Unequal Access to Education

Marginalised Musahar Girls' Inclusion in INGO-provided Education in Nepal

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Spring Semester 2020 // Roskilde University
Master Thesis in International Development Studies
181.344 characters

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Resumé

I denne kandidatafhandling undersøges det, hvordan den internationale NGO Street Child har været i stand til at sikre aktiv deltagelse i deres uddannelsesprogram for marginaliserede Musahar piger i Nepal. De mulige implikationer for den nepalesiske stats legitimitet, når denne ikke er den primære uddannelsesudbyder, belyses. Afhandlingen tager udgangspunkt i primær interview data indsamlet via feltarbejde, herunder 27 interviews med unge Musahar piger, deres forældre og lærere samt to eksperter. Social Kapital teori samt Performance Legitimitetsteori udgør den teoretiske ramme, og anvendes i opgavens analyse. Studiet konkluderer at: 1) Street Child lykkes med at sikre deltagelse i deres program gennem strategier, der tilgodeser den lokale kontekst og involverer målgruppen i programimplementeringen. Eksisterende normer ændres herved til fordel for Musahar pigernes uddannelse. 2) Uddannelsesprogrammets succes står i kontrast til statens fejlslagne offentlige skoletilbud, som Musaharerne opfatter negativt eller som irrelevant. Selvom den nepalesiske stat har adresseret Musahar pigernes behov for uddannelse gennem politiske tiltag, er disse ikke blevet gennemført. Selvom statens økonomiske kapacitet kan være påvirket af tidligere konflikter i landet, modtager Nepal en stor andel bilateral finansiering til udvikling. Således konkluderes det, at staten synes at nedprioritere Musaharernes inklusion i uddannelse, hvilket resulterer i, at Musaharerne anser den ikke-statslige organisation Street Child, som en mere legitim uddannelsesudbyder end den nepalesiske stat. Nærværende studie bidrager til den akademiske litteratur, der beskæftiger sig med ulige adgang til uddannelse i udviklingslande. Således kan dets resultater anvendes til sammenligninger og videre studier af denne tematik i andre geografiske kontekster for større indblik i hvordan marginaliserede grupper sikres inklusion i uddannelse.

Abstract

In this study we investigate how the INGO Street Child in Nepal has succeeded in ensuring participation in its educational programme. In addition, the implications of this for state legitimacy are explored. The study is based on primary data gathered through fieldwork, including 27 interviews with young Musahar girls, their parents, teachers and additional experts. The data is approached through a theoretical framework consisting of Social Capital Theory and Performance Legitimacy Theory. The study concludes that 1) Street Child succeeds in ensuring participation in their programme through strategies that consider the local context and involve community members. As SC adapts to existing social norms, they manage to facilitate norms that are in favour of girls' education. 2) The success of the INGO programme contrasts that of state-provided education, which generally is perceived negatively or as irrelevant by the Musahars. Although the state has identified the educational needs of the Musahars it has failed to meet them. The capacity of the Nepalese state might suffer from economic deficiencies. However, the fact that the state receives a heavy amount of donor funding, suggests that including the Musahars in education is not a priority. The legitimacy of the state is, accordingly, low, whereas Street Child is considered as a legitimate education provider. This study contributes to the academic literature of education governance, specifically within unequal access to education in developing countries. Thus, this study's findings can be used for comparisons and further studies in other geographical regions, to foster a greater insight in marginalised population groups' inclusion in education.

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1.0 Introduction

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, it was globally established that education is a basic right and service needed for economic growth, societal development and the eradication of poverty (Annan-Diab et al 2017: 3). In spite of the objectives agreed upon, however, great disparities between and within countries, remain. In many countries, children of the poorest 20% of the population are less likely to attend school. A significant gender gap, with girls remaining at disadvantage is, in addition, widespread (UNICEF 2019).

While school enrolment is used as a measure to account for children's access to education, it is not equivalent to school completion or useful learning outcomes. In contrast, in many cases children drop out or fail to achieve the minimum standards of learning. Despite countries' commitments to include and educate more children and youth, marginalised population groups are still not included in education offers (ibid). As the states have failed to reach those groups, either due to lack of resources or lack of political will (Bennett 2005: 42), other actors - including international NGOs (INGOs) - have become increasingly more prominent as education providers (Shiohata 2012: 2, 6).
Scholarly debates on the implications of the changing roles in education provision have been vivid. The debates have included perspectives on the impact of alternative education provision on state legitimacy and in continuation, a diverse range of views on how INGO providers either benefit or undermine the state as a legitimate authority (Bratton 2007; Brass 2010; Martin 2004). Other studies have discussed the contribution of INGOs in the inclusion of marginalised groups in education as well as the incapacity of states to meet this target (Ahmadullah 2005; Rose 2006; Khanal 2018).
In light of these scholarly debates, this study aims to investigate how INGO-provided education contributes to the inclusion of marginalised groups and, in addition, the possible state legitimacy implications of this.

Nepal, being one of the poorest countries in the world with one of the lowest primary school enrolment rates (Bishwakarma 2019: 1-2), and in addition one of the countries with most donor-funded INGO interventions (Karkee et al 2016), is an obvious focus of such study. With point of departure in the INGO Street Child's (henceforth referred to as SC) education programme directed at the marginalised Musahar population of Nepal, this research explores how participation of illiterate girls has been ensured. Musahars are often excluded from public primary school due to barriers such

as poverty, discrimination and gender (Sah 2008: 213) and education is seen as purposeless (Street Child 2016).
The theoretical approach applied to the case at hand, is Social Capital Theory and Performance Legitimacy Theory, which in combination enable a focus on norms' influence on school attendance and the legitimacy of education providers. The focus on norms and social relations is derived from literature highlighting these aspects as crucial for educational achievement in addition to other factors such as economy (Coleman 1988; Portes 1998; Campos 2004). As few studies, however, have directly linked social capital with successful educational inclusion in an INGO context, our study will hopefully contribute to fill this gap in research.

Our research ultimately contributes to the academic field of governance of education in developing countries. The study is based on primary data collected through fieldwork among the Musahars in Nepal. With an outset in above puzzle, this thesis presents following research question:

How can an INGO education programme succeed in gaining participation from marginalised and illiterate girls in Nepal and what are the possible implications of INGO education provision for state legitimacy?

As the research question for this dissertation is two-fold, two working-questions will guide the investigation of the topic – each related to one of the two aspects:

1. How has SC managed to gain the participation of Musahar girls in their education programme, and how does social capital impact on the programme's success?

2. How are the Musahar girls' perceptions of public school reflecting to what degree the state is regarded as legitimate and what are possible implications of this?

1.2 Thesis Structure

The following will first present the contextual situation surrounding the Dalit population groups – especially the Musahars – in Nepal. This is important to understand the historical, political and cultural sequences of events leading to the Musahars' current livelihood and education situation. Hereafter, the existing scholarly debate on INGOs' and states' role in the governance of education in

developing countries will be presented in the paper's literature review. Three main strands of literature in the debate will be accounted for and the thesis' research will be positioned within the academic discussions. Subsequently, the theoretical framework of Social Capital Theory and Transitional Framework on Performance Legitimacy will be justified and presented. The thesis will hence present its methodological choices; the research design, methods and the empirical data as well as the ethical considerations made in the conduction of field work in Janakpur, Nepal. The theoretical framework will be applied to the conducted data in two separate analyses guided by two working questions. Ultimately, the paper will discuss the findings against popular discourse in the academic field and finally, present a conclusion answering the research question and suggesting points of interest for further research as well as reflections and practical recommendations.

2.0 Context – The Marginalisation of Musahars of Nepal

2.1 Politics, Economy and Culture

Nepal is geographically divided into a Mountain region, a Hill region and the Terai (low land). Its economy is based on agriculture and the population size is 26,494,504 (Khanal 2015: 710-11). The population consists of culturally and ethnically diverse groups, with 126 ethnic/caste groups and 123 languages. In 1990 democracy was established, but the inability of inclusion in the policies of the diverse population groups led to radicalisation and ultimately an armed conflict from 1996-2006 between Maoist rebels and Nepal's security forces (Khanal 2015: 711). Meanwhile, the new Constitution was not adopted until September 2015 and socio-economic progress has been slow (Krampe 2016: 54). The Constitution of 2015 resulted in the election of local governments as well as the adoption of an 'inclusive policy' (Bishwakarma 2019: 2-3). Consequently, more women and Dalits were elected as representatives at a local level. However, the new political initiatives have not led to the expected decrease in inequality and disadvantaged groups still lack political representation and are discriminated against (ibid).

2.1.1 The Caste System

A caste is a form of social stratification based on cultural ideas of purity and pollution (Bishwakarma 2019: 3). Caste-based ideas were developed in the Varna system in India as a form of 'colour' distinction among different groups of people and later turned into the labour-based division of the four-fold Varna system (Bishwakarma 2019: 3). Lowest in the hierarchy, beneath the four

occupational groups were the Dalits who were considered impure and untouchable (World Bank 2006: 6).

In Nepal the Varna system was developed in the 6th century and in the 15th century the system became law (See figure 1 for illustration). The National Code of 1854 included all caste and ethnic groups in this structure. The law included discriminatory legal punishment according to caste-category. This implied that lower caste members received higher punishment compared to high caste members for the same offences. Other discriminatory parts of the law included denial of access to public places, beating, and verbal abuse (Bishwakarma 2019: 4).

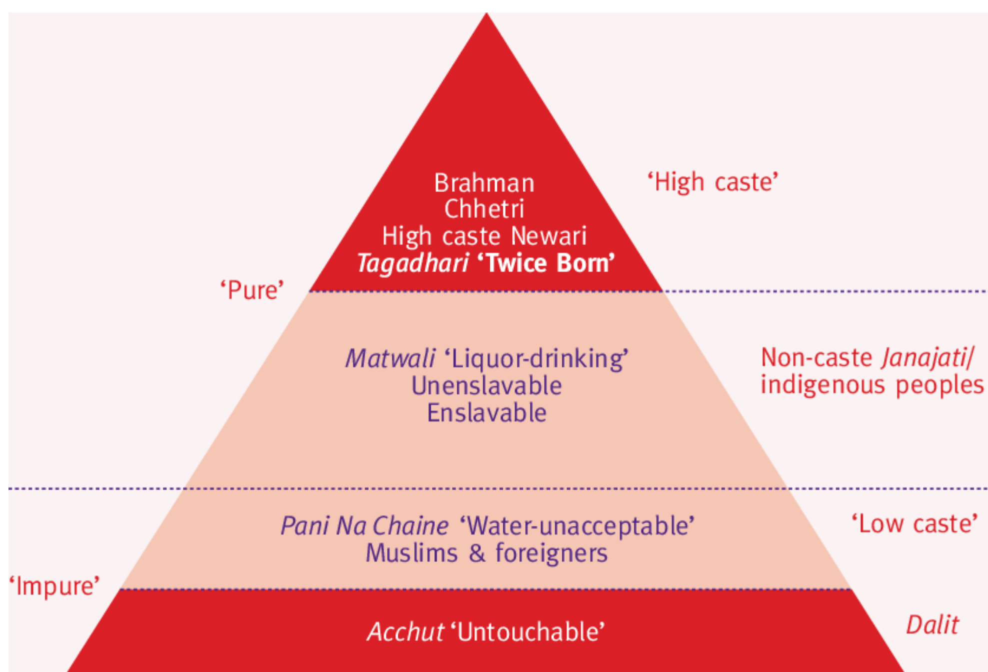

Figure 1: The Nepal caste pyramid according to the Muluki Ain (1854) (Kabeer 2010)

In 1963 a new civil code prohibited caste discrimination. This was later in 1990 adopted in the Constitution of Nepal as well as in the Interim Constitution in 2007. Meanwhile, there has been a lack of implementation and changes have not been significant (Bishwakarma 2019: 7). One example of caste-related practises maintained in spite of legal reforms is inter-caste marriage - a marriage between a upper caste and a lower caste member (Dalit) - which is legally allowed, but seen as unacceptable in the Nepali society (DCSOC Report 2015: 5).

