means results or 'goals are established, legitimized and measured' (OECD 2008a: 2). The inputs or activities have to be planned and designed in accordance with how they relate or how they will bring about the desired result. In the terminology of results based-management, results refer to outcome or impact. The main part of RBM is thus to analyse and establish which activities and inputs will lead to the desired results. Establishing this cause and effect relation is pivotal, yet also one of the most challenging aspects of RBM and requires extensive field inquiry, research, and knowledge on change and development processes. Such knowledge has to be grounded in the statistical systems, which has to be improved in order for an RBM system to be successful since RBM requires 'timely and reliable statistics at the country and global level' (OECD 2004: 11).

Hence, RBM requires credible and robust statistical data and information, performance monitoring systems, and evaluation protocols in order to establish and forecast the expected results and make decision-making 'evidence-based' (OECD 2008a: 3). One way to gather information on performance is to secure feedback and

the public's input and opinion on performance, which will also secure accountability (ibid. 4).

Using information and data to steer and improve the decision-making processes is a pivotal aspect of RBM (OECD 2004: 8). Sufficient flexibility in regards to budget and operational processes is in this regard is important as this allows for programs and projects to be adjusted in accordance with the available information and data and furthermore, enhance the opportunity of organisational learning (OECD 2008a: 3). This presupposes that sufficient resources are allocated for monitoring, evaluation, and rigorous planning, and that empirical information and data are taken into consideration during decision-making processes before, during, and after a development intervention (ibid. 4). A part of the aspect of learning entails feeding performance information and experiences from previous interventions into future planning. The MfDR policy suggest that within an RBM system the performance information ought to impact the funding priorities along with the 'policy objectives and political realities' which also exercise influence on the priorities and agendas (ibid. 3).

4 REVIEWING RESEARCH ON RBM

The widespread and increasing emphasis on managing for results within the development sector, as shown in the previous chapter, has given rise to a debate on the implications of RBM and to research aiming on investigating the challenges and consequences of RBM on the practice of development agencies and institutions. The existing and current research on the implications and possible effects of RBM has been the basis for our interest in researching the field of RBM within development.

Consequently, the findings and tendencies that the current research points towards have to a certain degree guided and inspired the themes of the interviews that we have conducted in order to examine have the development practitioners in the INGOs and NGOs in Nepal experience RBM. As such, we find it important to review and present the existing research as it forms the basis from where our research has emerged. The following sections will thus present the concerns raised in recent literature on the implications and effects of RBM on the practice of development. The findings of the authors have been identified either through their research or practical experience gained from working in the development field.

4.1 Clashes between RBM and development

The desire to control, design, and manage development interventions has been growing and become omnipresent and concurrent with a change in the means to achieving development. Whereas development policy previously focused more on

technical and economic led growth, its focus has extended to a wider scope of social and cultural changes as means to eliminate poverty (Mosse 2005a: 3):

> As a "means", social life is instrumentalized in new international public policy through policy-driven ideas such as social capital, civil society or good governance that theorize relationships between society, democracy and poverty reduction' (Mosse 2004: 642).

According to Mosse, the emphasis on rational planning has increased based on a desire to be able to plan and manage the social and behavioural changes (Mosse 2005a: 3). However, it is uncertain and debatable whether it is feasible and practicable to measure the impact of projects where the means to reduce poverty is through behavioural and social change.

One central challenge with RBM is establishing the results chains; that is the link between inputs and desired impact in the planning, implementation, and evaluation phase respectively, especially within complex development interventions that aim to achieve social and behavioural change (Vähämaki et al 2011: 20). Vähämaki writes that the staffs at the Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA) were reluctant when the minister demanded implementation of RBM, as they argued it would be impossible to document that results are causally linked to a specific development project supported by Swedish aid (Vähämaki 2015: 3537). The staff further argued that it would be unreasonable to require this, since the causal relation between activities and possible outcomes and impact in development is non-linear, exceptionally long, and much more complex than the RBM system is able to capture (ibid.; Vähämaki et al 2011: 21).

According to Vähämaki (2015: 3699), RBM reduces information from diverse and complex situations and contexts into numbers for easy comparison and aggregation. She refers to Espeland and Stevens' (1998) definition of this tendency as 'commensuration of sociology', which means that development organisations search for the perfect tool that can transform 'qualities into quantities and difference into magnitude' in order to appear to manage the uncertainties of transforming social and behavioural aspects of a society (ibid.). Vähämaki furthermore writes that although SIDA has experienced extensive implementation problems with regards to RBM, they still hope to find such a technical tool or solution to quantify and measure progress and change (ibid. 3705).

Sjöstedt (2013) empirically shows how the new aid architecture puts severe and competing demands on the development practitioners working in three developing countries with SIDA funds. One of his findings is that many of the development practitioners question the actual feasibility of measuring impact and of being able to establish and document to which degree measured progress can be attributed to a specific intervention: 'the attribution problem was perceived to make it difficult - if not impossible - to track development progress specifically to an individual donor's support' (Sjöstedt 2013: 150). Development involves areas where results can be difficult to measure and perhaps manage, such as capacity building, institutional and policy reforms, and good governance (Vähämaki et al 2011: 21), and it is especially within such areas that the issues of attribution is the most challenging. As Sjöstedt argues, the increased focus on results often 'comes in tandem with demands to perform more difficult tasks and, in addition, performing them in ways that aggravate the attribution problem' (Sjöstedt 2013: 153). In addition, the development actors who have to measure or collect outcome and impact data in the developing countries often have limited technical capacity and resources. Furthermore, in order for them to be able to measure for change or progress, reliable statistical and qualitative data is needed, however this is often lacking in developing countries (Vähämaki et al 2011: 21).

Natsios argues that there is a central problem with applying results-based and measurement-based management systems to the development sector since these management systems does not take into account the central doctrines of development and do not allow space for 'best practice' development work and theory. Natsios (2010) shows that the rigid measurement-based management approach, adopted into a USAID context and many other development agencies, derives from the spheres of domestic private industry, corporate business, and the public sector. This management approach has however not translated well into 'the complex and dynamic field of development' (Natsios 2010: 18). Natsios argues, that within the corporate and private business management model 'best practice' development and good development theory is seen as slow, expensive, and ineffective (ibid.). He further argues that applying the 'domestic management lens', its methods and its logics to the development sector is a fatal mistake and misunderstands the central development doctrine, as it risks making the 'means' of development into the 'end' itself (ibid. 4). Development works on the basis of other

doctrines and processes than that of the domestic private or public sector. According to Natsios, the ultimate goal of development is to develop

> a capable state, market economy, and civil society that can manage public services, design good policies, create jobs, and protect human rights and the rule of law on a reliable, sustainable basis after the aid program is over and funding ends. (ibid. 5)

However, according to Natsios, the prevalent measurement-based management approach often ends up treating the means to reach the ultimate goal as the goal in itself, instead of treating the means as subordinate to the larger goal of institution building (ibid.). Natsios argues, that a consequence of applying a measurement-based management approach to development is for example that health and education programmes are treated as construction projects where the goal itself is building more schools or getting more children to attend school. However, such programmes should be treated as means to a larger goal of institution building, with an ultimate end goal of a better educational system and an overall stronger educational public sector (ibid. 18). The latter is however not the case within the rigid management system and thus loses sight of the central development goal and 'best practice' development. Hence, Natsios shows that there are big challenges by applying management approaches that has been developed and derive from other sectors to the development sector, since such approaches might not fit well with the doctrines and processes of development and the complexity of interventions and activities needed to achieve the ultimate goal of development.

4.2 Doing things right or doing the right things

Vähämaki (2015) and Sjöstedt (2013) argue that the results agenda within development has triggered a change of focus towards 'doing things right' rather than 'doing the right thing'. The endeavour of acquiring legitimacy and demonstrating accountability have exceeded and become more important than the actual task of development (Vähämaki 2015: 3724).

As it appears to be challenging or even sometimes impossible to measure and attribute the outcome and impact of projects that work through complex change processes, several development practitioners and researchers suggest that RBM has led to a focus on doing projects which are less transformational yet easier to measure (Natsios 2010, Mosse 2005a, Vähämaki et al 2011, Sjöstedt 2013, Eyben 2015, Wood et.

al 2011, Nielsen 2015). The pressure to meet targets and demonstrate results influences program and project choices since development managers will strive to implement what is measurable rather than what is relevant and most transformational (Mosse 2005a: 116; Vähämaki et al. 2011: 21; Sjöstedt 2013: 153; Natsios 2010: 3). This is what Natsios has referred to as 'Obsessive Measurement Disorder', which he characterises as the tendency to believe that 'counting everything […] will produce better policy choices and improved management' (Natsios 2010: 3). This logic relies on a view that projects that are the most transformational are at the same time those that are most difficult to measure, and in reverse the least transformational projects are the easiest to measure (Sjöstedt 2013: 153). Consequently, engaging in the most transformational development interventions in areas where developmental issues are profound and complex to address, are more likely to be avoided because of the difficulties of measuring and quantifying. The current system and its spread of the obsessive measurement disorder might thus encourage a risk-averse behaviour within the development sector. As Natsios points out, new and experimental technologies or approaches to development are 'the exception rather than the rule in aid programming because they involve taking high risks' (Natsios 2010: 35). Thus, putting too much emphasis on results will inevitably create a preference for familiar and conventional projects and possibly hinder innovation. Brian Pratt, former Executive Director of the 'International NGO Training and Research Centre' (INTRAC), suggests that the results-based approach may then lead to risk-avoidance to such an extent that development programmes and projects will focus more on

> relatively easily measurable service provision outputs (e.g. numbers of schools) and move away from addressing underlying political issues of human rights and good governance, where results are harder to measure or demonstrate. (Pratt 2008: 1)

This is likewise an issue experienced by development practitioners, as Sjöstedt argues:

> Several respondents also voiced concerns about whether or not the strict focus on results - and especially on reporting them - in fact channelled aid into easily measurable activities at the expense of more complex and long-term processes with potentially higher, but less easily measured, impacts. Results-based management was hence perceived as encouraging a focus on "doing things right" rather than "doing the right things." (Sjöstedt 2013: 153)

According to an evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration, it is acknowledged that there has been a great concern with accountability for public spending of the taxpayers money in donor countries to such extent that there is a high disinclination towards risks: 'But to try to avoid all risks in development cooperation is to risk irrelevance' (Wood et. al 2011: xvi). This practice of avoiding the risky and perhaps ambitious spending of the aid funds has hindered good practice and a proper implementation of the principles in the Paris Declaration (ibid.). In the evaluation, it is further argued that it is time donors acknowledge that 'development and development aid are inherently uncertain and risky' (ibid. xv-xvi). Natsios also argues that because of the demands of the regulatory counter-bureaucracy and its emphasis on measuring and demonstrating results, USAID has decreased the amount of funds for NGOs, think tanks, institutions, and universities in the developing countries, which was earlier a used modality to support institution building (Natsios 2010: 39).

Rather than avoiding risks altogether the development sector should promote a realistic public understanding of the uncertainties of development and the difficulties of attributing progress to any particular development intervention instead of building up hope among the public that it is possible to avoid risks and attribute change to their paid tax money (Wood et. al 2011: xvi; Vähämaki 2015: 3537). This concern with the publics' and taxpayers' opinion and with satisfying their demands or expectations towards development aid is also a token of a more outspoken concern for up-ward accountability, which Vähämaki (ibid. 3719) suggests the current results-agenda has enhanced.

To sum up the risk and implication of RBM is that decisions are made on the basis of managerial concerns and on compliance with the policies rather than by technical and program specialists on the basis of developmental concerns (Natsios 2010: 37): 'Conflicts between good management and good development practice inevitably arise, and the compliance side increasingly wins' (ibid.).

4.3 Unrealistic time frame

Natsios (2010) argues that USAID programmes recently have shrunk in length and time span. Such tendency of development interventions becoming shorter in time-span poses another problem in relation to measurement of progress and results. Previously USAID programmes would span up to a 10-year period with a review

after five years, whereas now the tendency is to initiate much shorter-term programmes, as short as one year programmes (Natsios 2010: 39). Vähämaki et. al argue, that within several development agencies there are unrealistic goals of tracking and documenting outcomes and results on an annual basis (Vähämaki et. al 2011: 20), which according to Natsios is critical as 'results of development do not manifest themselves on an annual basis' (Natsios 2010: 27). Development change does not happen within one- or two-year budgetary cycles (Mueller-Hirth 2012: 661) and the assumption that 'appropriated aid money is not being spent quickly enough, and thus is being poorly managed, misses the point of good development practice. This kind of work cannot be done easily or quickly, if it is to be effective' (Natsios 2010: 43).