2.1.2 Dalits of Nepal

Dalit as a term has been used to refer to the group of people who are lowest in the caste-hierarchy. Dalit is the preferred contemporary term and while still referring to the untouchables, members - by using the term and identity - take up a collective identity for political struggle (Bishwakarma 2019: 7-8). Dalit identity, however, differs from other group identities since it does not refer to an ethnic group, but to a national historically marginalised group (Bishwakarma 2019: 8). In Nepal the Dalits constitute 13.56% of the total national population. The Dalits consist of 26 sub-caste groups who have a caste-based hierarchy among them. There are significant differences between the groups in terms of development (ibid: 9).

The Musahar Dalits constitute the second largest group of Terai Dalits with a population of 172,434 (Paudel 2018: 100). The Musahars have the lowest score on almost all indicators of the Nepal Multidimensional Index. This includes the economic, educational and gender-related dimensions (NSII 2014 in Street Child 2016: 2).

2.1.3 Poverty Among Musahars

Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world with 25% living under the extreme poverty line and 35% of the population is illiterate (Bishwakarma 2019: 1). The incidence of poverty varies according to population group and thus 46 % of the Dalits are living in poverty, while the number is 14% for the advantaged group the Newars (ibid). Many Musahars live in severe poverty and struggle to be able to afford enough food as well as clothes. They typically live between 7 and 12 persons in a small hut (Poudel et al 2019: 10). 99.4% of Musahars are landless and most are trapped in debt bondage. Bonded labour was abolished in 2002, but still persists among many Musahars (Street Child 2016: 2). The main occupation of Musahars used to be digging mud, but as a result of land reforms people migrating from the hills have taken over this function. As a consequence, Musahars are being displaced to other locations where they can make a living (ibid: 101). While Musahars are landless, Musahar communities are often located in remote areas, isolated from other communities and with poor access to water sources; sanitation and hygiene services or health, education and transport services (Giri 2012 in Street Child 2016: 2).

2.2 Primary Education - Barriers to Musahar Inclusion

In the Varna system, high-caste Brahmins were considered the only rightful holders of education, while, in contrast, Dalits were considered labourers and prohibited access to education. Not until the introduction of democracy in 1951 did the Dalits gain access to formal education (Bishwakarma 2019: 65). Policies adopted in the 1990's, including free primary school for all children and scholarships for the ultra-poor, influenced significantly on literacy among the Dalit population. Thus, the literacy rate of Dalits increased from 17% in 1991 to 33,8% in 2001 and to 52,4% in 2011 (ibid: 80). Even though basic education is compulsory, the gap between Dalits and non-Dalits is still wide and while the national average literacy rate is 65.9%, the high castes still have much higher literacy rates compared to Dalits (ibid: 42). Problems that Dalits face in the education sector include low enrolment, high dropout rates and caste prejudice in schools as well as a discriminatory curriculum (ibid: 64). The Nepalese government has adopted policies for Dalit education to address the problems, including the School Sector Reform Plan (2009– 2015), which focused on basic education. The plan included free education provision which covered cost-free services for admission, textbooks, tuition and examinations (ibid: 70). However, the implementation has not been effective and consequently progress is slow (ibid: 69-70). While there are legal requirements to employ Dalit teachers or management to address the problem and motivate Dalit parents and children, these have not been implemented (Khanal 2015: 168).

Both the lack of implementation of policies and inadequate policies are aggravating the educational situation of Dalit children (ibid: 166). As a result of lacking implementation of the legislation on free education, schools constitute an economic burden to poor Dalit families, due to school related costs. Moreover, school privatisation policies are resulting in an extended gap between poor Dalit childrens' access to quality education and other children with more resources (ibid: 191).

Musahars' literacy rate of 21,9% - for females 16,6 % - is one of the lowest among Dalit groups (National Planning Commission Secretariat 2014). Musahars experience barriers to education, including discriminatory behaviour from teachers and peers in school (Street Child 2016: 5). This includes a widespread perception of teachers as frequently absent, inattentive and sometimes abusive (ibid: 6). In addition, while Musahar communities tend to be located peripherally of the general population, schools are sometimes physically inaccessible (ibid: 4). The main reason for the

exclusion of Musahar children from public school is, though, their economic situation. Some families can't afford the direct expenses related to school, including fees and uniforms. In addition, schooling implies an indirect cost for families as children in school do not contribute to income generation to the same degree, something resulting in irregular school attendance and drop out (ibid: 5).

2.2.1 Gender Norms and Education

Dalit parents in general, invest more in their sons' education, both in urban and rural Nepal (Khanal 2018: 155). Deeply rooted norms and traditions are significant factors in relation to Dalit girls' education (Khanal 2014; Khanal 2018). Dalit parents' adherence to gender norms in the upbringing is an essential obstacle to Dalit girls' lack of educational opportunities. Thus, parents will typically reinforce a traditional view on females as housewives and caretakers rather than students and employees. The cultural tendency among various Dalit groups, to engage in child-marriages often results in the involved girls dropping out of school (Sah 2008: 213). While parents marry off their daughters following culture and tradition, economy also plays a role. As dowries are still a popular custom – and tend to increase with the girl's age – it is economically beneficial to arrange early-age marriage for daughters of the family (ibid). Musahar girls face similar challenges, including forced early marriages and a significant workload while they are engaged in domestic as well as wage labour (Street Child 2016: 2).

2.3 Education Providers in Nepal

There are two main types of schools in Nepal, namely the public- and the private schools (National Planning Commission Secretariat 2014: 192). In the public school there is a high drop-out rate which is related to low teaching quality, absence of teachers and overcrowded classrooms (Shiohata 2012: 5-6). In addition, even though attending public school does not imply any formal fees, it still places burdens on parents and the communities of the children related to school maintenance and teacher salaries (ibid: 11).

As in many other low-income countries, private schools in Nepal are playing an increasing role in education provision (ibid: 6). Even parents who are poor and illiterate struggle to send their children to the best private school they can afford since they lack confidence in the quality of public-school

education. This includes a widespread perception that public schools are much slower than private schools in covering the curriculum (ibid: 13).

INGOs in Nepal often promote governance, empowerment and participation in order to mobilise people to demand their rights from the state. NGOs in Nepal that provide education are typically directly involved with public schools and aim at helping the schools for better inclusion of marginalised groups (ibid: 2).

In relation to the Musahars, there have been various initiatives to improve their access to education, but most have had limited impact. Due to a lack of research based on Musahar voices and aspirations, many of the interventions have been fragmented and failed (Street Child 2016: 3).

This section has attempted to cover the most essential information about the historical, cultural and political background of the Dalit populations. This was done in order to foster a better understanding of the contextual factors affecting the Musahars in Nepal. The forthcoming literature review will now present the most popular academic debates in the field of education service provision in developing countries.

3.0 Literature Review

As we learned in the Context Section various actors operate within the field of education provision. In relation to this fact, many questions of the role of alternative education providers, particularly (I)NGOs, are being raised in academia. In the following, scholarly debates related to their role in enhancing access to education of marginalised population groups will be presented. Firstly, the possible consequences of (I)NGO service provision on state legitimacy will be discussed. Secondly, focus is turned to the legitimacy of (I)NGOs, including their positive or negative impacts in relation to development. Finally, discussions on (I)NGO strategies and their ability to, in fact, provide basic services for marginalised population groups are presented.

3.1 The Effects of INGO Service Provision on State Legitimacy

3.1.1 NGOs Help Strengthen the State

The concept of state legitimacy has typically referred to the extent to which those in power have domestic support and are recognized as legitimate in their actions by the population (Parkhurst

2005: 576). Scholar Michael Bratton argues that public satisfaction with basic social service influences positively on the support to democracy (Bratton 2007: 63).
A branch of scholars argue that NGOs contribute to strengthen civil society as well as state- capacity and legitimacy. Scholar Jennifer Naomi Brass in her study of NGOs' effect on state legitimacy in Kenya (2010), argues that NGOs in Kenya, through involvement in service provision, contribute to strengthen civil society, the state's capacity and democratization (Brass 2010: 3). Thus, NGOs, through their involvement in the governance process, help increase accountability and democracy, by influencing the government with ideas of participatory development and civic education. In addition, through collaboration, the state's capacity to deliver services and the quality of the services are improved (ibid). NGOs' provision of services, thus, increases government legitimacy while the population in general becomes more satisfied with the government when social services are delivered, regardless of whether the state or an NGO is delivering the service (Brass 2016: 209). Matthew Winters et al (2018) argue along the same lines, in their analysis of the results of a nationwide survey in Bangladesh, that the presence of foreign aid signals government competence and thus enhances citizens' confidence in the government.

Accordingly, Jay Martin, in his case study in Tajikistan, stresses that NGOs by supplementing the state's service provision, help compensate for its inadequacies and thereby increase its legitimacy (2004: 10). According to scholar Audrey Sacks the provision of services by donors and nonstate actors is, in addition, strengthening, rather than undermining, the relationship between citizens and the state (2012: 28-29). Simone Dietrich and Matthew Winters, in their study from India, conclude that NGOs do not negatively affect state legitimacy (2015: 170). Justin O. Parkhurst in his study from Uganda where he reviews Uganda's response to HIV/AIDS, hereunder the state's engagement with international actors, argues that NGOs helped the government increase its legitimacy (2005: 587).

Nearly all scholars who believe NGOs help improve state capacity and legitimacy emphasize that both governmental and non-governmental organizations have an important role to play and that partnership between them is therefore essential (Obiyan 2005; Campos et al. 2004; Uphoff 1993; Martin 2004). The role of NGOs should be seen as gap-filling in the provision of social welfare services, while weak state administrations rebuild themselves (ibid).

Although many scholars agree that NGOs' service provision can increase state legitimacy, some underline the risks implied by this. When government's legitimacy is increased, government inaction, they warn, can be legitimised and when NGOs provide services as opposed to the state, it can reduce people's ability to hold their government accountable by transferring the responsibility for social welfare needs from the government to international donors (Martin 2004: 12). In accordance, Jennifer Rubenstein argues that citizens' noncompliance as well as compliance can improve the state's governance depending on whether the state is unable or unwilling to improve its governance (2018: 10, 13).

3.1.2 NGOs Weaken State Legitimacy

Several scholars argue that NGOs can challenge state legitimacy when they provide services that are otherwise public (Jelinek 2006: 5; Heurlin 2010: 226; Dagher 2018). Thus, when NGOs offer services that the government cannot match, this points to the insufficiencies of the government (Bratton 1989: 572; Martin 2004: 10). Ruby Dagher, argues that states' Performance Legitimacy - the direct link between the degree to which citizens' needs are met by states' through service provision and the degree to which the state is perceived legitimate – can be influenced by INGOs. If states fail in meeting the population's needs, chances are that other non-state actors will seek to meet those needs and will be perceived as more legitimate than the state (2018: 91).

In some countries NGOs play an oppositional role to the state (Clark 1995: 593), but even where the critique is not political, but related to the state's inefficiency, it can reflect negatively on the state (Farrington and Bebbington 1993: 202). In addition, since NGOs often work with the empowerment of marginalised groups and challenge the status quo, some governments perceive them as a threat to their authority (Martin 2004: 10).

Another argument used in the academic debate is that NGOs erode the social contract between the state and its citizens (Schuller 2009: 85). Thus, by providing services that the state should provide NGOs can *'undermine Southern states' governance capacity, eroding the Keynesian social welfare state ethos and social contract that states should be responsible for service provision'* (ibid).

The social contract implies that governments have a responsibility towards its citizens (ibid) and state legitimacy is gained through service provision as a part of the social contract (Batley and

McLoughlin 2010: 135). The problem of NGOs taking over the service provision in relation to the social contract between the state and its citizens is that, in contrast to the state, NGOs are often dependent and accountable to foreign donors and not the citizens of the country where they work (Schuller 2009: 90). Ghani et al, in their study of state-building in Afghanistan, argue along the same lines that non-state provision of basic services can imply unsustainable and unaccountable practices and affect the legitimacy and sovereignty of the state (2005: 11).

3.2 INGOs in Developing Countries – Legitimate Development Actors?

3.2.1 Challenges to INGO Legitimacy

As just presented, the academic literature in the field exemplifies how scholars disagree on whether the diversification of public service provisions potentially undermine state capacity and legitimacy or whether it ultimately helps build state loyalty and accountability. However, scholars such as Collingwood (2006) believe that while the questioning concerning legitimacy is a salient one, it ought to include the questioning of INGOs' legitimacy as service providers as well. In order to do so, scholars have looked into the construction, history and agendas of INGOs to find that they lack transparency (Edwards 2000) or are simply built on an imperialist foundation which ought to question their legitimacy (Petras 1999). Popular critiques of INGO legitimacy within service provision initiatives are, in continuation, often based on the core foundation and idea of INGOs as 'Western' interference in developing countries. Especially within education provision, scholars criticise the donor aid for meddling with the national education systems. INGOs' curriculum and systems intervention in education systems are, thus, often singled out as a subject for critique. Richard Tabulawa criticises NGOs' approaches to learning in developing countries. In a qualitative review of national donor aid policies, he finds that the learner-centred pedagogy has become almost a 'prescription' from aid agencies in educational programmes (2003: 9). As 'true development' has been perceived only possible under liberal democracy after the end of the Cold War, multi-party democracy has often been a condition for giving aid, by aid agencies. Criticising the pedagogy for being more motivated by an ideology than of educational intentions, he argues that the educational conditionalities set by donors reproduce both a capitalist and liberal democratic system in periphery states (ibid: 11). In line with his thinking, is the opinion that the non-profit sector in general should be considered as a system of power and politics such as a state, instead of a humanitarian initiative.

As such, the question of legitimacy – as has always been an appropriate query in relation to state criticism – ought likewise to be evident in the academic INGO discussions (Roelofs 1995). Since INGOs often work under pre-set agendas, where external donors determine requirements for the beneficiaries of the initiative, INGOs risk following the highly political and strategic interest of nation states and international institutions (Roelofs 1995: 2; Mercer 2002).

NGO collaborations and agendas, in particular, should be scrutinised when debating their role in development. Emphasising transparency as the missing link, James Petras claims that NGOs' collaborations with private funders are often justified as a creation of collaborations within civil society – which beneficiaries are a part of. He claims that NGOs obscure the idea of civil society and undermine the profound class divisions and class struggles in here, where private actors commit injustices against their workers in the name of business. As such, NGOs indirectly prioritise capitalist societal growth over having an equal and just approach to inclusion in development (1999: 431). A newer study on the complexity of INGOs' legitimacy presents a similar argument; that engaging in such business collaboration indeed risks the core function and idea of an INGO. As the non-profit sector in general relies on sponsorships, funding or collaborations, INGOs face the risk of donors and businesses considering them as contractors rather than agents of the disadvantaged (Ossewaarde et al. 2008: 42, 51). Ultimately, INGOs will have to struggle for their perceived legitimacy, as they will never be legitimised through democratic electoral systems, but rather through their humanitarian values - which can seem hypocritical in relation to their business collaborations (ibid: 51). More practically, INGOs will have to build strong alliances with grassroots actors and other NGOs in their region in order to continue their quest of being perceived as legitimate actors (Banks 2012).

3.2.2 INGOs as Prominent Service Providers

In the academic debate about the legitimacy of INGOs in International Development Studies, many of the same subjects as just presented, rise as interesting points of analysis for scholars in the field. Hence, questions of donor funding; transparency and agendas; as well as inclusion of cultural aspects, are at the core of the debate among those strands of scholars who acknowledge and encourage INGOs' involvement as service providers in developing countries (Davis et al. 2012;

Walton 2016). Such literature does not, however, diminish the importance of holding these as well as other international players accountable, but merely focus on the change and actions that INGOs can bring through development initiatives.

One of the most popular reasons for INGOs' increasing legitimacy as an international development actor according to scholars, is their action-oriented and goal-specific agendas. While governments can be restricted in acting by laws and bureaucracy, non-governmental actors often have the possibility to act faster. Several scholars even believe that their services are better, cheaper, more flexible and responsive than those of governments (Fowler 1991; Owiti et al 2004; Moran and Batley 2004). INGOs' ways of working are indeed what make them different development actors compared to governmental initiatives. According to Davis et al, their capability to change public opinion through campaigning, advocating and informing is their core strength and makes them more at eye level (2012: 200, 224). Ultimately, NGOs have the ability to affect and change public opinion through advocacy campaigns on a local level to another degree than governments. NGOs are argued to be perceived most legitimate when they focus on their core skills – to help involve and enable local people in acting for themselves, while helping them acknowledge the responsibilities of the governments (Mencher 1999: 2081). John Clark discusses the links between the state, the voluntary sector and popular participation, in order to investigate the different roles of these actors. He argues that NGOs involved in public service provisions in particular play a significant role in ensuring the participation and inclusion of vulnerable groups in decision-making processes that affect them (1995: 600). More specifically, NGOs may provide instruments that help communities organise and gain influence on decisions and the allocation of common resources (ibid: 595).

Scholars point to the INGO/state relation when arguing for the legitimacy of the non-governmental sector. In a prominent study, Bratton questions the legitimacy of both states and NGOs in the realm of development initiatives. He argues that NGOs ought to be understood as agents operating within national boundaries and thus under sovereign governments. As states are reluctant to loosen their grip of the control within national development, they often seek to regulate and govern the voluntary sector – especially as these actors are getting more prominent. Nonetheless, by their very presence NGOs help to pluralise the institutional milieu and promote a more democratic culture

(1989: 570). Amanda M. Murdie is confident that INGOs have the potential to be the dominant providers of both service provision and human security in developing countries. With a firm belief that INGOs are gaining extensive power within states as well as internationally, she acknowledges that their success however, most often is conditioned by situational factors such as the level of control of state corruption; INGO/donor communication of agendas; level of donor support and agreement of preferences (2014: 385).

All in all, the more acknowledging scholarly views on INGOs' work as service providers in developing countries lead to a curiosity of the strategies and methods behind their work. Although much criticism regarding the core construction of INGOs can be documented in the academic debate, many other views, as illustrated in the above, point to the fact that INGOs' work often reaches further than that of states - potentially resulting in more progressive development. The following section will shed light on the strand of literature that delve into the methodological approach of INGOs to their programmes and strategies for inclusion and development in order to understand how they can succeed in providing services for the poorest.

3.3 Strategies for the Inclusion of Marginalised Groups

3.3.1 Programme Adaption to The Local Context

Mia Ahmadullah has investigated partnerships between the government and NGOs in Bangladesh, in relation to girls' access to education (2005: 80). She examines several case studies and finds that considering the economic and cultural context of the girls helped facilitate their access to education. This was done by providing stipends as well as transportation and adapt school curricula to the needs of the girls. In addition, flexible hours made it possible for the girls to learn while they earn (ibid: 86). These elements are indeed important when including marginalised youth in education, according to Pauline Rose. She believes that education programmes in fragile states in general ought to be more thoughtful of the beneficiaries and their economic, social and cultural needs and restraints (2006: 9). She suggests a core focus on identifying livelihood opportunities for the students. One way to do this is to design the programmes in consultation with the beneficiaries to make the programmes reflect their needs (ibid: 13). Job-generating activities ought to be at the core of all education provision for poorer students according to Malak Zaalouk. He claims that the main reason for female children and adolescence to drop out of school is the need to generate an income

for their families (2005: 117). In a similar vein, Shaleen Khanal suggests that parents receive education as well to ensure that girls' education is prioritised in spite of the widespread perception that boys have better job opportunities through education (2018: 157). Penina Mlma's reviews The Forum for African Women Educationalists and emphasises its strategies to girls' education as empowering. The core focus of the forum is the community's involvement and support. As cultural beliefs against female education are widespread in many African developing countries, communities need to be convinced of the importance of sending girls to school which requires a combined effort by various stakeholders (ibid: 58). A core issue of concern is the mediation between parents and daughters in relation to early and forced marriages which is one of the main reasons for girls to stay out of school (ibid: 59). It is thus important for education providers to be considerate of the diversity, class and gender differences of the participants, to ensure inclusion (Budhathoki 2013: 93). This aspect, though, is often missing in governments' education provision, and more common among alternative education actors (ibid). In a Nepalese context, Damodar Khanal suggests that teachers from same communities and castes as the beneficiaries ought to be employed by service providers of all kinds, as this in turn could motivate both students and parents to see and experience 'their own' in these positions as well as ensure an understanding of culture and context. This, in turn, could result in an increase in relatability and ownership (2015: 168).

3.3.2 Social Capital Deepening

As illustrated in the previous parts, various scholars highlight the importance of involving and engaging beneficiaries to ensure inclusion of marginalised groups in development programmes. In many cases this has been done through adaption of the programmes to local needs while trying to influence negative norms through information. Some scholars have studied these aspects through the concept of social capital and argue that the degree of social capital of a community is decisive for the success of a programme intervention. In a study from 2004, Campos et al investigate which factors determine the success of NGO programmes. Taking point of departure in a Pakistani NGO programme, the scholars find that ownership among the beneficiaries is crucial (2004: 53). NGOs can help ensure the occurrence of ownership through initiatives that deepen social capital - understood as trust, norms and networks - that can facilitate cooperative action and thus the efficiency of an intervention (ibid: 61). The scholars argue that meeting frequency and a formal set

of rules can be some of the factors enhancing the level of social capital (ibid: 53). While few studies use the concept of social capital directly in relation to (I)NGO interventions, the concept has been widely used by scholars to explain why some individuals or societies gain better outcomes in different areas than others. Scholars, in particular, have focused on how social capital can influence the individual's participation in education (Coleman 1988; Portes 1998; Plagens 2011; Furstenberg et al 1995). Thus, it is argued that a high level of social capital facilitates better educational outcomes (ibid). The significance of social aspects in addition to e.g. economy and parents' educational level, is, in this way, underlined as decisive (Coleman 1988). Pierre Bourdieu, one of the contemporary founders of the concept, sees social capital as the social relationships that allow access to the resources possessed by these contacts and, on the other hand, the amount and quality of these resources (Portes 1998: 3-4). While most scholars, accordingly, focus on social capital as something that can be beneficial in relation to the individual's achievements, Robert D. Putnam (1993) argues that societies can possess social capital. The level of social capital of a society can, thus, determine how well-functioning and democratic it is, as a result of high levels of trust, associations and political engagement. Alejandro Portes warns about the tendency of viewing social capital as entirely positive and argues that social norms and relations can have negative impacts such as the limitation of individual autonomy (1998: 17). Social capital, in conclusion, can be seen as a concept to understand and explain different outcomes both in relation to individuals, for instance educational achievement, but, in addition, in relation to the success of NGO interventions and the creation of ownership among beneficiaries.