Eyben concur with this issue of demanding results and impact too quickly and not in relation to the reality and complexity of development processes. She argues that on the basis of the few studies on the effects of the results-based approach, the approach can have positive impacts on the organisational practices by strengthening and making it more effective especially when there are long-term funding and partnership modalities present (Eyben 2015: 755). Thus, for RBM to be feasible and efficient development interventions have to be more long-term in order to fit the reality of development processes and change. If this is not possible and if projects and programmes remain short-term and demands quick progress and results, decision-making might again rely on the likeliness of achieving or producing fast results and hence rely on managerial concerns on 'doing things right' rather than developmental concerns of 'doing what is right'.

4.4 More bureaucracy and less implementation

Another effect of implementing RBM, which many researchers and practitioners have pointed towards, is an increase in resources spent on reporting and complying with policy. The risk is that such compliance diverts valuable and scarce time and resources away from implementing projects.

Danish development practitioners have recently raised this concern in an online debate in the Danish independent online newspaper 'Altinget'. The articles, authored by various development practitioners, were published around one year after the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs required implementation of RBM in a range of Danish CSOs. Birgitte Qvist-Sørensen and Lehnart Falk, General Secretaries

of DanChurchAid and ADRA Denmark respectively, argue that implementing RBM has demanded that extra resources are put into documenting and reporting results (Quist-Sørensen 2015, Falk 2015). In this debate, they also argue that the resources needed for reporting are being channelled away from the tasks of carrying out the actual development work. Furthermore, the emphasis on reporting results implies that organisations are evaluated on their reporting skills rather than the work they carry out, as Henrik Nielsen, PhD. within development argues in his contribution to the online debate (Nielsen 2015). According to Nielsen, reporting based on normative goals suggest that the very thing reporting relies on is the capability of phrasing and formulation rather than concise accounts of the activities carried out. This results in a scenario where those organisations that do not deliver and that are not doing a good job, are not necessarily discredited for such, as long as they are able to hire consultants that are skilled within the language of development. Whereas the organisations that are not able to hire such consultants pay the price (Nielsen 2015).

Natsios and Eyben also argue that within the development sector, a critical point has been reached where compliance has become counterproductive; the time spent on complying with policies exceeds the time spent on implementing projects (Natsios 2010: 5; Eyben 2015: 749)

> When compliance becomes the primary mission of an aid agency and drives programming, rather than serving a subordinate, supplemental function to the overall development and humanitarian response mandate, then something is wrong with the system. (Natsios 2010: 41)

Natsios furthermore argues that implementation is the one aspect that ought to be given more attention, but is more and more neglected in favour of managerial and policy compliance (Natsios 2010: 39). Hence, the extensive pressure to quantify things risks leading to 'obsessive measurement disorder', which paradoxically ends up making the achievement of results and impact on the ground level difficult and unlikely, because of the lack of resources and attention diverted to implementation (Vähämaki 2015: 3729). According to the findings of an analysis on current literature on RBM, carried out by Vähämaki et al., development officials experience a struggle keeping a balance between resources spent on implementing programmes and resources spent on data collection, reporting, and control; where the latter is taking up more and more time and efforts (Vähämaki et al. 2011: 23). Result reforms have changed the mind-set of staff from thinking about which activities and inputs are needed towards an occupancy with more time consuming results- and goal-

orientation (Vähämaki 2015: 3428). Vähämaki et al. further show that many of the challenges of RBM relates to 'a lack of human capacity, knowledge, and incentives to fulfil the complex requirements demanded by an RBM-approach' (Vähämaki et al. 2011: 23). In some organisations, the development practitioners have too little competence and experience difficulties with understanding the RBM system and its methods (ibid.). Pratt points to another consequence of RBM systems and the requirements of 'proving results as opposed to "improving" development interventions' (Pratt 2008: 1); such systems are likely to increase the competition between NGOs especially when performance incentives is involved, which will reward the achievement of results. The attention and time spent on 'branding' and making the NGO competitive, further diverts attention away from the main purpose and core competence of NGOs, which is implementing development activities (Pratt 2008: 1).

4.5 Unequal power relations

Lastly, the RBM approach risks aggravating the importance of power relations between development actors in different positions within the 'aid chain'. Natasha Mueller-Hirth (2012: 659) argues that it is important to remember that relations of power inevitably shape M&E, its findings and measured results; 'Decisions about what and how to monitor reflect the power relations that also underpin other development activities and relationships' (Mueller-Hirth 2012: 659). When indicators and desired results are set and defined by donors or partners situated outside of the developing country and its context questions arises regarding what and who constitute development, knowledge, and what is to be measured (Mueller-Hirth 2012: 659). Such reflections are also put forward by Eyben who suggests, that the results-agenda and its uses of artefacts have

> perverse effects when power determines which and whose knowledge counts, and when hierarchical ways of working limit communications and dialog, constraining an organization's leadership in discussing with its donors what is sensible and feasible. (Eyben 2015: 760)

The demand for results and the use of artefacts can have negative effects on the practices of local NGOs and the projects they implement, whenever the power relations is unequal; such negative effects occur if the local NGO is unable to freely communicate their needs and experiences through dialog with their donor or when

the relation between them and their donors determines that the knowledge of the NGO is not what counts the most (ibid.).

4.6 Sub-conclusion

On the basis of the current research we can conclude that there seems to be several challenges to the implementation of RBM and it can have negative implications on the overall achievement of development interventions. The desire to be seen to be in control is 'symptomatic of a refusal to engage with complexity in a dynamic and uncertain world' (ibid. 940). This has resulted in these elaborate performance measurement systems such as RBM (ibid.). An RBM approach risks shutting down transformational, important, and needed development interventions because they are complex, challenging, and cannot to a satisfactorily degree produce quantitative and measurable results on quarterly or annual basis (Natsios 2010: 41). However, as Natsios argues, planning, designing, and making decisions on the basis of what is measurable and quantifiable is a proof that the results-system has failed and become dysfunctional (ibid.).

Most of the findings presented above on the challenges and implications of RBM are based on research done on a bilateral level and in development agencies. The challenges and consequences of RBM might therefore be different at the implementing level, for example among INGOs and NGOs working in Nepal, as we have set forward to examine. As Sjöstedt likewise argues, within the new aid architecture little effort has been devoted to examining the effects and consequences of the new policies, management methods, and donor priorities and how these have impacted the processes and practices of implementation (Sjöstedt 2013: 143).

5 THEORISING THE RELATION BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE

This chapter will present the theoretical perspective through which the empirical data will be analysed. First, the relationship between policy and practice will be explored. The framework is drawn from a range of different literature mostly engaged within the field of 'Anthropology of development'.

5.1 Anthropological engagements with development

Among scholars and anthropologists, who have been engaged with the relationship between policy and practice there is a general consensus that this relationship entails a 'gap' or disjuncture, that is, that policy is not implemented in practice in the ratio 1:1. There are however different views on how this gap should be conceptualised in theory (Rossi 2004a: 560; Mosse 2004; Mosse 2005a; Mosse & Lewis 2006: 3; Eyben 2008: 23-28), which will be explained in detail below.

5.1.1 An instrumental perspective

One mode in which anthropologist have been engaged with development has been 'instrumental'. Within the 'instrumental view', policy is seen as directing and guiding development practices. Development policies are seen through a 'means to an end' rationality, where the policy entails normative/prescriptive and predictive

knowledge that will enhance development effectiveness if implemented (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 3, Eyben 2008: 28). According to Eyben, this perspective is favoured in the world of international development, and most governments and development agencies operate in this way. Within this perspective the assumption is that a planned intervention can change society the way that the planners wish (ibid.). Development agencies and policymakers convey confidence that if the management and implementation of aid interventions follow rigorous and 'best practice' policies, it will yield greater results and more effective aid (Mosse 2005a: 3; Lewis & Mosse 2006: 2).

Eyben argues, that donors are generally naïve about the causal links between policy intention and policy outcome and have unrealistic confidence that planning will lead to the intended outcome (Eyben 2008: 41). Despite that unintended consequences of project implementations have been pointed out frequently, the international development sector still strongly favour this instrumentalist perspective on policies (ibid. 30). To eliminate unintended consequences, and thereby the disjuncture between policy and practice, development policies are frequently updated with new and more sophisticated ideas, technical models, and designs on how to implement, manage, and govern development work (Mosse 2004: 648).

> For many working in development, getting theory right is the key to addressing the failures and disappointments of development; although the policy process ensures that policies do not command loyalty for long. Better theory, new paradigms and alternative frameworks are constantly needed. (ibid. 640)

The belief is thus, that the disjuncture between policy and practice needs to be diminished by better and more effectively implemented policies (Rossi 2004a: 560; Mosse 2005a: 2); the better the policies become the better the outcome of development work will be (ibid. 2). Through this execution and implementation of proper policy the order of development, which is understood as the 'ideal worlds', can be turned into reality (Lewis and Mosse 2006: 2).

According to Eyben this view is linked to the positivist tradition within which:

> policy is understood as a response to a real problem the existence and nature of which is judged as independent from the social position of those making the observation. From this positivist point of view policies will emerge and be developed as decision-makers learn from best practices, as well as from past mistakes, and adjust policy accordingly. A policy is understood as a kind of

> testable hypothesis in relation to a publicly recognised problem – if X, then Y
> (Eyben 2008: 29)

Mosse argues that the prevailing confidence that policies will yield better and more effective development practice is sustained because the relationship between policies and the 'real' outcome of the development interventions is concealed (Mosse 2005a). This is because the policymakers and those who believe in 'better policies, better practice' does not see the 'true' relation between the two and misinterprets the policies' significance on practice (ibid. 4).

5.1.2 A discursive deconstructive perspective

Another and opposing anthropological orientation to development is 'critical and deconstructive'. Within this orientation, development as a whole is understood as a historically specific discourse of power that conceals the 'true' agenda of the development paradigm: a way for the 'West' to dominate and exercise power over developing countries (Mosse 2004: 641, Mosse & Lewis 2006: 4, Lewis & Mosse 2006: 3). Within this group of critics it comes as no surprise that there is a disjuncture between development policy and practice, since their argument is that development policies are developed and designed in isolation from the contextual, historical, cultural, and social realities of the 'developing' countries (Mosse 2004: 642).

According to Mosse and Lewis, Arturo Escobar and James Ferguson's writings have been significant in promoting this view (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 4). Their writings have primarily been influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, and they analyse development as a discourse defined as 'a system of knowledge, practices, technologies, and power relationships that orders and limits description and action within this field' (ibid.). The critics argue, that the order of development itself is an 'instrument of cognitive control, social regulation or exploitation' (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 3) and that development policies

> enhance state capacity and expand bureaucratic control […] they reproduce
> hierarchies of knowledge (scientific over indigenous) and society (developer
> over "to be developed") and they fragment, subjugate, silence or erase the local.
> (Mosse 2004: 643).

Within this critical framework, the order of development and development policies are not to be implemented as much as they are domination to be resisted (ibid.). Mosse writes that this critical perspective on development as a discourse of power

saw the light of day in the 1980s, yet is still continued today (Mosse 2013: 228). However, this critical and deconstructive perspective has been criticised for not paying enough attention to the actors within development and the agency they have. Actors are not only to resist development as a hegemonic discourse, but they have agency to understand and use development and to 'minipulate the rhetorics, rules, and rewards of aid delivery' (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 4).

5.1.3 A call for a different perspective

These opposing views have however blocked for an in-depth and empirically based understanding of the relationship between policy and practice (Mosse 2005a: 5). Mosse and others (Mosse 2004; Mosse 2005a; Mosse & Lewis 2006; Rossi 2004b; Nauta 2006; Salemink 2006) refuse to understand the relationship between development intentions and its outcomes in simple instrumentalist terms or development as a hegemonic discourse of power, since

> Both the critical and the instrumental perspective […] divert attention away from the complexity of policy as institutional practice, from the social life of projects, organizations and professionals and the diversity of interests behind policy models and the perspectives of actors themselves. (Mosse 2004: 644).

Hence, both the instrumentalist and the critical perspective are insufficient to conceptualise the relationship between development policy and what happens in practice (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 4). Instead, researchers ought to pay attention to the social processes of development policies and practices, which will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how policy is produced and how the reality of development practice works, and the complex relationship that exists between the two (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 3; Mosse 2004: 641).