This literature review has outlined some of the scholarly debates related to (I)NGOs role as service providers. While critiques of (I)NGOs included the potential impact on state legitimacy as well as questionable agendas and lack of transparency and accountability, numerous scholars argued that (I)NGOs contribute to strengthen the state and benefit the most marginalised population groups that the state is unable to reach. Finally, strategies for the inclusion of marginalised groups, particularly in education, were presented and social capital was identified as a useful concept to understand and explain successful programme implementation.

In the following Theory Section, the theoretical framework, consisting of social capital concepts and a theory on legitimacy will be presented. In addition, the usefulness of the framework in relation to the subsequent analysis will be accounted for.

4.0 Theoretical Framework

The following section will account for the theoretical framework of the thesis by first presenting a brief justification of the applicability of the theories that constitute this framework. These have been guided by the current literature in the field, as well as the theories' respective abilities to shed light on relevant and essential aspects of this paper's data. Hereafter follows a review of the theories, firstly James Coleman's 'Social Capital Theory' with conceptual additions on positive and negative social capital by Alejandro Portes. Then an explanation of the second theory used - Ruby Daghers' Transitional Framework on Performance Legitimacy, will be carried out.

For this thesis' theoretical framework, Coleman's (1988) Social Capital Theory has been chosen to constitute the ground theory to help answer this paper's first working question. Much research highlights participation and ownership (Campos et al 2004; Budhathoki 2013; Khanal 2015) as important elements for successful programme implementation. In addition, the importance of sensitivity towards the local context is underlined (Zaalouk 2005; Khanal 2018; Mlama 2005). While fewer scholars have linked the concept of social capital specifically with the strategies of NGOs (Campos et al 2004), many have suggested a focus on norm- and mindset changes (Ahmadullah 2005; Rose 2006; Mlma 2005). As norms are a crucial form of social capital (Coleman 1988), it was relevant to use a ground theory on social capital. Conceptual additions to the Social Capital Theory, presented by Portes (1998) are added to meet the shortcomings in Coleman's theory, in which negative aspects of social capital are not a focus.
To uncover how service provision can have implications on the perception of state legitimacy - in an educational context - Dagher's framework on Performance Legitimacy is useful, as it presents a type of legitimacy theory which considers the importance of service provision in a post-conflict context.

As this thesis' research question is two-fold, the theoretical framework has been constructed likewise. In order to best capture the nuances of both queries in the research question – regarding inclusion of marginalised groups in education and perceptions of legitimacy – a dual framework was

deemed necessary. Where Social Capital Theory can help shed light on the significance of social capital in relation to Street Child's programme initiatives, it suggests little theoretical reasoning on the participants' perception of the legitimacy of the state. Dagher's Transitional Framework on Performance Legitimacy, on the other hand, enables this focus and facilitates a theoretical attention to the relevant factors to uncover citizens' perception of an actor's (be it state or NGO) legitimacy. The theoretical framework, thus, provides the possibility to shed light on both inquiries in the research question.

4.1 Social Capital Theory

James S. Coleman is one of the major contributors to Social Capital Theory. Along with Pierre Bourdieu (1985), he was one of the first contemporary scholars to define and use the concept of social capital (Portes 1998: 3). While Bourdieu basically understands social capital as something that becomes available to the individual through social relations beyond the immediate family, Coleman includes relations between family members, including parents and children, as sources of social capital (ibid: 12). As the focus of this study is the significance of attitudes and norms, primarily among girls and their parents, Coleman's understanding of social capital as related to family relations, particularly with regard to educational participation and outcomes, is considered most relevant. While focus within Social Capital Theory has mainly been on the individual's relation with others and the benefits obtained through these (Coleman 1988; Portes 1988; Plagens 2011; Furstenberg et al 1995), other prominent scholars such as Robert Putnam et al (1994), use the concept in relation to societies, including entire countries (Portes 1998: 18). Again, while the subjects of this study are a limited number of individuals and focus is on their perceptions, a theory operating with large entities and not at the individual level is not adequate. Coleman's understanding of social capital is, in contrast, useful for the purpose of this paper while he particularly focuses on the significance of norms and furthermore relates social capital specifically to education outcomes, hereunder to explain why some youth are disadvantaged due to the lack of social capital (Coleman 1988). Thus, in his work from 1988, he introduces the concept of social capital and relates it to high-school dropouts. A further development of the theory has been presented by Alejandro Portes (1998) who includes new elements and contributes with the

underlining of the existence of 'negative social capital' which he argues has been overlooked by many scholars, who focus on the concept as mainly positive.

The following section has incorporated the theoretical contributions from Coleman with conceptual clarifications of Portes. Coleman's description of the different forms of social capital and Portes' description of positive and negative effects of social capital have been combined, in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of social capital – allowing more nuances for later analysis.

4.1.1 The Concept of Social Capital

Social capital inheres in the structure of relations between and among actors. It refers to the function of social relations to actors as resources they can use to achieve their interests (Coleman 1988: 98, 101). Social capital as a tool, constitutes an aid in accounting for different outcomes at the level of individual actors (ibid). Social capital, thus, enables outcomes that could not be obtained without it (Portes 1998: 7). Coleman in his study, argues that there is a strong link between high-school dropouts and their quantity of social capital. The social capital of students is argued to be related to their relationship with their parents, including the time spent together and parents' expectations (Coleman 1988: 111-112).

While acknowledging that economic and educational aspects of the family are important for children's educational achievements, social capital can be even more important. Parents support and expectations, accordingly, are decisive, even when they don't have an education themselves (ibid: 110).

Coleman describes three different forms of social capital of which the two deemed useful to this study are accounted for in the following section.

4.1.2 Forms of Social Capital

4.1.2.1 Norms and Sanctions

The purpose of norms is to limit behaviour that can have negative impacts on the community and encourage beneficial behaviour (ibid: 105). Norms are upheld through sanctions and rewards (ibid: 99) and constitute a powerful form of social capital. For instance, community norms supporting and rewarding high achievements in school, enhance students' efforts (ibid: 104-105). A particularly important norm for the creation of well-functioning societies is that one should forgo self- interest

and act in the interests of the collective - something that is reinforced by the reward of social support, status or honour (ibid).

4.1.2.2 Information Channels

Information is important in providing a basis for action (ibid: 104). Therefore, the potential information obtained through social relations is a valuable form of social capital. Relations maintained for other purposes can give people access to useful knowledge and open new opportunities (ibid). New job opportunities are one example of what can be achieved from information acquired through social relations (ibid: 111).

4.1.3 Mechanisms of Social Capital

4.1.3.1 Closure of Social Networks

Certain kinds of social structure are especially important for facilitating some forms of social capital. '*Closure in relations*' facilitates the efficiency of norms (ibid: 105). Closure refers to a closed network of members who all know each other. Norms within a closed network are maintained more effectively since the member who violates or complies with a given norm - in relation to another member - faces rewards or sanctions from the rest of the network. This in contrast, would not be possible if two persons did not have a common network to uphold the norms (ibid: 107). In the case of norms imposed by parents on children, closure of the structure requires '*intergenerational closure*' (Coleman 1988: 106). This implies that the parents of two children who go to school together, know each other as well. The consequence of this closure is a set of effective sanctions that can guide behaviour. When parents know each other, they can discuss their children's activities and come to some consensus about standards and sanctions (ibid).

4.1.4 Effects of Social Capital

Portes distinguishes between positive and negative effects of social capital. According to him, social ties can '*bring about greater control over wayward behavior and provide privileged access to resources'* (1998: 21). On the other hand, social ties can also restrict the individual's freedom (ibid). Accordingly, Portes warns not to view social capital one-sidedly since it consists of complex processes with several dimensions (ibid: 22). In the following, positive and negative effects of social capital are reviewed.

4.1.4.1 Social Capital in the Family and Community

Coleman (1988) and Portes (1998) agree that social capital in and outside the family can improve school achievement. Social capital outside the family - so-called 'weak' ties (Coleman 1988: 111) - in addition, can help enhance access to employment through information and contacts. In relation to education 'strong ties' or 'closure' (Coleman 1988: 115) among the adult community surrounding a school is argued to be important for children's education (ibid).

Another more negative effect of social capital, both within family- and community structures, is the aspect of social control restricting individual freedom. While social capital created by tight community networks is useful for ensuring compliance (Portes 1998: 10), strong enforcement of local norms may reduce the autonomy of individuals (ibid: 16-17). Social Capital Theory offers an approach to shed light on how norms and relations can have negative as well as positive implications for individuals. In the following, in turn, the Performance Legitimacy Theory will be accounted for with the aim of understanding how citizens' perceptions of the state - and other actors - can change depending on their provision of the citizens' basic needs.

4.2 The Performance Legitimacy Theory of Transition Framework

This framework aims to emphasise the role of - and uncover the mechanisms behind - performance legitimacy. It is initially developed in a response to the overweight of theory focusing on normative approaches to legitimacy inspired by the experiences of Western states. Thus, this framework is tailored for the analysis of situations taking place in post-conflict countries.

In order for the theoretical notions to be most accurate, the state relationship under investigation must have had limited experience with process legitimacy (acquired through democratic processes) as her theoretical points originate from conclusions from case studies with this factor present (2018: 86). The Nepalese state and country – despite the end of the civil war in 2006 – is yet to experience full reconciliation. It can thus be argued that its democratic grounds are still very fragile and limited, and accordingly, Dagher's framework is applicable to this case. As the framework is very elaborate and embraces a wide range of analytical notions, a theoretical delimitation is necessary. Since the aim of this thesis' analysis is in part to uncover the Musahar girls' perception of the Nepalese state's education provision, we will solely utilise the first stage of the framework's 2 sections, as this stage

relates to the identification of legitimacy perceptions in citizens as well as the identification of legitimacy of other agents than the state.

4.2.1 Types of Legitimacy

It is of uttermost importance for states to be perceived as legitimate actors, as it allows them to exercise authority over their citizens to varying extents. Thus, gaining trust from citizens makes the enforcement of rules and implementations easier (ibid: 87). Legitimacy is obtained through a many-sided process between a subject and an object – these being the 'legitimiser' and the 'legitimisee'. Last-mentioned is the one – the state – who is receiving legitimacy. The legitimiser – the citizen - is the one giving the state legitimacy (ibid).

4.2.1.1 Process Legitimacy

Process legitimacy can simply be explained as the type of legitimacy which states receive through their democratic processes such as frequent elections; adhering to Human Rights; implementing anti-corruption laws; upholding a transparent public administration and by practicing civil rights (ibid: 88).

4.2.1.2 Performance Legitimacy

Performance legitimacy is, on the other hand, something a state (object) – or another actor– can be perceived to have, when their citizens (subjects) believe that their basic needs are being met (ibid: 85). It is gained when the state provides welfare outputs that affect the citizens' daily lives (ibid: 91). The more responsive the state is to its citizen's needs, the higher the probability of them to regard the state legitimate. As each context and state situation is different, Dagher encourages an assessment of basic needs for the individual population group under examination in the analysis, based on their own expressions of such. To create or increase performance legitimacy, three factors must be present or activated which will be described in the following sections.

Knowing Subject's Interests

First step in gaining performance legitimacy is by identifying and acknowledging the needs of the subjects. Thus, the object might find it difficult to know the subjects' exact needs. However, in post-

conflict situations or in very poor population groups, basic needs are often very limited and non-complex. Also, across humanity there exists a commonality of needs (ibid: 91).

Meeting Subject Expectations

Secondly, the object must meet these identified expectations of the subjects. By doing so, the subjects will be more likely to perceive the object as legitimate. In situations of mediation of conflict - where the state has difficulties in meeting the expectations for equal distribution of services and resources- other actors are likely to attempt to meet these needs. These actors will then be the objects of legitimacy. When analysing a state's performance legitimacy, it is essential to consider the size of the population group that feels oppressed or excluded as its magnitude can increase the contributions – and the possible increase in performance legitimacy of - other actors such as civil society organizations (ibid: 92).

Capacity

In order to both acknowledge and seek solutions for citizens' desires, the state needs to have the required capacity[1]. To gain performance legitimacy, the capacity of the state or of other actors is thus crucial, as solutions to complex situations – and sometimes even to basic needs – can require complicated systems and a high level of capacity. For post-conflict situations, the delivery of services can be hindered by the state's weakened position. As performance legitimacy is gained by the provision of services, weakened states can experience a low starting point due to inabilities and lack of capacity caused by conflict (ibid: 92).

4.2.2 The Object of Legitimacy

According to the framework, the ability of other actors to accomplish the three aforementioned factors, is important to keep in mind. Alternative providers from both inside and outside the state, including (I)NGOs, can earn performance legitimacy when meeting the criteria. This, in turn, can become a challenge to the perception of the state as legitimate, as citizens will have less expectations of alternative actors than to the state. Alternative actors will often be able to gain resources to provide services to a selected part of the population – with no expectations or

[1] Capacity is understood in terms of both economic, societal and political resources (Dagher 2018)

responsibility to provide to the entire population. Eventually, these actors will have higher odds for being perceived legitimate, as they are not measured against the same criteria (ibid: 93).
The legitimacy of the state or the alternative actor can ultimately be determined by their relevance in the lives of the citizens.

Applying the presented three factors - as well as the additional considerations - allows for the identification of the perceived legitimacy of a state by its citizens. Moreover, it additionally allows for the identification of the perceived legitimacy of other actors competing on the service provision of basic needs.

4.2.3 Applicability to this Thesis Case Study

The Legitimacy Framework is relevant in the particular case of the Musahar girls, as it allows us to look into their perceptions of the public education offered by the state. Looking at their experiences of state education allows for an understanding of how legitimate the state is perceived to be. Likewise, it is possible to uncover the perception and legitimacy of the competing NGO education provision by Street Child. Examining the perception of the various sources of legitimacy within service provision is relevant to instances where a state has had a non-existent or limited positive role in its citizens’ lives. As post-conflict states often only have had the capacity to embrace certain portions of the population, crises of legitimacy are common (ibid).

The theoretical framework, presented in the above sections, consists of two parts, each relating to one of the aspects of the research that is carried out. As presented, the first part relates to social relations and norms. The identification of these social structures helps us understand and explain the social context of the girls of the study and, in continuation, why they do or do not participate in education. As we off course recognise the influence of concrete conditions, including economy and physical access to education as important factors, we find that social relations are affected by and reflect these surrounding conditions. Addressing social aspects hence helps understand the reality of a group of people, including the choices they make. Performance Legitimacy Theory, in turn, is useful for shedding light on state legitimacy. As the point of departure of our study is education, the public school and the perception of it as opposed to SC’s education programme, is the focus.

5.0 Methodology

The following section will present the methodological reflections of this dissertation by displaying its theoretical foundation and thus its ontological and epistemological underpinning. The research design – a single case study - and case selection process will be accounted for as will the study's utilised fieldwork approach and justification and interview method. As the study's data collection process has been carried out within a vulnerable population group, this too will be discussed while also identifying the ethical considerations made before and during the data collection.

5.1 Methodological and Theoretical Foundations

Our methodological and theoretical considerations have been guided by the main aim of this thesis: *How can an INGO education programme succeed in gaining participation from marginalised and illiterate girls in Nepal and what are the possible implications of INGO education provision for state legitimacy?*

The theoretical framework has steered the focus of the analysis and has – conjointly with the research question – informed the assembly of empirical data. As this thesis seeks to 1) explain how an INGO manages to obtain beneficiary participation and the significance of social norms, and 2) to identify the implications of this on the participants' perception of state legitimacy, the thesis' theoretical ground can thus be said to have a constructivist foundation. This paper's ontology reflects this, as a constructivist ontology takes as its main assumption, that human activity affects and constructs social knowledge by the interactions among people (Barnett 2014). Correspondingly, this thesis takes an interpretive epistemological approach by understanding knowledge as gained through the interpretation of norms, meanings and perception (Halperin and Heath 2012: 6). This allows for a qualitative methodological approach, that enables a gathering of data on personal experiences and opinions related to the case in question. For this thesis, field work method has been utilized in the travel to Janakpur, Nepal where participant observation and semi-structured interviews were carried out.

Following sections will elaborate on the benefits of a single case study as a research design for this specific purpose, as well as argue for the qualitative methods chosen for the data collection carried out in this research project.

5.2 Research Design – Single Case Study

This study's research design takes the form of a single case study, as opinions and perceptions among actors are seldom captured through quantitative models of explanation. Although single case studies may not have the same possibility for easy inferences, it allows for an intensive study of a particular case, with the purpose and possibility to shed light on a larger group of possible alike cases (Gerring 2007: 20). Although different discussions and definitions of the single case study – and case studies in general – prevail within academic methodological scholarly, some understandings are more prevalent than others. Robert Yin (2009) popularly defines it as *'an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context'* (14). According to this definition, case studies are thus capable of presenting an exhaustive level of detail to foster a deep understanding of the case in question. As the aim is to capture and examine opinions, beliefs and experiences, this thesis' phenomenon is argued to be best studied through a qualitative lens within a single case study design.

5.2.1 Case Selection

The theoretical framework as well as the research question, have guided this thesis' case selection. The research goal has been to explore and explain the measures which an INGO takes, in order to engage a young marginalized group in education activities in a context of low public-school attendance. Hence, it made little sense to discard the value of the outcome and randomly choose a case. Qualitative research is often guided by the selection of cases based on the dependent variable and is thus seldom handled in a theoretical neutral way (Mahoney and Goertz 2006: 239-241). The goal of this research has thus not been to uncover *if* an INGO can succeed as an education provider but rather how and with what measures a certain INGO does it. The case under investigation is thus a 'positive' case, selected on the basis of 1) the observed engagement of SC in Musahar education initiatives in Nepal, where public school enrolment for marginalized youth is still low, and 2) SC's confirmation of their experience of active participants of marginalised youth in their education programme 'Breaking the Bonds' (confidential internal report received from SC prior to our field work mission).

Designing and planning a case study is important before entering the field research. However, as new findings often emerge in the data collection process, it is important to be able to rethink what the study is a case of (Lund 2014: 224). In order to determine the case focus, it is necessary to look at the possibilities for the investigated phenomenon to say something about other social inquiries (ibid:

226). With this research focus in mind, this study is ultimately a case of the exclusion of marginalised population groups to social service provisions in developing countries.

5.2.2 Limitations

With a narrow study focus utilised through a single case-study this thesis' research will not be able to generate inferences as a quantitative study might have. Thus, it will not be possible to suggest any causal links in relation to how an INGO succeeds in fostering active education participation among a marginalised population group - and the role of social capital herein - nor about the implications of this on their perception of state legitimacy. This study will on the other hand be able to suggest particular answers to these queries which ultimately can be transferred to other cases and reinvestigated; or it can function as the starting point for a series of case studies, across various marginalised population groups, in order to uncover similarities in findings and identify differences. As such, this study can form the basis for identifying resonance within other studies which ultimately can suggest probability and likelihood rather than universal generalisations (ibid: 227).

5.2.3 Case Context - Street Child

This section will briefly present the INGO SC and their projects which this thesis' research centers its data collection around.

SC is based in the UK with offices and projects in various countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia (Street Child about us). In Nepal, they were first involved with the Musahar population in relation to the 2015 earthquake that left over a million children out of school. In continuing efforts to support education development, they developed programmes to ease marginalised population groups' access to education. These included two DFID funded projects; 'Marginalised no More' and 'Breaking the Bonds' aiming at educating Musahar girls (Street Child Nepal).

5.2.4 Street Child's Education Programme

'Breaking the Bonds' commenced in April 2018 and is planned to last three years. It addresses Musahar girls aged 15 to 18 in 240 villages across three districts in the southeastern region of Nepal. The aim of the programme is to improve Musahar girls' life situations through education and income opportunities. The girls participate in the programme for a total of 15 months where they learn basic literacy and math through the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) and subsequently, participate in a Livelihood Support Programme (LSP). According to interest, they learn either how to start their

own business, or are prepared for employment in a relevant field. Life Skills Classes (LSC) are a part of the full time-period and consist of classes on subjects such as hygiene, personal and social development and how to obtain government grants and services, including citizenship certificates and education scholarships (project brief annex 6).

5.3 Fieldwork Method

Fieldwork is considered the key method of anthropology and is widely used in qualitative research within social sciences (Dahal 2014: 191). The approach to research entails that researchers gain insight and understanding first-hand by situating themselves in the natural environment of the phenomenon studied, in contrast to conducting data through literature searches or in a laboratory. A contemporary understanding of fieldwork stresses less observation and more participation. That is, more intimate and close social relationships which demonstrate that researchers are authentic, sensitive and have integrity (De Laine 2000: 2).
The fieldwork of this research has been carried out between the 15th of November 2019 and the 4th of December 2019 in four Musahar villages outside of Janakpur in the South of Nepal. In order to obtain data on how the girls in SC's education programme experienced the INGOs' efforts to engage them, it was necessary to gather information on their opinions and perceptions of such. Looking into the INGOs' programme description would only provide one-sided information and a very limited selection of testimonies. Solely relying on the portraits of young Musahar students provided in the INGO's reports, would neither give us first-hand data from the sources in question, nor would it give us data for which we could argue the validity. Therefore, field work seemed to be the best – and only – possibility to obtain opinions and answers from the adolescence themselves.

Worth mentioning is that data on the conditions of young Musahars does in fact exist in academic literature (Paudel 2018; Poudel et al 2019; Street Child 2016). However, the majority of these studies are carried out in a North Indian Musahar location and are therefore not a direct link to information on Musahars in Nepal. In addition, relying on other studies' data will never present the same possibilities for depth and detail. In this case, getting contact to a very isolated and marginalised population group would be impossible due to technological deficits in their communities. As we were lucky to be facilitated access to the villages in Janakpur over several days, various considerations had to be made, as we formed semi-close relations with some of the girls. When producing knowledge through fieldwork, researchers and subjects are in close contact and thus ethical dilemmas are

inescapable (De Laine 2000: 1). The ethical considerations in this process will be explained in detail in section 5.9.

Ultimately, conducting fieldwork adds value to the research in a way that literary analysis could not. Uncovering meanings and perceptions by using fieldwork method allows for both interviews, participatory observations and informal conversations. The following sections will account for the use of such.

5.4 Participant Observation

A central part of fieldwork is the researcher's engagement in the lives of the subjects under investigation. Thus, participant observation is not only important but crucial in order to fully grasp the nuances of the subject's environment and everyday lives (Dahal 2014: 202).
For this study, participant observation was essential to the conduction of data. As we were invited to the lessons every day, we experienced the teaching and observed the class interactions. Although details might have been lost in translation - we made attempts to interact in the class through body language.