5.2 New ethnography of development

A new ethnography of development has thus emerged, which challenges the instrumentalist and critical view and suggests a different conceptualisation of the relationship between development policy and practice (Mosse & Lewis 2006; Mosse 2004; Rossi 2006; Mueller-Hirth 2013; Mosse & Lewis 2006: 9). According to Mosse and Lewis, ethnographic studies of development offers 'valuable reflective insights into the operations and effectiveness of international development as a complex set of local, national, and cross-cultural social interactions' (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 1). Since development works at many levels, from policymaking to practice in the field

and 'involves a great number of interactions between actors of different statuses, with varying resources and dissimilar goals' (ibid.), it is important to explore the social processes, relationships, and interactions within which power and meanings are negotiated. The field of ethnography constitutes a 'privileged empirical pathway' (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 12), into investigating social reality and the multiplicity of interactions that takes place between various development actors, since ethnography 'forces attention to the social processes and negotiations of meaning and identity in heterogeneous social arenas' (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 2). Ethnographic research enables an analysis of development practice and meaning as outcomes of various translation processes taking place between actors, such as interpretation, negotiation, and representation processes.

5.2.1 Agency to negotiate meaning

Ethnographic research of development practice and policy has shown that the development practitioners have agency to more or less autonomously oppose, challenge, and use the hegemonic development order and policies, and that they are not simply dominated or subverted by it (Rossi 2004b; Rossi 2006; Mosse 2004; Mosse 2005a). Development change is not achieved 'through the logic of official policy intentions, or even through its hidden operation as a discourse of power, but through processes of compromise and contingent action of various kinds.' (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 4). Mosse and Lewis argue, that applying an actor-oriented approach enables an understanding of how the negotiations of power and meaning unfold in practice (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 9).

The way meaning is produced and negotiated between actors relies on an understanding of power as latent and productive in opposition to a more manifest, oppressive power. The latter can be characterised as a theoretical understanding of power as something that can be 'measured' or 'observed' for example by investigating 'how A might get B to do what he otherwise would not have done.' (Hyden 2008: 264). The former more latent understanding of power, particularly explored in the works of Foucault, can be characterised as a power that 'works through people rather than on them' (Hyden 2008: 264). As Rossi argues: 'Power struggles are founded less on direct confrontation than on a kind of semiotic proselytism that appears in continuous negotiations over meanings (see Carney and Watts 1990) and attempts to enroll others in one's interpretations of specific

circumstances' (Rossi 2004a: 556). We will touch upon the aspect of enrolment of supporters and negotiation of meaning further below.

Recently researchers within the field of anthropology have turned to Foucault's latter concept of 'governmentality' in their ethnographic studies of development in order to explain the order of development and the role of development policy (Lewis & Mosse 2006; 3; Mosse 2004; Rossi 2004b; Rossi 2006; Mueller-Hirth 2013). Within this framework the order of development is seen as a form of governmentality that operates 'neither trough bureaucratic or military control, nor through repression and domination/resistance' (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 3). Instead the order of development operates through a form of productive power, 'which both acts on and through the agency and subjectivity of individuals' (Shore and Wright, 1997: 6, cited in Mosse 2004: 644). Development policies as a form of governmentality thus enables agency and empowers action (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 3). This means that policy through a 'productive power' to a certain degree regulates social life (Mosse 2004: 644) yet still enables individuals agency to shape practices on other rationalities than solely that of policy, since the productive power gives rise to subjectivities and aspirations (Mosse 2004: 644). Development actors should thus not be seen as passively subjected to development policy as a hegemonic discourse, but instead as free rational individuals with agency to produce and negotiate meaning through translation and brokerage (Mueller-Hirth 2012: 652).

5.2.2 Disjuncture between policy and practice

Ethnographic studies of development have frequently shown that there is a disjuncture between the 'normative expectations and the multiplicity of practices in development arenas' (Rossi 2004a: 556); a disjuncture which to most remains concealed due to an apparent increasing order of development rationales (ibid.). Hence, even though there seems to be consensus and more unification on the order of development expressed rhetorically in the 'global' policies for example on poverty reduction in the MDGs and the OECD led aid effectiveness agenda, the 'actual' practices are becoming ever more concealed (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 2).

According to Rossi (2004: 560), it is still up for debate and further research to reach a consensus on the conceptualisation of the relation between order and disjuncture; whether there is a 'reality' of disjuncture behind a 'fiction of order', or whether development actors strategically can produce and bring into play either the

appearance of order or that of disjuncture according to their strategic needs. However, for the time being we will not further debate or discern between whether order and/or disjuncture is produced strategically or not, but determine that there is often disjuncture between policy and practice and that this gap is concealed by a production of order.

The disjuncture occurs because the role of policy, such as development models, strategies and project designs, is first and foremost 'to mobilize and maintain political support that is to legitimise rather than to orientate practice' (Mosse 2004: 648). Instead what orientates and informs development practice are other rationalities than that of policy. As Mosse argues, a project becomes intelligible through 'the system of relationships produced by compliance with the political and cultural logic of field encounters, managerial style, and organizational rules and procedures' (ibid. 651). A good policy is not developed on the basis of technical and operational logics and concerns, but instead on the basis of political mobilisation, recruitment of support from other actors, and consensus processes and thus cannot be understood in terms of its proclaimed rationality or as a discourse of power (ibid. 648).

Development policies are instead fragile models, sustained by the translation work of 'brokers' and are dependent upon the recruitment of support from a broad range of development actors, from beneficiaries to the political bosses (ibid.). The process of developing a policy entails the art of bringing together diverse and sometimes incompatible interests and priorities through political processes (ibid.). All the different and sometimes contradictory interests and agendas of various actors are through the policy making process 'translated into a single, technical-rational, politically acceptable, ambitious and ambiguous project model' (ibid. 651).

Although policy texts might work well for mobilising resources and support 'they are often not very suitable for development intervention, do not provide a good guide for action nor can easily be turned into practice, since they do not take the historical and social context into account' (Mosse 2005a: 15). As Mosse argues, a policy that manage to entail the most interests, achieve legitimacy, and mobilise the greatest support by a broad range of actors, is at the same time a policy that is the most difficult to transform into practice and to use as a plan for action (Mosse 2004: 651).

Policy, such as project designs, strategies, models etc., are not constructed to orientate practice but rather in order to create an appearance of order and legitimise practice (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 2). It is therefore in the actors' interests to sustain the confidence that these normative frameworks are implemented and reflected in practice so as to mobilise resources and sustain support (ibid.). This is achievable through concealment of the disjuncture between these policies and practice as will be elaborate on below.

5.2.3 Sustaining order through translation

Hence, the role of policy is not to bring institutional practice into line with policy descriptions, but to mobilise resources and support, and legitimise rather than orientate practice (Mosse 2005a: 3). This relationship between policy and practice is concealed through translation work by the brokers:

> This apparent disjuncture between policy and implementation is sealed by the continuous work that projects (or rather the actors working within them) must do in order to represent their practices as congruent with policy models. (Rossi 2004a: 557)

Mosse argues, that practice is not produced by policy; rather practice is concealed by policy: 'instead of policy producing practice, practices produce policy, in the sense that actors in development devote their energies to maintaining coherent representations regardless of events' (Mosse 2004: 640). The brokers are actively, not necessarily strategically, representing their practice as coherent with policy regardless of the 'real' events and activities.

According to Mosse, development actors; beneficiaries, field staff, managers, consultants, donor policy makers, etc., work more or less autonomously from one another and within the framework of the policies (Mosse 2005a: 10). This means that skilled brokers, project managers, community leaders, consultants etc., constantly have to translate 'policy goals into practical interests; practical interests back into policy goals' (ibid. 9), and continuously represent practice as congruent with policy by reading 'the meaning of a project into the different institutional languages of its stakeholder supporters.' (Mosse 2004: 647). The brokers thus produce an appearance of order and conceal the disjuncture between the organisation's policy framework and the 'actual' practices. In fact, as Mosse suggests, the development actors' power

lies in the control over the representation of reality and events, since the operational control of practice and events in itself is limited (Mosse 2005a: 8).

This translation thus functions as the concealment of a multiplicity of divergent and contradictory practices and the reestablishment of the ambitions of the policies through the processes of interpretations and representation of events (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 16).

Because of the multiplicity of rationalities, interests, and meaning productions within the development sector and among its diversity of actors, both individuals and institutions, translation or 'brokerage' is needed to produce an appearance of order and compliance with policy, which then secures legitimacy, resources, and support (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 16; Lewis & Mosse 2006: 4). The intention with the translation processes is thus to sustain the confidence that policy informs practice, which will sustain the policies themselves and legitimise practice (Mosse 2004: 648; Mosse 2005a: 4).

5.2.4 Recruitment of support

The success of the translation processes is reliant on the recruitment of support for the interpretations and representations of events. In fact the brokers, through translation processes, produces the 'realities' of a project by the act of enrolling and interlocking varying interests by different actors into the practice (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 13). The interventions are maintained by 'networks of support, and, in turn, unfolding one's trajectory entails "translating" it into terms that are congruent with existing paradigms' (Rossi 2004a: 557).

The concept of interface, which has been widely used within anthropological research on development work (Rossi 2006), refers to the context in which the brokers operate. The brokers need to operate at the interfaces of varying and often divergent social interests, power structures, world-views and knowledge systems. It is within these interfaces that brokers operates and negotiates meaning and representations in order to manage, control or maintain the disjuncture (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 10).

The success of a project then does not come from good policy, but rather from the ability to 'recruit support' for the interpretations and representations of events (Mosse 2005a: 8). Good relationships and network with other actors involved in the

project cycle is thus pivotal for the brokers, in order for them to recruit the necessary support.

Different actors, for different reasons, support the interpretations. The more interests that can be tied up in the interpretation, the more powerful or dominant a development policy model becomes (ibid.). A 'powerful development narrative' interlocks many different interests and is thus able to sustain itself to a greater extent by the buttress of many actors (ibid.). A development policy model or development narrative thus serves different purposes for various actors with varying interests (ibid.):

> The differentiation of practical interests around "unifying" development policies or project designs is a consequence of successful enrolment, and a condition for stability and success. (Mosse 2005a: 9)

Within this framework the unforeseeable development projects 'become real through the work of generating and translating interests, creating context by tying in supporters and so sustaining interpretations' (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 13).

5.2.5 The production of success through translation

Understanding the relationship between policy and practice within the above framework has various implications for how development works. As Mosse has argued, the ethnographic question that ought to be asked and examined is not 'whether but *how* development projects works; not whether a project succeeds, but how "success" is produced' (Mosse 2005a: 8). Because whether a development project is regarded successful or not, depends not as much on the effects of an intervention, than on a judgment of its compliance with policy, since '"success" and "failure" are policy-oriented judgements that obscure project effects' (Mosse 2004: 662).

According to Mosse, the success of a development project is always dependent on interpretation and since the reality of a project does not exist independent from the meaning ascribed to it by different development actors: 'Project reality has to be determined through interpretive work of experts who discern meaning from events by connecting them to policy ideas and text – logframes, project documents (and vice versa)' (Mosse 2005a: 157). Success or failure then depends on the ability to represent project or practice in coherence with policy, rather than on the relevance

and quality of project activities (Rossi 2004a: 557). Mosse's claim relies on three propositions that he argues 'success' depends upon:

> (i) Establishing a compelling interpretation of events, (ii) sustaining this as a key representation (through model building, reporting and field visits), and (iii) enrolling a wider network of supporters and their agendas, whether donor advisors, researchers, government officials or regional NGOs and linking them to the success of the project. (Mosse 2005a: 158)

As such project failure is not failure 'to implement the plan, but a failure of interpretations […] such failures are corrected by conceptual rather than practical work; and here evaluations and impact studies have a key role' (Mosse 2005a: 182).

The critical and interesting part to investigate further, Mosse argues, is 'who is qualified to construct knowledge about a project […] and how it is to be done' (ibid. 158). The interpretation of events and the representation and ability to obtain support of these, comes to rely on expertise and skill. A development project's success can come from good marketing, convergence of development agendas, and through building and sustaining good relationships with all involved stakeholders (ibid. 159). The results of a project are brought about 'through a complex set of social, institutional and political relations informed by a "hidden transcript"' (ibid. 162). However, project reports and evaluations still promote the view that the results come from implementing the 'public transcripts', which is the official project policy (ibid.).

5.2.6 The role of evaluations, reports, and field visits

A project evaluation for example will never be 1:1 ratio of representations of the 'reality' of projects, but should rather be viewed as constructed stories, interpretations, and acquired reality (Mosse 2005a: 157). Evaluations and impact studies are not means to uncover the facts and progress of a project; rather it is an exercise of establishing coherence with policy (ibid. 182). Evaluations are thus only more or less acceptable stories, since no reality of a project exists outside of the interpretation and representation of it, which 'makes constructing a project story highly contentious' (ibid. 157). Mosse does not intend to insinuate that projects are not real or does not produce valuable impact, only that the compliance with the policy models is not a matter of turning policy in to practice, but rather a matter of interpretation, brokerage and representation of project reality.