In addition, we walked around with some of the students and community members every time we visited. They would show us their homes, the common areas in the villages, their crafts and animals. Participant observation can be argued to be one of the most time-consuming techniques, since the researchers must take part of the community life and, at the same time, make sure to note the observations down for the purpose of remembering details (ibid). Through the village walks, many informal conversations were exchanged, which gave us much additional information that people might not have thought to bring up in more 'formal' interviews. However, in order to best foster informative conversation in the actual interviews as well, we put much effort in creating different group interview-protocols, after the identification of the different informant groups. These processes will be accounted for in the following.

5.5 Informant Groups

Considerations of the selection approach to interviewees is crucial when conducting interviews in ethnographic field work. When the aim is to collect information from individuals with knowledge about a specific phenomenon, a random selection of informants makes little sense. A purposely

selected sample approach, on the other hand, will seek to choose interviewees who are assumed to have relevant knowledge about the query at hand (Tongco 2007: 147). The first step in the selection process was thus to identify the relevant groups for interviews by reviewing their potential knowledge of the phenomenon and hereafter select the informants from each group (Kumar 1989: 9). For this research, the Musahar girls in SC's education programme were identified as the first group of key informants as they naturally had first-hand knowledge about their own experiences. In theory, all the girls were relevant to interview as they were enrolled in the education programme. However, as we wished to talk with some girls who had experiences with public school as well, we had this in mind when informing our contact person about the variety we wished for in the informants. We additionally had to consider the contextual situation of the Musahars' busy work schedule in the harvest season. The immediate availability among the girls thus ultimately determined who participated in the interviews.

Parents and siblings were selected as an informant group in order to add to our understanding of the girl's experiences. As many of the girls were unmarried and underage, their parents affected most of their decisions regarding school, which made them relevant subjects of information. As some of the parents were part of SC's Community Management Committee (the so-called CMCs), these were of particular interest to us as we believed they could have additional information because of their engagement in the programme.

In order to clarify some of the information obtained in interviews with the girls, we selected an informant group consisting of some of their teachers. As these were educated adults, they were able to provide us with more detailed information about some of the technicalities about the education system in both SC and in the public school. At the same time, they were not shy as some of the girls were, which facilitated a more descriptive information stream in the interviews. Their answers enabled us to compare them to those of the girls in cases where more details were needed for a broader perspective.

Two staff members from SC were chosen as expert interviewees as their job positions and experiences with the Musahars made them very capable of informing us about the conditions, challenges and results which they believed the girls - and the programme in general - had faced. Conducting the expert interviews before the interviews of the main target group, enabled us to gain background

knowledge about the programme and the girls. As our field work mission did not allow much time for off-the-record conversations with the girls and observations of the communities before the interview sessions, the background knowledge was crucial for our pre-understanding of context and programme specifics.

5.6 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews have been used, based on an assessment of how to best create meaningful data to inform our research question. The approach allows us to start with open-ended questions and progressively move towards more theoretically driven questions. In addition, the method implicates reciprocity and thus allows for the researcher to probe responses for clarification. Semi-structured interviews can address specific topics related to the phenomenon of study, while at the same time leaving the possibility open for participants to influence the study focus during (Galletta 2013: 24).

It was important to be flexible with the questions asked, in order to be open to new information from the interviewees. Since the target group consisted of young adolescents - for whom the interview setting might be new - we were aware of the risks of them not giving elaborate answers. Our question formulations were thus often guided by their priorities and perspectives to foster a more engaged conversation. Having a focus before-hand, enabled us to maintain open for adaptations according to the continuous findings.

One of the key benefits of the semi-structured interview is that it puts focus on the lived experience and at the same time addresses theoretical elements of interest (ibid). This was adequate to our study, as we were interested in exploring personal experiences of SC's education programme and the public school, guided by the theoretical lense of Social Capital and Performance Legitimacy Theory.

5.6.1 The Formulation of the Interview Protocols

The protocol is the set of questions guiding the interview. It requires considerable time to formulate and structure questions, as well as trial in the field. It is important to be clear about the necessity of each question included, and thus consider how it will contribute to the research. Thus, the placement of questions in the protocol should be deliberate (ibid: 45).

A protocol is often divided into three main sections. The first opening segment is characterised by mostly open-ended questions. The aim is to obtain as much information as possible about the participants' personal experiences. Establishing comfort and trust, while making certain that the interviewee knows her rights, is crucial (ibid: 47). In practice, this initial phase functioned as a declaration of trust and interest in the interviewees. We prepared general questions concerning living situations, number of siblings, daily chores etc. Although this segment is more general, the questions, the intent of the questions is often based on theoretical considerations (ibid: 48). Hence, the questions regarding family and community relations as well as daily doings were guided by theory on Social Capital indicators such as network, community and trust.

The middle segment of the interview protocol includes more specific questions with the purpose of exploring the topic in-depth. The questions draw on the information already obtained and seek to learn about the experiences in more detail. Here the interviewer must consider questions, that will ensure an adequate exploration of the research topic (ibid: 49). The core of each interview with the young interviewees focused on their relationship to and perception of their current school engagement in the classes; their prior public-school experience and their general attitude towards education and obstacles hereof including lack of resources, housework, marriage etc.

The concluding segment of the interview protocol often includes more nuanced questions reflecting theoretical considerations. Here, earlier ideas expressed by the participant may be related to theoretical concepts. This segment thus builds on the data from preceding segments. It is an opportunity to explore in-depth meanings and possible contradictions (ibid: 51, 52).
Some of the final questions in the interview protocols did attempt to reflect on, in which ways the skills that the interviewees had learned could help them further on. In general, we attempted to make them think about more intangible elements which they might have gained, such as network, self-esteem and responsibility.

During the formulation of interview protocols, it is important to consider the cultural and contextual background of the interviewees, in order to retrieve the most useful information, while preserving a comfortable interview environment (Dahal 2014: 203). As such, we created several protocols in order to present questions, which fitted the individual situations of the interviewees best. This resulted in a

total of 2 protocols with similar questions - however with variations concerning enrolment status - for the girls; a protocol for their parents and siblings; a protocol for teachers and a protocol for experts.

5.6.2 Translation Issues

While personal experiences constitute the foundation of qualitative studies, language and the understanding of meaning are crucial. Language differences may however cause misunderstandings of concepts, which ultimately risks being a bias in terms of the actual meaning conveyed (Van Nes et al 2010: 313). Presenting a section on possible translation issues in the study is thus important, in order to be explicit about how potential losses in meaning have been avoided (ibid: 316).

In this study, translation during the interviews has been a necessity, as the target group spoke Maithili – a recognized regional language spoken in the eastern Terai area of Nepal (Street Child 2016). As the general English proficiency among Maithili speakers is rather low - we had to accept a translator with an intermediate English level.
As a result, it was important to pay attention to a number of translation risks. Although our translator was a master's student of an English Business degree, her level was far below that of ours. In order for her to best understand our questions, we discussed them with her beforehand to clarify any misunderstandings. When necessary, we changed words with easier synonyms as well as minimised difficult and abstract words.

As our time in the villages were structured after the interviewee's availability, our translator's and driver's and contact person's schedule, the idea of a test-run of the protocol did not seem possible considering our limited time in the field. As such, we included all conducted interviews as research data. However, although the questions were re-worded together with our translator to minimise comprehension issues, we initially realised that we asked about concepts that were rather self-evident to us but extremely abstract for the girls. The notions of 'time' and 'dreams' were indeed difficult for many of them to grasp. We came to learn that this was likely due to the concept's irrelevancy for the interviewees, as their futures were seldom based on autonomous decisions. Reflecting on the question on 'future dreams', one might argue that our own privilege as researchers from a developed country made us unalert of the abstract formulation of the question. When discovering that we did not get any replies from the interviewees on this matter, we stressed more specific themes in our questions.

5.7 Expert Interviews

To increase our background knowledge in the field, we interviewed two experts from SC - with the functioning titles as Education Officer and Evaluation officer, respectively. Both with several years of experience working with the Musahar population.

Thoughts were paid on the idea of labelling the interviewees as 'elites', and instead adopt an approach, where such experts were not seen as a homogeneous group with a fixed and consistent power, but rather focus on the individuality of the questions and conversations with each of them (Lancaster 2015: 97). In practice, this was done by tailoring the interviews for the individual NGO worker – with base in the same protocol - researching their background and field specific competences beforehand.

It was important to be aware of the contextual situation surrounding the interviewees working with the population group under examination (ibid). As the interview protocol consisted of many questions about caste relationships in Nepal, attention was paid to their reactions and wording in these matters. This was a priority, as both men were of higher caste and therefore could have been under unconscious preconceptions about lower castes.

It should be noted that the interviewees were hired by SC. Ultimately, this in itself presents possible bias, as their comments and explanations might be driven by an interest in validating the work of the organisation. However, we made sure to be very upfront with the aim of their participation and made it explicit that their interview answers would primarily function as guidance for the interview protocols for the Musahars. This was ultimately done to make sure that they understood that their personal work and roles would not be at the centre of our scrutinization.

5.8 Qualitative Content Analysis - Coding of Data

For this thesis' research, answers from 10 interviews with the Musahar girls have been the primary data. In addition, 17 interviews with families, teachers and experts have been conducted. In the following analysis in section 6 a Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) will be performed, to compare analytical findings in the interviews to theoretical notions presented in the theoretical framework. In order to do so, it is necessary to first convert the interviews to text. This was done by transcribing

each interview and hereafter filling in relevant text in schemes according to interviewee categories; girls, family, teachers and experts.

The core of QCA is the categorisation of the material in accordance with the theory and research question. 'Codes' or categories are created in order to obtain an overview of main themes of the content to ultimately identify relevant patterns. This can be done by categorising the codes into schemes, displaying the themes and the quotations from interviews (Mayring 2000).

In this paper, codes were created somewhat based on theoretical notions from Social Capital Theory but mostly based on the content in the interviews. As such, the themes that were highlighted by the interviewees guided the categories of the schemes. These themes were, in turn, affected by our questions asked. As the protocol questions were created with a theoretical preunderstanding, we knew that our questions would suggest the direction of the answers. Semi-structured interviews, however, allowed the interviewees to bring up other topics and the interviews changed depending how much they chose to share. The aforementioned schemes were, accordingly, divided into thematic categories and the schemes served as a useful tool and overview over the interview content.

5.9 Ethical Considerations

The following section will present the ethical considerations that we have been reflective about before, during and after the empirical data collection. The ethical considerations have especially been spurred by the social vulnerability of the research's target group. Firstly, this section will cover the considerations made in relation to ethical conduct with vulnerable groups and secondly, the ethical behaviour when working with cultural differences will be accounted for. Thirdly, the ethicality of ethnographic fieldwork as well as the roles of the researchers will be considered, and reflections on the expert interviews will be presented.

5.9.1 Consent

One of the most important ethical matters, when conducting ethnographic fieldwork is to protect the privacy of the 'human subjects'. These refer to the research informants from whom you rely on your data (Gurung et. al. 2014: 208). Thus, serious attention was initially paid to keeping the conversations with the young Musahar girls private, anonymous, and most importantly – consensual.

As the majority of the female interviewees were between 10-18 and thus underage, we made sure to secure their consent, by informing them that the interviews were voluntary, and any participation should be as well. We additionally asked them directly if they cared to take part in the interview after explaining the general nature of the study, as well as made sure that they knew that no remuneration would be given. As the target group were mostly underage, we also required oral or written consent from the interviewees' parents or guardians. A written consent in the receiver's language, would naturally be the best solution in order to avoid communicative misunderstandings due to possible language barriers. However, as the majority of the Musahars are illiterate, an oral consent was the most doable solution in the situation.

5.9.2 Anonymity

The concept of confidentiality is associated with anonymity, as this is a way to apply confidentiality by making sure that the identities of the interviewees cannot be identified. One of the dilemmas often encountered by qualitative research, is that of reporting truthful findings thus potentially exposing the interviewees' identity or omitting interesting stories to avoid identification (Lancaster 2017: 98). For this research, it was agreed beforehand, that any significant stories from the girls which personally accused or talked negatively about teachers, upper-caste men, male relatives etc. would be evaluated with SC to determine the potential for personal identification. Being aware of the possibility that omitting stories to reduce potential harm to the interviewees can bring the accuracy of the study into question, it was a necessary element in order to secure the safety of the girls.

As the locational specifications for the interviews were not discussed with our contact person beforehand, we were caught off guard by our own ignorance in relation to carrying out anonymous interviews in rural communities. As classrooms were outside on a carpet it was not possible to isolate us with the interviewee and translator. Also, as we could have expected, our presence attracted much attention in the small communities, which resulted in large gatherings around the interview setting. A certain pitfall in our process plan was our obliviousness towards the community culture of the Musahars. Not only did everyone take a personal interest in the happening and interviewing, but also felt entitled to 'help out' with answers and comments. The small size of the communities and their relative isolation from the larger city of Janakpur, very much implied their unity, but was however difficult to foresee with our limited experience in community fieldwork. Ultimately, a large bias exists in terms of anonymous answers by interviewees, as many of the girls were surrounded by a group of

friends, family members and sometimes the teachers, whom they were asked questions about. By being aware of this possible bias very early in the interview process, we trust our instinct in identifying answers, which might have been affected by the circumstances, through observing the body language and attitudes of the interviewees.

5.9.3 Culture Differences and Power Positions

Understanding the cultural sensitivity of the target group and the people interviewed, is crucial when gathering ethnographic empiricism in the field (Gurung et. al. 2014). Before our departure to the field, SC brought to our attention that many of the Musahars had felt exploited by researchers and politicians in the past. Musahars often felt that these actors needed votes or opinions from them, but seldom kept their political promises or brought the change that they had assured (Street Child 2016). Respecting the cultural sensitivity and experiences of the target group, the data collection process could not be ignorant to this information. It was thus made a priority to explain what their interview answers precisely would be used for, before they gave their consent to participate.

The interview setting with the Musahar girls was much considered based on cultural and gendered factors and with a concern for the perceived socioeconomic differences between researchers and interviewees. We were very aware that our positions might be perceived authoritative, as most foreigners visiting the communities work for organisations and thus have something to gain or offer during their visits. In order to prevent a severe power imbalance between us and the interviewees, we made sure to stress that our research was solely for thesis use, and that we too were currently enrolled in education. We additionally made sure to use our own experiences as examples, when e.g. asking about conflicts among the girls, in an attempt to seem more relatable.

The initial plan for the interview location was to choose a place at a safe and known location to the interviewees. As the school facilities were more resourceless than expected, the interviews took place in open areas next to the classes. As we had reviewed project details in SC's reports and found that the school programmes were managed and taught 'female to female' we wished to respect the chosen gender code and made sure to hire a female translator. Due to traditional gender norms among the Musahars, using a male translator might have been intimidating for the interviewees (Sah 2008: 213). However, as caste differences potentially could influence the interviewees' feelings of comfort - conscious considerations were made beforehand, in terms of the gender and caste status of the

translator. In practice, only two capable translators were available in Janakpur; one middle-aged professional male translator with an adequate English level and a young female master student, with an intermediate English level. Based on just mentioned gender considerations, we hired the female translator, aware of the risk that her limited English proficiency might decrease nuances in the translations. As both translator candidates were of higher caste, we believed a younger woman would still be the better choice, as she most likely would be more relatable in terms of gender and age.

The cultural and socioeconomic differences between us and the interviewees, were held in mind throughout the interviews. Respecting cultural norms in terms of female modesty, we made sure to wear respectable clothing and removed extravagant jewellery. This was both an attempt to diminish physical differences between the interviewees and us but also to respect the common dress code for women in the culture.

During the interviews, many people gathered around the interviewees. We explained the risks of an audience influencing the interviewees' answers, to our contact person, but he did not seem to understand the issue. We additionally had to ask him several times to leave the interview situation, as he as an organisation authority, would risk affecting the validation of the interview. Although we at all times tried to respect the patriarchal norms in the communities, we would not risk too much bias in our research and had to be persistent in our exclusion of men. In the instances where the by-standing men or our contact person were unwilling to leave, we paid extra attention to the interviewee's body language and sometimes completely left out more personal questions regarding marriage and children.
It should be noted that the various power positions of the present people in the interviews could present bias to the interview answers. The presence of the teachers and the organisation representative in some of the interviews might have affected the interviewees' willingness to critique the project and the teachers. Thus, interview answers in these situations have been carefully scrutinized in the data processing for hesitant answers, discomfort or other indicators of biased answers.

5.10 Methodological Reflections

As for the potential biases in our research, we have tried to be aware of such from the initial stages in order to overcome the worst pitfalls. However, some reflections relating to bias are necessary to cover, for the sake of transparency in this research.

Since SC facilitated our access to the Musahar villages, it was only natural that their contact person followed us during our data conduction. However, as mentioned, he was present in some of the interviews. Although we tried to explain the importance of getting the interviewee's own answers – even if this meant silence – it took some time for him to act in accordance. The approaches to academic research stressing ideas of objectivity, critical viewpoints and subjectivity seemed unfamiliar to him. Thus, it took some time to explain that we were not interested in 'positive' answers but in truthful answers. However, our translator – a university graduate – more easily understood our research approach and made sure to translate and ask follow-up questions while reflecting our attitudes. Ultimately, these differences in understanding approaches to research might have affected some of the interviewees' answers. However, as this happened in a few instances, we believe the vast majority of the answers are reliable and unaffected.

5.11 Delimitation

In this study the perceptions and experiences of the Musahar girls, their families, their teachers and the SC staff who help facilitate the education programme have been uncovered via interviews. In order to foster a more nuanced idea of the Nepalese public-school environment, its policies and teachers, it would have been necessary to interview government officials within the education sector, public school teachers and possibly currently enrolled students (Dalit and upper caste), to uncover their experiences versus those of the Musahars. Although this would have put the Musahar girls' experiences in perspective and presented a broader take on the various experiences in public school, this was not the focus of this study. In a comparative study with greater scope than this research paper, this addition could have strengthened the validity of the study by providing various opinions from individuals, not directly linked to the main target group. However, as this thesis core focus has been on the Musahar girls' perceptions and experiences, analysing and concluding from their answers have been assessed to be the most relevant approach to best answer the research question at hand.

As we have attempted to uncover the Musahar girls' perceptions of the state as an education provider, it should be noted that this was analysed and concluded by looking at their comments on public school and not directly from answers on the state institution. As the young Musahars had little political involvement, it would be futile to ask them about the state institution. Hence, we decided to seek this information from a different angle in order to minimise abstraction and possible reluctance in

answering. As such, their perceptions of the public school will in this study be viewed as an indicator of their perception of the state.

As of now, methodological considerations and reflections of this study have been presented. In the following this thesis analysis section will be presented and two analyses will be carried out.

6.0 Analysis 1: Social Capital and Girls' Participation in SC's Education Programme

In this section we use Social Capital Theory as our theoretical approach to understand how social dynamics in the Musahar communities[2] have impacted on girls' participation in Street Child's (SC) education programme. This is in accordance with working question 1 of this thesis:

How has SC managed to gain the participation of Musahar girls in their education programme, and how does social capital impact on the programme's success?

The following is structured to gradually explore the above question. The first part identifies attitudes toward education - concretely towards the public school and the SC programme - as well as expectations of girls. This leads on to the analysis of the effects of social norms on the girls' school attendance, including how SC initiatives have ensured participation in their programme.

6.1 Attitudes

6.1.1 Positive Attitudes toward Education

Social norms and expectations influence individuals to act in certain ways. By following the norms, they get a reward in terms of e.g. recognition while non-compliance may lead to sanctions (Coleman 1988: 104). In a local community characterised by close relations, the recognition from others and thus fitting within the norms by living up to expectations become important for the individual's inclusion and survival (Portes 1998: 13). The attitude toward education in the family and community is a norm that can greatly influence children's educational achievements (Coleman 1988: 109).

[2] Musahar communities in our use in this study refer to the four communities visited during field-work. Thus, villages where the inhabitants belong to the Dalit population group of Musahars

When asked about the significance of education, many of the community members reply in a similar way. Girls and their family members agree that education is important to have better life opportunities. Basic knowledge and job opportunities are highlighted: *'Those who get education will understand basic ideas of life and get a better life, they get jobs, they get other offers'* (brother 1 annex 2). One of the girls participating in the programme, in line with this, states that education will help her get basic knowledge and a better life (girl 3 annex 1). In addition, several of the girls express a wish to attend school which they describe as enriching and important for improving their life conditions: *'I like going to school, learning new things, making friends, having fun. If we don't go to school, we go backward.'* (girl 2 annex 1).
The concrete usefulness of education for their daily lives is underlined. The ability to read, accordingly, is stated by girls to help them find locations as they are enabled to read addresses (ibid). The positive attitude toward education, particularly of girls, is also expressed through the wish of some for their children to attend school in the future. Again, there is a belief that someone who gets an education can get a better life than someone who doesn't. This, besides improved job opportunities, also implies becoming more independent, respected in society and valuable as someone that can educate and inspire others:

'A girl who gets an education can get a better life compared to others. They can get a job and be valuable in society. If my daughter is educated, she is able to make her own decisions, she can motivate others. I think women must be educated. A woman can educate her family more, like a mother can educate her children' (girl 9 annex 1).

In this section, we have identified positive attitudes toward education among Musahars indicating that education as such is perceived as positive. In the following section we look at the attitude toward the public school to investigate why public-school attendance, particularly of girls, is low in spite of positive expressions about education.

6.1.2 Critical Attitudes toward the Public School

Most of the interviewed girls have either attended school to a very limited degree or never attended school. One of the reasons for not attending school has been related to the physical accessibility. In

one community, the local school closed due to 'political issues' (girl 1 annex 1). Distance to school is also mentioned as a problem in several instances (mother 2 annex 2; girl 10 annex 1). In another case, sexual harassments stopped parents from sending their daughters to school: *'There was sexual harassment going on, that is why girls left the government school...People don't think their girls will be safe in these schools'* (CMC 2 annex 2).

Some of the interviewees described school negatively as a place where teachers '*spend time talking to each other and not teaching'* and highlighted SC's education programme as better *(*girl 7 annex 1). Public school is apparently regarded as being of low quality compared to private schools where several parents send their children, if they have the money (CMC annex 2; mother 1 annex 2). Similarly, one of the girls' ambitions for her children included sending them to a private school '*so they can get a better education'* (girl 9 annex 1).