Hence, Mosse argues, that objectively measuring a project on whether it has reached its results or not, is not possible. Rather success is determined by interpretations and how well these are 'sustained socially' (ibid. 158):

> In order to understand the imperative to connect, to link or network, it is necessary to appreciate the fragility and uncertainty of meaning in development practice, the hidden contradictions and the unreliability of judgements; the fact, ultimately, that "development success" is not objectively verifiable but socially produced. (ibid. 171).

Some events or parts of practice are hidden and concealed and others are produced as successes through the act of interpreting project realities and representing these within the discourse and rhetoric of the normative policy plans. It requires considerable work to maintain the relationships and network of actors that is needed to legitimise the interpretations of a development intervention. Development projects needs skilful brokers that are capable of translating the meaning of the project into different institutional languages and agendas, and at the same time ensure that the long chain of translation is sustained (ibid. 172).

Another way of sustaining the image of transferring policy into practice in a 1:1 ratio is through reporting. According to Mosse, reports are however often laden with reference to the initial project design and policy (ibid. 164). Reports based on technical tools, such as logical framework, encourage this way of reporting and representing project outcome, since 'it demands information on the accomplishment of predetermined schedules and outputs' (ibid.). Project reports and documents all help to continuously produce knowledge about the project that reconfirms the illusion that the project is successful due to implementation of a policy that is well designed (ibid.).

Perhaps the processes of producing a project and its success through interpretation and representation have become so incorporated into the everyday work and practice of development actors that it is invisible to them? As Mosse writes:

> the incentive to produce coherent representations blurs the boundary between the normative and the descriptive, so that project planning manuals become cited and reproduced in project or donor texts as project experience. (ibid.)

This has become the accepted practice, and is sustained through the support and acceptance of the network of actors.

A third way a project is produced successful is through field visits by consultants or donors, which functions as 'rituals of verification' (Power 1997, in Mosse 2005a: 165). However, the field visits to the project site are planned and constructed by the project staff. As Mosse argues, field visits or field reviews 'transforms the space and suspends the routines of office and village' (ibid.). As such the possible interpretations of events and accomplishments derived from such visits are limited to this 'transformed space', which are structured to reaffirm the project policy model (ibid.). Field visits thus becomes 'paradoxical rituals in which the power of the donor over the project is publicly acknowledge but practically denied. Visitors are honoured but controlled; powerful outsiders turned into gullible spectators' (ibid. 166). The visitors might be ignorant of the disjuncture between policy and practice or otherwise 'unable to criticise the dominant interpretation offered' (ibid. 167).

Mosse continues to explain, that the ignorance at such field visit is not individual but institutional, because whatever doubt or scepticism an individual might have had during the visit, it disappears once the field visit concludes with an authorised interpretation of experiences that confirms progress according to policy model (ibid. 166).

6 DISJUNCTURE BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE

In order to examine how and why a disjuncture emerges between RBM policy and practice the following chapter will analyse the interview participants' accounts. First, we will account for how the participants and their organisations have adopted RBM. This will be followed by an analysis where we identify how and why the disjuncture emerges.

6.1 Adopting RBM

RBM policies originated in the development sector within OECD auspices, and INGOs and NGOs are not directly required to implement RBM. Yet, in the analysis of our empirical data below, we will show that the agenda of RBM and the emphasis on showing results of development interventions nevertheless influence the project management systems of the participants.

During the fieldwork, we enquired development practitioners about their project management practices from planning to evaluation. All of the interviewed participants had experienced a stronger focus and emphasis on managing for and documenting results in the past years. The M&E Officer in an INGO explained that in his experience donors focus more on results and their concern is with how the organisation plan to track and measure those results:

> Yes, lots of changes, the donors are more focused only on the results and what the changes are. No matter how much investment you have, they want to know

what the change is. After any activity you do, the first question is always about the results. I have also been involved in the development of proposal, and they particularly focus on monitoring and evaluation. Whether they will fund a project or not, they ask how we will track it. It depends on the monitoring and evaluation framework if we get the fund, or not. It is hugely dependent on that. It is not only the concept or the idea. (M&E Officer, INGO A, 09.11.15)

The Program Officer at another INGO gave a similar account of the demand and focus on results and furthermore added that they are required by the donors to implement a results-based framework. For this organisation, RBM moreover entails that results are non-negotiable:

According to that donor [International Development Agency], results are not negotiable. If we commit to deliver results they are not negotiable. In that way we have to complete what we have committed to. In a similar way we are also working with our partners that way. Results are not negotiable. (Program Officer, INGO D, 03.12.15)

In various ways, most of the INGOs and NGOs have adopted a results-based framework or strategy to apply in the management of their projects. Most of the participants explained that the way they understand RBM is that it entails an omnipresent focus on results and impact, rather than a focus on the project processes, what is done during project implementation, and how the funds have been used. Some of the organisations do not have a specific overall RBM strategy, but managing for results has been incorporated into already existing M&E frameworks. Others are directly required by donors to plan and report according to desired results or impact instead of reporting on output. The Executive Director of an NGO explained that it depends on the donor:

Some donors especially request results-based management or results-based reporting and we report. But some donors, they do not have that type of very specific results-based reporting template. But we try to, while reporting, to show results. (Executive Director, NGO C, 09.11.15)

From the abovementioned, it is evident that the result agenda affects the practice of INGOs and NGOs in Nepal. They seem to have adopted RBM in various forms of RBM strategies, results-based frameworks and M&E systems that adopt the results focus. However, as we shall show in the following, the relationship between RBM policies and the practices of the participants is not that of a 1:1 implementation. Practice might appear to be a perfect implementation or compliance with policy,

however when inquired and examined further, it appears to be other logics and rationalities that orientate and inform practice.

6.2 The emergence of disjuncture

As argued in Chapter 5, policies often rely on a means to and end rationality. Many development practitioners and policy makers confirm the view that getting theory right and developing better and more sophisticated policies (strategies, models, logical frameworks, project designs etc.) is key to addressing any shortcomings of development practice or lack of results. Hence, the expectation is that a well-intended and well-orchestrated policy as RBM will lead to good practice, secure effectiveness and results, and allow for change and progress to be controlled by the planner's visions. This relies on the assumption that policy ought to inform and govern practice in a 1 to 1 ratio, where development actors are expected to follow the organisational management policy and implement projects accordingly.

In the following, we will argue that RBM policy do not and cannot orientate management practices of the participants and their organisations. In theory, RBM might be a desirable way to manage and make development interventions more efficient and secure results and impact, but in practice the normative framework is much more difficult to realise. Challenges emerge when the normative framework collides with the social reality of development practice and projects in the context of the INGOs and NGOs in Nepal. Problems arise when the participants needs to 1) determine the causal link between activities and the desired outcome and impact; 2) identify and determine measurable indicators; and 3) quantify and measure and assess for results. In the following we will analyse the participants' accounts of their experiences and challenges with RBM, which will allow us to argue that RBM policy cannot and does not orientate practice rather 'change is brought about, not through the logic of official policy intentions, or even through its hidden operation as a discourse of power, but through processes of compromise and contingent action of various kinds' (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 4).

6.2.1 RBM in a complex context

When we inquired the participants about the challenges that an RBM framework might pose, several pointed to challenges with managing for results of projects that aim at achieving political, social, or behavioural change within a community; for example through advocacy work, awareness campaigns, empowerment, training of

community people on various issues such as rights, nutrition, the importance of schooling etc. The change processes of such projects were generally seen as more complex, uncontrollable, and non-linear, as opposed to service delivery projects, for example of providing better access to water or education through digging new wells or constructing school buildings. The latter types of projects were generally highlighted as projects with simpler and linear change process, and thus belonging in another category than the projects most of them engage with.

The Program Manager in an NGO that works with women's rights, mainly through advocacy and awareness campaigns, stressed that advocacy projects are more complex than construction projects:

> If we are building a house then it is very easy to see this is the house we have built for the funds and with the money [the donors] have contributed. But for the advocacy, it is totally different. It is really hard to do advocacy with the government as it consumes a lot of energy and time for us. But it does not show anywhere, you know? When there are achievements too, it seems like, it is a collective achievement. (Program Manager, NGO A, 04.11.15)

The Program Manager found it challenging to measure and document results of advocacy work. Firstly, because the desired result of their advocacy work is the enactment of new laws and regulations, which consumes a lot of time and energy. The Program Manager has experienced that achieving the results of a changed legal landscape and the enactment of a new law can take years and sometimes there will be no tangible or measurable results to show for the funds spent. Secondly, this kind of project makes attribution of any result problematic, since the achievement is often a result of collective achievements.

Furthermore, several participants mentioned that the control they have on the change processes and ensuring achievement of results is more limited than what the RBM policies and frameworks assume, because of the unforeseeable, uncontrollable, and unmanageable character of the social context in which the projects are carried out. The Project and Administrative Manager from an NGO expressed that when projects have more complex change processes they cannot always achieve the results they have planned for; no matter how well they follow the plan or conduct the activities, they have less control over the change processes that leads to the desired result:

> It is not necessary that we achieve everything in the project period; it is not possible too. We cannot control everything. We can just try to convince the parents, we cannot force them. We influence them in different ways. And only if their mind-set changes, they will send their children to school. It is not in our control to convince all the parents at one time. (Project and Administrative Manager, NGO B, 05.11.15)

The participant has experienced that desired and planned results are not always achievable, as some of the changes they try to achieve are not within the organisation and projects' control. Through projects they can raise awareness and provide training to parents about the importance of schooling for their children, but beyond this point changes are not in their control. This and other participants' experiences suggest that projects are uncertain and complex and not always manageable and controllable. Social, behavioural, or political change relies on factors that projects and project staff cannot possibly control, plan, or forecast down to every detail.

There seem to be aspects and processes of managing for results that collide with the type of project that the organisation conducts. The theory and methods of RBM policy do not correspond well with projects aiming at structural, political, social, or behavioural changes, which the INGOs and NGOs in Nepal are conducting. No matter how well a project and its change processes have been planned and 'forecasted', there will always be a degree of uncertainty within this field. As Eyben argues, it seems as the rationalities of RBM; of measuring and showing results, and the desire to be in control, is 'symptomatic of a refusal to engage with complexity in a dynamic and uncertain world' (Eyben 2015: 940).

Mosse (2004; 2005a) shows that in the case of a DFID development project in rural India that he worked on for ten years, there were various ways in which the project design and theory of participatory development 'did not, and *could not,* shape actual practice in the project' (Mosse 2004: 651). Although the practitioners in Mosse's case tried their best to commit to the project's design and its theory, it was not practicable and suitable in all cases in the various context of the project because of competing rationalities. Mosse further argues that 'practices were shaped less and less by the formal goals (of policy/design)' (ibid. 653). Instead, the project was first and foremost shaped and made comprehensible 'through the system of relationships produced by compliance with the political and cultural logic of field encounters, managerial style, and organizational rules and procedures' (ibid. 651).

Implementing RBM, which assumes a linear cause and effect relationship, in a context characterised by complexity, implies several challenges and implications for INGOs and NGOs, which results in a disjuncture between policy and practice, as we will show below.

6.2.2 Establishing a results chain

One way in which we found that the practices within the organisations differed from the policies was when participants explained about establishing a causal relation between inputs and the desired outcomes and impacts. First step in an RBM framework is to decide which outcomes and impacts the project should aim for. Next step is to identify what inputs and actions are needed to be able to achieve these desired outcomes and impacts. This is done through establishing a results chain that will define and illustrate the causal relation between inputs and actions and the desired outcomes and impacts. However, this is where the participants experience that the policy on RBM is difficult to implement, because how and on what basis are they supposed to be able to forecast and determine this causal relationship? How can they forecast the change processes when change and progress rely on and involve the actions and reactions of the beneficiaries, politicians, and trainers etc., who are free and rational individuals?

The M&E Officer from an INGO explained that it is difficult to assure that the activities they plan will also lead to the desired results, since knowledge and evidence of change processes and which activities will lead to the desired results is difficult to ascertain (M&E Officer, INGO A, 09.11.15). According to his experience, establishing such relation is not possible and practicable; there will always be uncertainty as they are only able to assume this causal relationship and then plan ahead from there, they cannot be absolutely sure about how the project is going to evolve (M&E Officer, INGO A, 09.11.15). The participant further explained that when a donor gives them a target, they 'definitely have to achieve that. You do not know how, but we have to achieve that' (M&E Officer, INGO A, 09.11.15).

The scenario above illustrates the difficulty of implementing RBM in line with the policy. They cannot make the RBM practical and establish the results chain; they can only assume it. Accounts given from several other participants support this and several furthermore stated that they doubt the practicability of establishing a causal relationship or results chain.

From the examples above, it is possible to argue that the practices within the organisations are not merely informed by RBM policy. The task of planning activities is not done on the basis of establishing a causal link. Their management practices are rather informed by other rationalities than that of RBM: their capabilities, their past experiences, their habits etc. Two participants from an NGO for example mentioned several times that they were able to design projects because they had been doing it for many years and had been very successful (NGO C, 09.11.15). Other participants gave similar accounts when we asked them for example how they knew that a specific training of women would lead to empowerment or how they knew that making parents aware of the importance of schooling would enhance the attendance rate. The participants' rationales for these activities were based on habit: training is considered good, participatory approaches is considered good etc. In relation to this, Olivier de Sardan writes:

> Of necessity, a development project implies placing a bet on the way in which the social actors involved will behave […] This is because the effective strategies deployed generate such a wide variety of variables as to become unpredictable; these include a multitude of categories of actors competing with each other in the context of a development project, endowed with a multitude of personal logics, not to mention the wide variety of stakes being vied for, and the diverse local systems of constraints (produced by the environment and by history). (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 206)

The feasibility of firmly establishing a liable and valid results chain for projects that aim at achieving social, behavioural, or political change seems unlikely according to the explanations from the participants. Furthermore, when it comes to project planning their practices did not seem to be informed by a preoccupation of establishing a results chain, which RBM necessitates.

6.2.3 Defining indicators and measuring change

Another way the disjuncture between RBM policy and practice manifests itself is when it comes to identifying and defining indicators for assessing change. Furthermore, in relation to the complex change processes that characterise the context of development projects, it becomes even more challenging for NGOs and INGOs to define such indicators.

When a results chain has been established, next step in an RBM framework is to establish baseline data and identify indicators for assessing progress during

implementation and on project completion. Setting indicators is an important and central aspect of RBM, as it allows for tracking and measuring the progress or achievement of results through monitoring and evaluation. Without establishing indicators it will not be possible to measure whether results have been achieved or not. The M&E Specialist working in a larger INGO together with several other participants, voiced a concern with being able to identify and determine 'precise, quantitative, and SMART indicators' (M&E Specialist, INGO E, 04.12.15).

The Project Manager from another NGO explained that it is much more difficult and complex to set indicators and to measure results of projects that aim to change social or behavioural aspects in a community; counting the number of established women cooperatives within a year is much simpler than measuring change in the beneficiaries' behaviour, attitudes, and knowledge. As he says: 'we cannot measure feelings' (Project Manager NGO F, 20.11.15). The Executive Director from another NGO concurs with this view, and yet explains how they are trying hard to make every indicator quantitative, even where it might not seem feasible, because this is required within RBM. The projects they conduct aim at changing the population's discriminative behaviour towards a minority group, and even though the participant finds it difficult to measure and quantify the changes in behaviour, he explains that they aim at 'finding the number', because 'the number can come' (Executive Director, NGO C, 09.11.15). The Program Manager has also experienced difficulties in setting indicators and measuring changes in feelings or attitudes of the beneficiaries:

> How to collect information about the changes in self-esteem? How to measure the change in confidence? Because confidence is individual, I have one and you have another. How to track the changes in confidence? How can we document that they are improving and enhancing their self-esteem level? (Program Manager, NGO H, 24.11.15)

The example above illustrates how the disjuncture between policy and practice unfolds. The participant finds it complex to measure behavioural change, for example a feeling such as self-esteem. The RBM framework and its methods do not provide a solution to deal with the issue of measuring social or behavioural changes.

The Project Manager from another NGO has furthermore experienced that unsuitable, unspecific, or incorrect indicators risk making an assessment of change and progress distorted and misleading, and thus without value:

> How to measure it? That is the thing. Like when we started to work in our community, at that time, they did not even know what domestic violence was and we organised different campaigns. What happened next is that the number of reported cases or complaints increased in the police reports. (Project Manager, NGO F, 20.11.15)

In the project mentioned above, the indicator applied to assess change in domestic violence was mistakenly determined to be the number of filed police reports. Choosing this indicator distorted 'reality' and made it appear as if domestic violence was on the rise in the wake of project implementation, contrary to the expectation and intention. Such unintended effects of choosing the wrong indicators in the quest for quantifying indicators and results is not uncommon and several participants expressed concern with the demand for quantitative results and indicators, where it was not appropriate. An M&E Specialist also concurred with the experience that the whole process of defining quantitative results and indicators becomes complicated and easily arbitrary:

> In such projects where you are reducing corporal punishment for example or where you are reducing child exploitation, it is a little bit difficult to show the indicator. You might get second source of information about what the level of child exploitation is. But when you establish the indicators, it is difficult to decide and to set your indicator. For example if the number is 15, what is it you want to make? You can say 20, or from 15 you can say 10, why not nine? Why not 10? These things become tricky when you are formulating a project, when you are formulating indicators. So this is very tricky and very difficult and you need a lot of understanding. You need to see the chain of how it will happen? (M&E Specialist, INGO E, 04.12.15)

Defining quantitative indicators easily becomes an arbitrary and uninformed task as the quote from the M&E Specialist above shows. The participant underlines that the ability to be able to define precise and specific indicators to assess the desired results eventually relies on the level of understanding of the social and behavioural change processes and the ability to establish the results chain:

> The only issue [with implementing RBM] is how to come up with the percentage or the value when you define your result. That is something that needs more understanding and that understanding needs to be translated into practice. (M&E Specialist, INGO E, 04.12.15)

Although the M&E Specialist explained that he had many years of experience with RBM from being employed both in the implementing level and donor level, he still finds it challenging to define precise quantitative indicators and results. This indicates that on a theoretical level, it might be reasonable and a good tool to establish indicators for measuring progress, however in practice this is much more challenging and perhaps not in all cases feasible when even a skilled and experienced development actor, who is expected to implement RBM framework, finds it challenging and impracticable. The problem with measuring social or behavioural changes in the communities, for example self-esteem, is that no matter how good your method or tool for measuring such behavioural or social change is; putting a number or percentage to a change in self-esteem seems rather arbitrary (M&E Specialist, INGO E, 04.12.15).

One participant explains that donors have become very focused on results: 'they ask for the results every time. What is the result? They do not ask how or why, but they ask how much' (M&E Officer, INGO A, 09.11.15). The participant furthermore experiences that within some projects it can be feasible to measure and observe qualitative changes and report qualitative results, but within the current system, within the RBM rationality, it is not considered an option to report qualitative results.

Rather the requirements for documenting results are experienced as a demand for reporting only numeric data, percentages, and countable quantitative results and not qualitative data (M&E Officer, INGO A, 09.11.15). On this issue Michael Power writes: 'it is as if the reduction of complexity is valued for its own sake as the basis for a shared language to support decision making and for a distinctive policy style' (Power 2004: 774). This preoccupation with quantifying results shows the importance and dominance that quantitative, measurable and countable data have over other types of data and information about the results of a project. It furthermore shows another aspect of how the disjuncture between policy and practice manifests itself. The participants find that the requirements for quantifiable and measurable results to a certain extent is impossible to adhere to in the contexts characterised by complexity.

6.2.4 Scarce resources and RBM
Resources available within the organisation have a great impact on how and to which extent RBM is implemented and guides practice. Managing for results

requires a lot of time and skills that are not always available to the participants in their practice. The Executive Director from an NGO expressed that the project strategy needs to be developed properly in order to be able to achieve results. He argued that there is a need for greater investment by the donors to engage in project-planning processes that entails consultation processes with the beneficiaries and other stakeholders about the needs and problems in the communities; proper analysis and research on the developmental problems and their cause; and proper coordination with other organisations and agencies etc. (Executive Director, NGO C, 09.11.15).

The M&E Specialist from a large INGO explained how the system of project funding does not allow for rigorous and in-depth planning of projects. There is limited time and resources allocated to the project-planning phase; although he argues that this is one of the most important parts of RBM (M&E Specialist, INGO E, 04.12.15). He further elaborated that if there is a risk that the donors will not choose to fund the project, the organisation cannot afford to invest a lot of resources in thoroughly planning and designing that project. Thus, from this participant's experience and insight, it can be argued that the project planning is rather shaped by the donors' agenda and what kind of projects that are most likely to win funding, than on rigorous, relevant, and research based project planning. Instead of the managing practice being informed by RBM policy, it is among others, informed and shaped by what is possible within the institutional practice of the development sector in Nepal.

Another issue related to the above is that adhering to RBM policy requires certain expertise and knowledge. The M&E Specialist employed in an INGO explained that they have to provide training and raise awareness to their implementing partners on the different elements of RBM. Yet, even within his own organisation on a senior project management level and elsewhere in the development sector where he has worked, he has experienced that people have difficulties understanding the RBM approach and what it entails (M&E Specialist, INGO E, 04.12.15). Other participants voiced that they do not always feel that they have the right capacity to align management practises with RBM. They experience that RBM requires a lot of expertise and knowledge that they do not always have access to:

> RBM is challenging also, because it needs some resources, it needs some skills.
> And an organisation like us, we have different type of skills and capacity of our
> staff and our structure is different. So it is very difficult to work nowadays and

we had to transfer it to the field. And then we had to see the changes and the results which had been captured properly, that is also necessary for RBM, reporting. This is a challenge - existing capacity challenge. We are trying. (Executive Director, NGO C, 09.11.15)

These experiences of lacking the necessary expertise and knowledge align practice with RBM, indicates that the participants have to compromise and thus practice is among other things the outcome of available resources (expertise, knowledge, time etc.) and not what a results-based practice ought to entail.

6.3 Policy does not guide practice

To sum up, we have now shown that there is a disjuncture between the normative expectations of RBM policy and the management practices of INGOs and NGOs in Nepal and argued that RBM policy do not and cannot shape and inform the practices of the participants. Rather a combination of various other factors, processes, and rationalities, other than that of implementation of an RBM strategy, determines participants' practices and choices when they are managing projects.

The 'disjuncture comes from the gap between these ideal worlds and the social reality they have to relate to' (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 2). The disjuncture inevitably occurs when the rationalities that RBM policy suggests and the ideal practice that it normatively describes have to relate to the social reality of development work. As we have shown when the rationalities of RBM collides with the social reality of development work and practice in the INGOs and NGOs in Nepal, it becomes evident that a gap exists between the ideal normative RBM framework and the social reality of development practice.

The operational logics of the organisations, and the development sector at large, that determine to which extent RBM policy can be complied with. As Lewis and Mosse explain, practice is shaped 'through processes of compromise and contingent action of various kinds' (ibid. 4), not through the logics and norms of official policy intentions (ibid.). Yet, the operational control that NGOs have on 'the events and practices in development is always constrained and often quite limited' (Mosse 2004: 646). The operational possibilities can be constrained by the interests or agendas of actors from beneficiaries, consultants, external evaluators, to the partner INGOs and their donors etc. All these different actors influence the participants' actions and

choices on how to manage projects to varying degrees and it is through such social relations that practice should be made comprehensible.

It can thus be argued that the RBM policies only affect, the INGOs' and NGOs' management practices 'through its imperfect translation into the intentions and ambitions of others; the institutional interests, operational systems, procedures and organizational culture of collaborating agencies, their workers and those recruited as beneficiaries' (ibid. 654).

We have pointed towards aspects or rationalities that *can* and *do* shape and inform the participants' practices although the analysis above should not be seen as an exhaustive list of logics that do shape and inform practice. It has been challenging for us to gain access to which other logics shape and inform the participants' practices. The methodology applied in this research have to a certain extent, limited the inferences we can make in regards to how practices are generated if not by policy. This is because we did not have the possibility to spend considerable time with the development practitioners in the field where such situations are more likely to have occurred.

6.3.1 Counter-argument

Some might argue against our findings above and claim that the reason INGOs and NGOs do not adhere to RBM policy is simply because they are not equipped for the task and a solution would be to provide them more resources or revise the RBM policy. This claim rests on a belief that more and better management policies are needed in order to 'close' the gap. However, we will argue that precisely no matter which policy or how well composed the policy is, the relationship between policy and the reality of INGOs and NGOs can not and should not be understood in terms of an instrumentalist view. Policy does not direct practice. No matter how many or how well designed the policy is, practice will still be generated by other logics than that of policy.

While we have argued that policy does not inform practice, then what is the purpose of policy and how can we understand the relationship between policy and practice? How come there is so much energy devoted to generate the 'right' policies when policies seem to have limited influence on practice? These are some of the questions we will address in the following chapter.

7 THE ROLE OF RBM POLICY

While we have argued that RBM policy do not and cannot shape and inform the practices of the participants, rather practice is informed by administrative rationalities, available resources, interests, etc. How then can the role of RBM policies be understood? Which purpose do they serve for the organisations?

As we have shown in the above section, there is a disjuncture between RBM policy and the practice it intends to orientate, since practice seems to be shaped by other logics than that of policy. RBM policies can be analysed as 'a normative way of framing how the world should be' (Eyben 2008: 14), and not simply as an instrument for solving the shortcomings of development aid and lack of results and effectiveness (ibid. 13).

We will argue that the disjuncture manifests itself because the role of policy is in fact not to orientate and direct practice, as is the general assumption. Instead as Mosse argues, it is through policy that practice can acquire legitimacy, mobilise resources and support (Mosse 2004: 648). Through adopting an RBM framework, the INGOs and NGOs are able to mobilise resources and support for their practices and thus legitimise them, as we will argue for and show in the following.

Eyben argues, that the allegedly agreed statements and rationalities of a policy are the outcome of 'temporary victories' of political processes built on consensus, which makes policies fragile and subject to 'challenge, obstruction, revision and downright rejection' (Eyben 2008: 13). We wish to argue that RBM policies and policy in general, are shaped by political processes, rather than out of operational or technical concerns. As Mosse argues and which we have further elaborated in Chapter 5, a project

model, strategy or logical framework is technically and operationally expressed, but developed on the basis of political mobilisation (Mosse 2004: 648); and the 'logic of political mobilization and the logic of operations is different' (ibid. 651).

As such, when the participants experience challenges with RBM policy it should be seen in the light of the role of policy and the policymaking processes. As both Eyben and Mosse argue, policy making is often detached from the social, cultural, and historical realities of development practice, which makes them poor guides for action (Mosse 2005a: 15; Eyben 2008: 21). This explains why the rationalities of RBM are not shaped from what is technically and operationally feasible within social development projects. Instead, we can argue that the ideas and rationalities of RBM have been developed and shaped through political processes detached from the social reality of development.

As explained in Chapter 5, the political process of developing policy, from a policy in OECD/DAC auspices to a project model, entails the art of bringing together diverse and sometimes incompatible interests in order to mobilise a broad support and enhance the policy's legitimacy (Mosse 2004: 648). Through the policymaking process, the interests and agendas of various actors and stakeholders are 'translated into a single, technical-rational, politically acceptable, ambitious and ambiguous project model' (ibid. 651).

In order for a policy to appeal to and acquire support from a heterogeneous audience of actors with a range of different interests, policymakers will naturally try to present their policies in the best possible light so as to appeal to the various interests (Morrell and Hewison 2013). A policy or project model will therefore often consist of a certain kind of language, which makes it possible for the policy to obtain support by actors and stakeholders. It can be argued that RBM's encouraging and powerful message of promising accountability, effectiveness, and enhanced achievement of results, provides projects, CSOs and the development sector at large much needed legitimacy.

According to Des Gasper and Raymond Apthorpe, the often optimistic and appealing peculiarity of development policies and the promise of a 'happy ending', constitute a narrative structure through which development policies can convey encouraging messages; messages that are easy to grasp and capable of responding to situations that can otherwise seem profoundly complex to address (Gasper & Apthorpe 1996: 9). Andrea Cornwall and Karen Brock (2005: 1043) furthermore

argue, that development policies can be characterised by a 'warmly persuasive and fulsomely positive' language and rhetoric. The development agenda is phrased as 'no-nonsense pragmatism', with an almost 'unimpeachable moral authority', that easily convinces that better policies are the needed solution for solving issues and that implementing the policies really will make a difference (Cornwall & Brock 2005: 1043). Such language use will give a policy a broad appeal and 'lend the legitimacy that development actors need to justify their interventions' (ibid. 1044). That is why 'fine-sounding words' or buzzwords are attractive to use in development policies because of their ambiguity and ability to shelter several meanings that appeal to a very heterogeneous audience (ibid.):

> What makes a concept valuable is precisely that which gives it broad-based appeal. To have that appeal, it needs to speak to those who work in development and speak about their preoccupations, their hopes, their values. (ibid. 1056)

Using a broad-based appeal and a strong moral authority when shaping a development policy thus make it very difficult for any actors to disagree with the policy (ibid. 1043).

It can be argued that RBM policies exactly consist of such positive language and no-nonsense pragmatism, through which it achieves a broad appeal among a heterogeneous group of actors. RBM speaks to the hopes and values of development actors, by promising the enhancement of achieving results and making projects and aid effective. On a normative level it is difficult not to commit and support interventions or organisations that adopt an RBM approach, since they appear to have adopted a comprehensive, thorough, and 'best-practice' management approach that will enhance the likeliness of achieving results and thus providing value for money. Hence, the normative framework of RBM provides the actors with a 'rhetoric tool' with which they can outwardly appear to address and respond to the complex and demanding tasks of conducting good development work.

As we have shown in Chapter 4, the ideas, proclaimed rationalities, and purposes of RBM, expressed through a convincing 'no-nonsense' language, have been negotiated, framed, and affirmed through various political processes throughout the years as part of the aid effectiveness agenda. Since its emergence within the development sector, RBM has gained legitimacy and become widely accepted by a broad group of actors and stakeholders as a management method for enhancing aid effectiveness.

This further indicates its broad-based appeal and ability to enrol varying interests and agendas and acquire a broad support.

Thus, the political process within which RBM has been developed also implies that it is difficult and perhaps impossible to implement. As argued, RBM policy entails many interests and mobilises a broad support among various actors and stakeholders, but is not shaped by operational concerns but rather on the basis of consensus and what a broad group of stakeholders and actors have been able to agree upon. As Mosse argues, a policy that manages to entail the most interests, achieve legitimacy, and mobilise the greatest support by a broad range of actors, is at the same time, a policy that is the most difficult to transform into practice and to use as a plan for action (Mosse 2004: 651).

The above conceptualisation of policy indicates that policy serves an important purpose for the participants if they are to legitimise their practice and mobilise resources and support for their work. The INGOs and NGOs need to comply with policies even though the practices might be informed by other rationalities. It is important to sustain the belief that development works from the logics of policy, that there is an order to things, and that the practices and processes of development can be controlled and governed by the construction of meticulous plans and through policy. Hence, we wish to argue that the participants are engaged with concealing the apparent disjuncture and producing order through various translation processes, since this will allow them to sustain their practice and maintain the support and flow of resources. The persisting confidence in policies is thus ensured because the disjuncture between policy and practice is concealed (Mosse 2005a: 4). This will be argued in the following chapter, which shows these processes of translation as they have become visible in our empirical data.

8 CONCEALING THE DISJUNCTURE

Above, we have identified a gap between RBM policy and how it is implemented in practice. We have argued that the development actors seem to work autonomously from the policy model of RBM. This finding might then bring in question like why INGOs and NGOs are not discredited for not complying and implementing policy?

In line with Mosse's view, we will argue that the disjuncture and the logic of how practices are generated are being 'hidden by the active promotion of policy models' (Mosse 2004: 654). As we will show below, the actors are working to sustain the impression that the policy model is generating their practice by promoting RBM policy.

The actors do this because it is in their interest to do so, since sustaining the representation of a coherence of order is essential to mobilise support and resources and legitimize development interventions (Mosse 2004; Mosse 2005a). When an INGO or NGO in Nepal 'adopts' a policy, such as an RBM strategy, their task is not to implement this policy into practice on a 1:1 ratio and operationalise it, rather it is a task of producing convincing policy arguments to justify the allocation of resources by validating the overall policy goals of, for example a donor (Mosse 2004: 648). They have to present a coherent policy argument in the language of RBM.

We were at first puzzled by the fact that the logic of NGO practices seemed to contradict the policies on RBM, while at the same time the interview participants seemed constrained to promote the view that RBM policy is implemented and

directing their practice. The participants explained how they believed RBM was good, how their donors did not give them any problems for not implementing and following the policy, and complying with donors' requirements and RBM policy.

We will argue that these contradictory 'storylines' within the participants' accounts and narratives signify a way of concealing the disjuncture and representing practice as order and as compliance with policy.

8.1 Promoting RBM policy

Although the participants mentioned several challenges in regards to RBM, they were at the same time engaged with promoting RBM policy. Several participants gave accounts of various positive and rewarding effects that RBM had had on their practices and many did not seem to be weighed down by the challenges of RBM.

For example, the Executive Director from an NGO emphasised that he is content with RBM and that his organisation have experienced that it has made them more focused on results:

> When we just focus on the input level and process level, we just complete activities. Results-based management is also associated with effective development and also accountability, because we commit results and then we are committed to achieve that result. (Executive Director, NGO C, 09.11.15)

The Executive Director further explained that RBM increases their reflection on the overall aim and goal with the activities they conduct, and thus make them more committed to achieving results instead of just completing activities (Executive Director, NGO C, 09.11.15). Yet, this participant also gave accounts of how they do not have the capacity to fully implement RBM, and he furthermore doubted the possibility of measuring behavioural changes (Executive Director, NGO C, 09.11.15).

The Project Manager from another NGO gave a similar account; in his opinion RBM directs attention towards the results and it supports the planning of projects since it enables them to identify which activities to implement in order to achieve specific results or targets. However, in the same interview the participants also expressed that they are unsure how to measure behavioural changes and they do not have the required capacity to implement RBM and establish results chains (Project Manager NGO F, 20.11.15).

The M&E Specialist from an INGO does not doubt the value of RBM: 'Multiple countries have already agreed to implement these things, so I do not see any issues to implement the result-based management' (M&E Specialist, INGO E, 04.12.15). However, in the following sentence he mentioned problems with setting quantitative indicators and added that there are aspects of RBM that are not practicable (see Chapter 6). On one hand the participant's account drew on the rationality, that because RBM is a global management policy it must therefore also be of valuable use. On the other hand, the participant explained how difficult it is to measure results against quantitative indicators, which is based on a rationality of operational and organisational practice. This might indicate that although the participant finds it difficult and sometimes even impossible to meet the demands of RBM, he still felt constrained to promote the view that RBM is possible to implement, and thus represented his practice in concordance with the policy.

When participants promoted RBM, they outwardly demonstrated that they are accountable, trustworthy and manage the funds according to a widely accepted approach; an approach and policy that has a broad-based appeal and speaks to the interests and hopes of the development actors at large. Adopting an RBM framework correlate with the goals of the donor, since it is in the donor's interest that the INGOs and NGOs manage the funds properly and in a way that will yield results. Adopting an RBM policy serves this purpose and thus sustains the support and funds from the donor.

The participants' promotion of RBM policy in the above examples can be analysed as an attempt to produce order and an appearance of compliance with policy. When the participants explained about the challenges with RBM, as we have shown in Chapter 6, it was not possible for them to sustain the appearance of order. Instead, we were able to identify a disjuncture between RBM policies and the practices it intends to direct. Yet, what several of the participants did in addition to explaining about challenges, was to promote RBM policy and express that they were complying with the policy, as shown in the above examples. There is a clear contradiction between these two 'storylines' and their rationalities; the participants on one hand gave accounts of RBM as unfeasible in practice, which indicates that it does not inform their practices, and on the other hand they promoted RBM and conveyed the impression that implementing RBM has had positive effects on their practices.

How can we understand these two contradictory messages about RBM policy? Is the promotion of policy a way in which the participants attempt to produce an appearance of order?

We will argue that participants' attempt to translate and act as brokers during the interview manifests itself through this contradiction. Promoting the policy is an attempt to represent their practices as compliance with RBM policy and thus convey to us, the impression that they are accountable and that their management practices are in order and legitimate. This way, they are working to sustain RBM policy. However, the participants failed to sustain the appearance of order when they accounted for their experiences implementing and using RBM. In these accounts, it became visible that there is a disjuncture and that their practices are not directed by policy (as shown in Chapter 6). Hence, the contradiction can be argued to indicate an attempt to translate during the interview; nevertheless this translation process is somehow flawed.

Aspects of the participants' accounts, such as promoting RBM policy, can thus be seen as part of a direct translation process where the participants attempt to interpret and represent to us their practices as complying with policy. Other parts of their accounts are not to the same extent part of a direct attempt to translate during the interview. In those situations, we were able to get an insight into how the participants work to produce and sustain order in their everyday project management practices. This latter aspect will be elaborated and explored in the next section.

8.2 The practices of creating order

Development practitioners are constantly engaged in creating order. It requires considerable work for development actors to promote the view that their development practice is informed by RBM policy. This task involves maintaining the relationships and network of actors that is needed to legitimise the interpretations of a development intervention. According to Mosse, project reality is dependent on outside interpretation and judgement; it cannot proclaim its own reality (Mosse 2005a: 157).

The success of a project is not based on the effects of the intervention, but instead on an 'assessment' or judgment of how well these effects comply with policy, since success 'demands that action be interpreted as the execution of official policy' (Lewis

& Mosse 2006: 5). There are no objective meters to measure a project's success against, only the degree of compliance with policy, which is 'estimated' through interpretations. This is why development actors through brokerage necessarily have to interpret the effects of the interventions, the activities, the events etc. within the 'language' and framework of the policy, and then represent the effects as compliance with policy in order to claim success. This concealment of disjuncture and production of order, do not necessarily mean that results have not been achieved or that the projects have not been transformative. It merely indicates that the actors cannot claim success without sustaining and representing the events of the project or the results within the framework of policy.

Hence, it can be argued that the participants need to produce their practices and 'meaning' in such a way that it reflects the framework of the policy. An evaluation or impact study is thus a production of a more or less acceptable story, since no reality of a project exists outside of the interpretation and representation of it (Mosse 2005a: 157). However, any interpretation and claim of 'success' has to be sustained and supported socially. Projects then only 'become real through the work of generating and translating interests, creating context by tying in supporters and so sustaining interpretations' (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 13).

When success is seen as socially produced and not as something that is objectively verifiable, the meaning in development practice inevitably becomes fragile, contestable, and uncertain, because of the concealed contradictions and the uncertainty of judgements (Mosse 2005a: 171).

When the participants were inquired about the challenges and difficulties of complying with the principles of RBM policies, and how they would manage when it seemed impossible to comply with policy, they would often explain about various solutions or ways in which they managed to handle these issues in their practices. As we will show below, these 'coping' strategies can be analysed as ways in which the participants interpret and represent practice as compliance with policy, through enrolling interests and acquiring support for the interpretations.

8.2.1 The relationship with donors

Several participants pointed to the importance of having good relations with donors. During the interviews, we inquired the participants about how donors would react and respond to the challenges that the participants were faced with in regards to

managing for results. The accounts given during the interviews indicated that a good relationship with donors is pivotal in order to sustain the representations of their practices as compliance with policy.

The Project and Administrative Manager from an NGO explained that when they are unable to measure and show results and face challenges with advocacy activities, their donors are aware about and understand the difficulties with these types of projects and thus stay flexible (Project and Administrative Manager, NGO B, 05.11.15). According to this participant, whenever challenges occur in relation to complying with the project policy or plan, it can be managed and solved through good relations with the donors. The Program Manager from another NGO gave a similar account and explained that documenting results from advocacy projects is difficult and sometimes impossible:

> This is the thing we are struggling with too. When we have a meeting with the partners and donors, we share with them "how to show the results?" and they say that: "Small changes can be a result, you try your best but it does not necessarily mean that there will be a change in the policy and all those things. We also understand that advocacy is a long process and that changing the policies take time." (Program Manager, NGO A, 04.11.15)

However, when faced with these challenges they consult with their donors and together they find a solution on how to show results. For example, they can interpret even small and less transformative changes as results and thus claim some success, although the main results that the project aims at realising are not met.

In relation to the issue above, Mosse argues that while disagreements might occur between donors and partner NGOs and INGOs, there is 'usually a shared need for an "acceptable story" that mediates differences and buries contradictions in order to sustain relationships and the flow of resources' (Mosse 2005a: 158).

The Program Officer employed in an INGO explained how they have a very good and well-established reputation among the donors. He experienced that this reputation allows them greater flexibility to stray from the project plan and revise activities during implementation, although the donors are usually not happy to allow such changes (Program Officer, INGO D, 03.12.15). His account indicates that the INGO's position and reputation enables them to negotiate project meaning and interpretations to their advantage.

An M&E Specialist elaborated on the difficulties claiming attribution and made it clear that attributing changes to a project is difficult to do with 100 per cent accuracy. In fact, he experienced that with the type of complex projects that they conduct, there was no accurate method with which they can claim attribution. However, he did not experience this as a major problem and explained that they would somehow claim attribution anyhow:

> I mean we do not really say we cannot claim all of this. It is understood. The moment you say that we have a share to it and we can attribute it to our effort as well, so that means donors also understand […] It is understood, it still attributes something to us as well. To our money. (M&E Specialist, INGO E, 04.12.15)

Hence, although the attribution of changes cannot be made methodologically valid, they still claim a share to the changes. This again shows that if there is a mutual understanding and agreement of the interpretations of the events and the project activities and their significance, it can be represented and claimed as results of the project and attributed to the money invested.

The examples above illustrate how participants in these cases manage to enrol the interests of the donors into their interpretation of practice. Their interpretations aim at showing results and relevance of the project and the investment, which is very much in the donors' interests as well. With these kinds of interpretations they are thus successful in enrolling the donors' interests and sustaining their support. Arguably, if the actors interpret project reality as 'negligible progress' and present this to the donors, the project loses its reality (Mosse 2005a: 157), and the donors' support could prove difficult to sustain since their interest of achieving results cannot be enrolled in such interpretation. By enrolling the interests and support of the donors into the interpretations, the participants manage to conceal the disjuncture and produce order and compliance with project policy.

8.2.2 The relationship with beneficiaries

It is not only the support and interests of the donors that have to be enrolled into the interpretations of project 'reality'. In the task of representing practice and creating order the relationship with beneficiaries is likewise important. This is because the interests of the beneficiaries also have to be enrolled in the representations of events; their support also needs to be secured to some extent.

The CEO of a consultancy that carries out assessments of development projects reflected on the role beneficiaries have in evaluations of development projects. He explained that the selection of respondents among the beneficiaries is important; since there is a risk of getting fabricated information and that beneficiaries will tell you 'what you want to hear' (CEO, Consultancy A 36:30). He further elaborated that good relationships with the beneficiaries is pivotal, because then they will tell the 'truth' about the project outcome:

> Often [the beneficiaries] will tell you what you want to hear. People are influenced by the agency [NGOs and INGOs]. So to get beyond that you need to sit down with people, spend long time cross-questioning them, win their hearts and minds, build good relationship and trust and maybe then they will tell you the truth. But if you just say: "How was the program?" and they will say: "It was good. We are happy." But inside they may not be happy. (CEO, Consultancy A, 29.10.15)

Another participant likewise reflected upon how the beneficiaries' accounts might be biased. He explained, that if he comes to the beneficiaries as a representative from an INGO the accounts would be biased, since the beneficiaries would want to tell him whatever is in their interest and to their benefit (M&E Specialist, INGO E, 04.12.15).

The examples above indicate that the beneficiaries also have power to influence the interpretations of events; the results of an intervention are dependent upon the relationship with beneficiaries as this affects their accounts. Furthermore, beneficiaries might also have an incentive to represent events according to their agenda. Thus, beneficiaries might cease to give positive accounts on a project to increase the likelihood of having another project initiated in their community. According to Mosse, sustaining order and securing 'success' depends upon 'the active enrolment of supporters including the "beneficiaries"' (Mosse 2004: 646). As such the interpretations of events have to incorporate and be in the interests of the beneficiaries as well and development practitioners need to secure support from the beneficiaries in order to produce an appearance of order.

8.2.3 Relationship with consultants

A significant element of an RBM approach is the exercise of assessing progress against indicators established in a baseline survey. According to the participants depending on the amount of funding, donors usually require external evaluation at

the end of a project, whereas monitoring and mid-term evaluations usually are carried out internally in the organisations.

Actors who engage in evaluating development projects will therefore inevitably be part of an interpretation process. Part of the interpretation of events relies on actors external to the project and organisation, since the institutional logics entail that organisations cannot claim success on their own. The interpretation and representation of events and 'reality', relies on a 'validation' by external experts, as Mosse argues:

> A development project cannot in any definitive way proclaim its own reality; this is always contingent upon outside judgments. Project reality has to be determined through the interpretive work of experts who discern meaning from events by connecting them to policy ideas and texts – logframes, project documents (and vice versa). Indeed a project does not exist independent of our (expert) opinion of it. (Mosse 2005a: 157)

This is often the task of consultants or external evaluators who conduct external assessments of whether results and impact have been achieved. Hence, these actors become part of the translation process and their interests have to be incorporated into the representation of practice as well, in order to produce success and order.

Several participants expressed trust and reliance in the consultants and the consultants are generally viewed as actors with expert knowledge and skills on methodology, which makes them competent to measure and evaluate complex projects; something the participants in their own opinion are not equipped to do.

Hence, the consultants or external evaluators are also important actors that must be enrolled into the interpretation and representation of events. The construction of 'reality' and meaning have to be negotiated with the consultants, and thus good relations with the consultants are important.

The M&E Specialist from an INGO reflected on whether they can trust the evaluations conducted by consultants, and added: 'the consultants also need to make money. If I am a consultant, possibly I will avoid putting my client in a bad position. Maintaining client relationship is another dynamic' (M&E Specialist, INGO E, 04.12.15). This participants' reflection implies that the consultant possibly has an interest in interpreting and representing practice in a certain light that serves the interest of the project organisation; their client. However, it can be argued that the consultants' job security relies on their attempt to be 'objective' and unbiased.

Regardless, it is valuable for development practitioners to maintain a positive relationship with consultants as well. This is because the support of consultants along with other likewise needs to be enrolled in the representations.

8.2.4 Sub-conclusion

In order to produce a successful representation of practice and sustain the appearance of order the participants have to negotiate meaning with other actors, such as donors, beneficiaries, and consultants as shown above. They furthermore have to be in a certain position of power in order to negotiate meaning with these actors; as Rossi argues, power struggles between development actors are founded on a 'semiotic proselytism' (Rossi 2004a: 556). Thus, when the participants produce order through interpreting and representing practice as compliance with RBM policy, they have to be in a position of power to negotiate meaning. They furthermore have to be able to mediate between and enrol the various interests of the actors into a coherent representation of practice in order to sustain the appearance of order. The process of translation and brokering is a challenging and demanding task that has to be mastered in order to sustain order and coherence between the different actors and enrol their interests into the interpretations and representations.

8.3 Reasons why order and disjuncture are produced

In order to be deemed successful and sustain their existence, the participants and their organisations are dependent on representation and concealing the disjuncture by producing an appearance of order. They are compelled to promote policy or else their practice and existence is threatened.

The overall incentive for producing an appearance of order is the need to sustain the order of policies; policies that subsequently maintain resources and legitimises development projects. Therefore it is pivotal for the participants to sustain the fiction of order of RBM. As shown in the section above, the participants do this, for one thing, by promoting the policy outwardly to us.

Policies and ideals works as systems of representation, often oriented upwards and outwards to secure reputation and funding or inwards as self-representation when they are adopted as part of the operational system in an organisation (Mosse 2005a: 162). As stated earlier the RBM policies and frameworks are valuable in order to secure funding and reputation, since this management approach has been broadly

acknowledged within development to achieve greater aid effectiveness; goals that are in everyone's interests.

While a disjuncture emerges partly because it is not possible for development practitioners to comply with policy and for policy to orientate their practices it can also be argued that the participants conceal the disjuncture between policy and practice in order to secure their autonomous agency. The disjuncture arises partly because of the participants' autonomy over practice, and it is therefore not in the participants' interest to 'bridge the gap' or otherwise diminish the disjuncture.

The disjuncture is desirable for the actors, because it enables that they have power and agency to manoeuvre in the field of their practice, carry out their work freely, conduct practice on the basis of operational and institutional logics, and through social processes, since they are not constrained or dominated by policy. It can thus be argued that it is in the actors' interests to maintain the disjuncture, since the disjuncture is necessary in order for them to conduct their practices (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 5).

> Since "success" demands that action be interpreted as the execution of official policy, competing logics and contingencies of action become necessarily hidden. The task of the skilled brokers […] is then to maintain, not blur, this disjuncture and to protect the autonomy of practice and policy. (ibid.)

Thus, concealing the disjuncture also serves the purpose of protecting and sustaining their autonomy and agency over policy and practice.

8.4 A flawed production of order?

Through the analysis above we have shown how the participants work to produce and sustain order; the production of order becomes visible both during the interview situation but also in their accounts of their practices. However, we have also shown that this production of order is difficult for them to sustain during the interview situation. They do not manage to only convey to us an order and compliance with policy; in their accounts we can also identify that there is disjuncture between their practice and the policies.

In order for the participants and their organisations to be deemed successful, their practices need to appear as complying with policy. Hence, the participants are dependent on the ability to produce order and an appearance of compliance with policy. We have to assume that it is in the participants' interest to at least outwardly

produce and sustain the appearance of order. We can thus assume that the participants would also have an incentive and interest in producing an appearance of order during the interview situation. That is why it is interesting that the contradictory storylines unfold in the interviews and become explicit and clear to us. One would think that the participants to a greater extent would be able to conceal the disjuncture, produce order, and not reveal to us the challenges and impracticability of RBM.

This led us to question why we have been able to identify the contradiction in the interviews and identify a disjuncture? If it is not in the interest of the participants to reveal it to us, why then are they confiding in us and revealing the disjuncture? Are they just unskilled brokers and their translation flawed? Or is it the space created in the interview situation that makes them feel comfortable to reveal disjuncture and that the order is a fiction?

We do not believe it is neither of the above scenarios that can solely explain why the contradiction becomes visible to us. In the vein of Mosse's (2005a) findings, we will argue that no matter how much the participants work to produce order, it will always to some degree be possible to identify or recognise a contradiction or disjuncture. Since, as Mosse (2005a) argues, there are always contradictions between the practices and the normative plan, and it will evidently 'shine' through the translations to some extent.

Mosse argues, that in the case of field visits by consultants or donors to a project site they might in fact find the dominant interpretation they are offered and the 'reality' they experience. However, 'the individual doubt, the personal scepticism, the private wonder of what it is *really* all about […] all disappear' (ibid. 166). Their doubt and scepticism towards the dominant interpretations disappear when the visit is wrapped up in texts and reports (ibid.). So although they experience a contradiction they are unable to 'react' to this *personal* scepticism or wonder. Mosse argues that this is not due to the visitor's personal ignorance of the contradictions, but it is an institutional ignorance (ibid.). The visitor is not ignorant of the contradiction but the institutional logics do not enable them to question and act on the contradiction in all cases. It is not in their professional interests to question the interpretations and share their scepticism. Mosse exemplifies that the interest of the consultant is to give 'expert' advise and point in the direction of recommendations and the field visit is thus tailored to the interests of the consultants or the donors (ibid. 167). As long as

the support for the interpretations is secured and the interests of the various actors (the consultant, the donor) is enrolled in the interpretations, the doubt, scepticism, and wonder will not materialise itself, since it would be illogical for the visitor to do so as it would go against her interest. Therefore, we will argue that no matter to which extent the participants would attempt to interpret and represent their practices within the framework of the RBM policies, we would be able to recognise the contradictions to some extent.

Thus, when we are able to identify and recognise a contradiction, it is *not* merely because of our efforts to make the participants confide in us or due to an insight that only we as researchers have acquired. The argument is that the contradiction will be there and will be visible in other situations as well, for example during a field visit by donors or consultants.

Yet, as opposed to the consultant or the donor we are not assigned to the institutional logics of development because of our role as researchers. This means that we can allow ourselves to be puzzled by the contradiction and question the contradiction, which we identify between the participants' representations of practice as compliance with policy and their accounts of how the 'reality' of practice their practice is. Our role is to question such contradiction and ask what is at stake and try to explore this contradiction, since that is what is in our interest. Consultants or donors, on the other hand are 'victims' of the institutional logic and therefore unable to question the interpretations offered to them.

Thus, the fact that we are able to analyse the disjuncture in the participants' accounts although they attempt to produce order and conceal the disjuncture, is not because they are unskilled brokers or because they confide in us and intend to reveal the disjuncture. Rather the contradiction would also be visible to others in other situations, the difference is though that we are positioned outside of the institutional practice of the organisations and of development at large. It is thus not a flaw in their translation necessarily.

9 THE CONSTRUCTION OF A VIRTUAL REALITY

Through this research, we have sought to explore how and why disjuncture and order is produced between policy and practice in development organisations in Nepal. In official policies, RBM is conceived as a rather manageable and straightforward exercise of accountability and measurability with a promise of effectiveness. Our findings however suggest, that a coherent relationship between RBM policy and practices to a certain extent is absent. The management practices of INGOs and NGOs in Nepal are not and cannot be directed and informed by RBM policies.

As we have shown, the preoccupation with measuring, quantifying, and documenting results and proving accountability, legitimacy, and value for money within the logics of RBM become rather arbitrary exercises, which are not always founded in the 'reality' of development projects. This disjuncture emerges because of the marginal influence development policy has on development practice, since practices are generated by other logics and rationalities than that of policy. We have shown that development actors to some extent are occupied with concealing this disjuncture through processes of brokerage and translation, in order to represent practice as 'order' and compliance with policy. This in turn, enables the development actors to mobilise support and resources and legitimize their development interventions. These findings have led us to question the wider consequences this implies for development.

While RBM policies confront development practitioners with 'unrealistic assumptions of order' (van den Berg & Quarles van Ufford 2005: 209), the disjuncture and the marginal influence policies have on practices continue to remain rather unacknowledged (van den Berg & Quarles van Ufford 2005). This is problematic, since development practices are translated and represented in such a way so as to confirm the policy. In this way, meaningful development narratives reflecting the 'reality' of development practices and projects become absent. Consequently, our findings make it possible to question and scrutinize the claims of order and logic that are inherent in RBM policies. The international development sector proudly claims order when results from development interventions are presented to the public. However, our findings suggest that it is questionable whether these results have any foothold in reality, since they appear to have been produced through social processes of interpretation, negotiation, and representation.

For example, it is not just any result that donors are interested in measuring and documenting through an RBM approach, but results attributable to the intervention in question: The desire is not merely to create change and progress in a community but to be able to attribute such to the intervention. The ability to attribute measured or observed results to a specific project or intervention is essential in order to claim that 1) results were achieved as an outcome of the project, and 2) the results can be attributed to the respective donor's funds and investment, and 3) results can be fed into future decision-making and learning. This is where the value of managing for results lie for the development sector. However, if results cannot be attributed to a specific intervention or to the investment of the development sector at large, then results are without value, since accountability, effectiveness, value for money, and legitimacy cannot be claimed. This questions the claim of order.

Within the RBM framework, the claim is that a proper establishment of a results chain and causal relationship between inputs and outcome will increase attribution (See Chapter 4). The assumption seems to be that establishing a results chain inevitably will make a claim of attribution possible, since the results or progress measured in a community was indeed forecasted and found to be causal-related to the inputs of the particular intervention.

This is contradicting to our findings that suggest that the feasibility of establishing such results chain is highly doubtful and does not seem to inform the practices of the INGOs and NGOs in Nepal; they are unable to establish a causal relationship and

adding to this, the participants do not have full control over the change processes or the ability to secure results. This makes a claim of attribution on the basis of an RBM framework questionable. In relation to this Rob van den Berg and Philip Quarles van Ufford argue that:

> Meaningful relationships between official instrumental discourse and the concrete transformations actually taking place are evaporating. Insights into the actual relations in the domains of development practice are becoming obscured in aggressive ways by the demands of a mechanical official discourse. This leads to the construction of virtual realities, which have serious negative impacts on real-life learning processes. (van den Berg & Quarles van Ufford 2005: 208)

The lack of ability to establish a results chain and the normative claims of such ability in the RBM policies indicate such an evaporation of a meaningful relationship between official policy and the actual practices taking place. The concealment of the disappearance of meaningful relationships between policy and practice, as we have shown in our analysis as well, produces a virtual reality that becomes the only reality that is officially acknowledged and outwardly exposed.

This implicates a problem for learning, performance-based decision-making, and improvement of future development interventions. Because how can an organisation learn from any 'measured' change or progress if they are not able to determine that these 'results' are in fact the outcome of their effort and project in question. If attribution cannot be claimed in a valid way, any 'results' claimed to be the outcome of a development intervention are merely a part of a virtual reality, rather than actually representing any real outcome of the intervention. The risk is thus that decisions are made on the basis of results that might not be causally linked to the intervention.

Furthermore, it is interesting that within the policies of RBM, the issue of attribution is hardly mentioned. The realisation and validity of an RBM framework relies on the ability to claim that change or progress is in fact causal related to the interventions, the aid funds, and investments made by the development sector. If they cannot attribute, how can the sector then claim greater aid effectiveness and accountability? In this way, development remains 'shielded from a serious confrontation with the real world' (van den Berg & Quarles van Ufford 2005: 203), and development practitioners will in turn live in a world constituted by a 'virtual reality' (ibid.). The

consequence is that development practices are rather opaque and concealed. And the promise of RBM to contribute to greater aid effectiveness is therefore dubious.

It seems as the claims of order and the managerial desires have serious implications for the knowledge of practice and the development meaning that is produced, widely distributed, and used for decision-making.

Instead, recognising the marginality of policy's ability to influence practice might provide an important contribution to a new practical and scientific way of understanding development practice (van den Berg & Quarles van Ufford 2005: 199). If development practice can be revealed and become visible in a more transparent and realistic way it might be more feasible to actually learn what practices and methods work and which do not. When practices are concealed as now, valuable, influential, and transformational methods and projects might be concealed because they contradict the wider logics of the hegemonic policies. Thus, opening our minds towards the disjuncture is important and the development sector needs to learn how to cope, handle, and openly accept the inevitable uncertainties and risks involved with development, instead of pretending to manage and control it through a fiction of order.

10 CONCLUSION

In our research, we have explored the relationship between policy and practice in the context of NGOs and INGOs in Nepal and their adoption of RBM. The empirical data for this research has been produced through conducting semi-structured interviews with development practitioners from NGOs and INGOs in Kathmandu, Nepal. Puzzled by the presence of two contradicting storylines manifested parallel to each other in the same interview with the same development practitioner led us to question how and why participants seemingly promote RBM policy and conceal the fact that in most cases, it is not possible for them to implement RBM? And if policy does not shape their practices, what then does? And how can we understand the role of policy if it is not to shape and inform practice?

As a response to the extensive critique of development and its lack of results, RBM has gained influence and become a widely accepted management approach adopted into the strategies of several donor agencies. This reform of development policies is based on a belief that better and more sophisticated policies will address any shortcomings of development and make development more effective. In official policies, RBM is conceived as a rather manageable and straightforward exercise of accountability and measurability with a promise of contributing to greater aid effectiveness.

Our findings contradict this understanding and suggest that a disjuncture between RBM and practices of NGOs and INGOs emerges because participants are unable to operationalise the RBM policy. A central concern for adopting an RBM strategy within a development context is that the change processes, which RBM is assumed

to address and somehow plan and control, often are uncertain and unpredictable due to a complex relationship between cause and effect; a relationship that RBM does not fully encompass. The disjuncture emerges because RBM policy does not inform practices; rather the actors' practices are informed by organisational, operational, and institutional logics and by a multiplicity of rationalities of various actors involved in the projects on various levels.

Additionally, policies are the outcome of political processes of negotiation and consensus. Rather than to orientate practice the role of policies is to mobilise resources and support in order to legitimize development interventions. The role of policy is therefore not to orientate practice, which likewise contributes to the emergence of a disjuncture.

Development actors are constrained to conceal the disjuncture and produce an appearance of order by representing their practices as compliance with policy, in order to secure their legitimacy, autonomous agency, and existence. This concealment is done through various processes of brokerage and translation.

Any events and actions need to be interpreted by the actors as implementation of official policy. This relies on the fact that success is not based on the effects of an intervention but instead on a judgment of how well these effects comply with the policy. The development actors' interpretations of events need to enrol the interests of donors, beneficiaries, and consultants, who can then validate and support the interpretation in order to sustain a coherent representation of practice. The development actors are therefore working to sustain the impression that RBM policy is generating their practices by promoting RBM policy and representing their practices as compliance with RBM, which in turn will mobilise support and resources for development interventions.

However, representing practice as order and as compliance with RBM through processes of translation is problematic because it generates a 'virtual reality'. This implies that development knowledge and meaning are constrained to be informed by this virtual reality or fiction of order and thus become fragile and contestable. This is because the 'actual' practices, its contradictions, and the logics and rationalities that orientate them are concealed underneath a web of translation processes. Inevitably this poses problems for learning and evidence-based decision-making, and thus for the hope of making development aid more effective. Ethnographic research and the knowledge and insight this field of research is able to

produce, can thus contribute to reveal how development works and does not work, and then enable a debate on how to contribute to better development.

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