However, some of the girls had positive impressions of the public school and wished to attend. Because of a lack of time, though, it had not been possible: *'I was interested in studying, but my parents didn't allow it and they scolded because I had to do housework'* (ibid). Another girl had a similar experience: *'I had to feed my animals, goats, housework. So forced by my parents, I had to stop my education'* (girl 10 annex 1). Even in cases where parents did allow for the girls to attend school, the encouragement was not strong enough and the workload at home was still experienced as a barrier. One girl, accordingly, claimed that even though the teacher was good, a lack of interest and her parents not forcing her to go were reasons for her dropping out (girl 6 annex 1). As lack of time due to housework is mentioned frequently, lack of interest could be related to this and the fact that school is not perceived as mandatory. Another reason for not attending school includes marriage. One of the girls confirmed that she liked to study but couldn't continue because she was married at an early age (girl 5 annex 1). The fact that some of the girls' brothers do attend school (girl 7 annex 1) - while the girls frequently state to lack interest - supports the probability that lack of interest is related to gender norms prioritising boys' education before that of girls (Khanal 2018: 157).

In conclusion, while the public school was perceived negatively and of low quality by some, others wished to attend, but an extensive workload, in particular, inhibited this. As previous sections have

shown (See Context Section), these obstacles experienced by Musahar girls are closely linked to poverty and gender norms resulting in a lack of prioritisation of girls' education.

6.1.3 Active Support of Street Child's Education Programme

In relation to the participation in the SC project, girls' and other community members' experiences were mainly positive. Especially teachers and teaching methods were highlighted as positive. Numerous girls mentioned teachers' skills as something they like about school: *'The teacher is good in behaviour. He repeats again and again if someone doesn't understand'* (girl 2 annex 1). Another girl explained that she has learned how to count money, although it was very challenging for her to follow the classes in the beginning: *'It took me much time when I started - understanding what the teacher was saying and what he was trying to teach me'* (girl 5 annex 1). But the skills and methods of the teacher, who she described as very funny, helped her learn and according to her, all students were satisfied with his teaching (ibid). Other community members highlighted the same aspects as the girls. One of the mothers mentioned the teachers and the level as something she liked about the SC classes (mother 1 annex 2). Another mother also found that the teachers teach *'very well'* (mother 2 annex 2). In addition, the outcomes of the education programme were seen as useful in many ways. Several of the girls mentioned that they were now able to count money, which would help them for '*business purposes'* (girl 6 annex 1). Others wanted to work as tailors and hoped to get skills within that profession through the programme (girl 1 annex 1).

It was clear that many of the interviewees found that participating in SC's education programme would improve their lives by helping them earn an income. But not only job-related skills were mentioned as valuable. Some of the girls highlighted that they had learned something about marriage and how to save money for future needs (girl 9 annex 1). In addition to the independence gained from being able to count and buy things in shops, they also experienced a changed role in the community being able to help others count money, resolve conflicts and support younger siblings in their school attendance:

'*Now, I behave like a parent for my brother and sister who are younger. I'm telling them to go for tuition in time, teach them about cleanliness, and to go on time to school, get up early in the morning'* (girl 7 annex 1).

Being able to plan for the future and manners were also mentioned as skills obtained through the classes and the Life Skills Classes were highlighted by some as particularly useful since they are preparing and motivating them for '*real life*' (girl 10 annex 1).

Parents also seemed to see the usefulness of the SC classes and pointed to skills such as math as useful in relation to e.g. tailoring (mother 1 annex 2). Besides these skills, changes in the personality and behaviour of their daughters were also mentioned as expectations for the classes (mother 2 annex 2). One parent expected the classes to change the lifestyle and life of the girls. He explained that his daughter was now teaching him manners, including '*how to speak'* and *'what to speak* (CMC 3 annex 2).

In conclusion, the expectations to and experiences with the SC programme were overall positive among girls and their parents. Teachers and the usefulness of the educational content were highlighted in particular. The education programme was hoped to change their lives through an improved economic situation and new knowledge. The attitude toward the SC programme, thus, is generally in contrast to the attitude toward the public school. In the following we identify expectations of the girls and relate these to their school attendance to understand why they participate in the SC programme, when norms (related to poverty and gender) did not allow them to attend public school.

6.2 Expectations of Girls

In the community it was clear that there were a number of expectations of girls. In the following we look at how these affect the possibility to attend either public school or the SC programme. In the previous sections, a number of explanations for the lack of school attendance of the Musahar girls were identified, including housework and early marriage. As our data showed, parents generally did not oppose girls' studying, but, at the same time, expected them to fulfil their duties at home. Accordingly, one of the girls mentioned that even though her parents supported her going to the SC class, sometimes they told her to stay home and do housework instead (girl 6 annex 1). In other cases, other women took over the tasks in order for the girls to be able to attend school (girl 4 annex

1). This illustrates how housework generally is regarded as an important task for girls and women that must be completed before there is room for education.

The Musahar girls are subjects to a patriarchal societal structure where they are expected to marry early and obey their parents and, when married, their in-laws and husbands (See Context Section). As a result, one of the reasons for the girls dropping out was their husbands' opposition. Some husbands, working abroad, feared that education might threaten their marriage (teacher 2 annex 3). While our data, thus, showed that early marriage was sometimes a barrier to school attendance, several married girls were, in fact, attending the SC classes (girl 5; girl 10 annex 1; girl 9 annex 1). However, the girls were clearly subject to the attitude of their parents or in-laws and husbands.
While early marriage is a widespread norm among Musahars due to traditions as well as economic considerations (See Context Section), some parents went against this and told their daughters to postpone marriage till after the completion of school (girl 3 annex 1).
Generally, the female youth (nine out of ten of the interviewees) expressed that they experienced support from their families and the community in relation to attending the SC classes. This was the case even though parents were not educated themselves and could not understand well the content of the classes (girl 4 annex 1).

In the previous sections we have seen that the Musahar girls are subject to many expectations from their families. Families' prioritisation of other work-related duties was identified as one of the central barriers to girls' school attendance. While the girls dropped out of public school, they as well as their parents expressed satisfaction with the SC programme which the girls were attending. In the following sections, we investigate the effects of social norms on the girls' school attendance to better understand the success of the SC programme.

6.3 The Significance of Norms for Girls' Education

In the previous sections it was illustrated that some of the girls and parents had a negative attitude toward the public school. This was in contrast to a mainly positive attitude toward SC's education programme. Expectations of the girls were marked by traditional gender roles, where women are

expected to take care of the house. Alternative views, though, were also identified, since some of the girls and their parents expressed that education should be prioritised before marriage.
In the following we will describe how norms are decisive for the girls' school attendance. For this, Coleman's theory on social capital and his concepts of strong ties and closed relations, will be utilised.

The Musahar communities, that the interviewees of this study belong to, are located outside the main city of Janakpur. Even though their villages sometimes border villages of non-Musahar communities, the Musahar communities do not mix much with other castes. This is related to the original caste-based exclusion and discrimination of the so-called "untouchables" and implies, for instance, that Musahars marry within their own caste (See Context Section). While the community members, consequently, live most of their lives within the communities and with limited contact to other caste groups, they are highly dependent on each other. This is being reinforced by the lack of access to basic social services (ibid). As a result, the studied Musahar communities are characterised by closure of the social networks which implies that they all know each other and thus each other's' friends and families. As Coleman underlines, this type of social structure is particularly facilitative of upholding norms in a community (1988: 105). The strong ties (ibid: 115) between the members of the communities, meanwhile, have negative effects for some community members. As Portes underlines, intense community life and strong enforcement of local norms can reduce the autonomy of individuals (1998: 16-17). In the present case, while females are expected to take care of the house and children - and in addition - help out with field work and other types of work, this limits their possibility to attend school. This norm benefits the communities - in line with the function of norms of facilitating behaviour that is beneficial for the community (Coleman 1988: 105) - since parents are supported and enabled to work while the house is taken care of (teacher 4 annex 3). Since sending girls to school entails a loss of labour and possibly money for the family, education is not a priority for many families. This tendency is only reinforced by negative experiences and expectations of the learning- and income related outcome of public-school attendance. In this closed social network, the norms, thus, do not facilitate the girls' school attendance in general.

However, alternative attitudes were expressed by several of the interviewees, suggesting an increasing awareness that education can actually benefit the girls and the community as a whole. While the norm of girls' work responsibility remains, there was evidence of a widespread attitude among parents that their daughters could attend classes and still assume their work-related responsibilities. In spite of the tradition of early marriage, which in some cases inhibits the girls' school attendance, some parents, as we saw, thought that it was better for their daughters to postpone marriage in order to complete their education.

6.4 Street Child's Initiatives to Ensure Programme Participation

The investigation of attitudes and norms of the Musahar communities in relation to education showed a general satisfaction with SC's education programme and that the girls were able to assume work duties along with attending the classes.

In the following, we take a closer look at the elements of SC's programme that may have contributed to the participation of the girls. First, we look at the role of the teachers. Secondly, we look at the organisation and content of the classes and third, we look at participation of the community members in the programme implementation.

6.4.1 A Trustful Relationship Between Parents and Teachers

The teachers of the SC programme were recruited locally to ensure a local understanding of the context and the ability to teach in the local language. The majority of teachers were female. Teachers informed the communities about the programme prior to the beginning of the classes (project brief annex 6). This helped convince parents that their daughters should participate: *'my parents told me to participate because the community educators talked about the importance to the community'* (girl 1 annex 1).

After the classes started the teachers continued with frequent communication with parents about the content of the classes and the significance of attending: *'I have contact with the parents almost every day. I explain to them what we are teaching the girls, what the advantage will be, why these kinds of subjects matter and what will be beneficial for them'* (teacher 2 annex 3).

The teacher's involvement with parents was particularly important since some of the girls were sometimes absent due to their parents' prioritisation of housework. It was also common that

teachers went from house to house in the morning to tell the girls to attend classes. While girls wanted to attend classes, some parents continued not to regard education as a first priority for their daughters: *'...I have to go door to door to call them every day...The girls understand, but, however, their parents don't take it seriously* (teacher 3 annex 3).

The contact between parents and teachers was clearly contributing to continuously influencing parents' attitude and prioritisation of their daughter's education. The frequent communication resulted in parents feeling comfortable with contacting teachers and becoming more engaged with the programme: *'Class has not started yet, but the girls' parents...come to meet me and they are already excited about this class'* (teacher 5 annex 3).

Teachers highlighting how education benefits not only the girls, but the family as a whole, is in accordance with the norm of acting, first and foremost, in the interest of the collectivity (Coleman 1988: 104-105). As the family's interest, before that of the individual girl, is clearly important in the Musahar communities - as seen in the expectations of girls to help their parents - this logic speaks to the local context. While teachers tried to influence parents' attitude toward education, including to postpone marriage of their teenage daughters, they sometimes failed which, in some cases, resulted in girls dropping out (teacher 3 annex 3). This indicated that traditional norms were still significant. In addition, while many of the teachers came from other communities - and many were not Musahars - they were not part of the group solidarity, based on group identification (Portes 1998: 7-8), existing among the Musahars. As the Nepali society is highly divided according to caste, teachers are therefore likely to be regarded as outsiders and not part of the closed network. As a result, their influence might be limited in some matters.

Clearly the SC programme has succeeded in creating a personal relation between parents and teachers. Parents trust teachers and have been convinced about the importance of supporting their daughters to attend classes. Since the norm about the female youth's first responsibility being housework was still widespread, the information and communication with parents was ongoing. Although parents felt confident to talk to teachers and showed interest in the classes, teachers still had to underline the importance of the girls' attendance to class - sometimes on a daily basis.

6.4.2 Consideration of the Local Context

SC, before initiating the project, did a participatory study of the situation among the Musahars in relation to education. This, in addition to the consultation and collaboration with local partners, contributed to a good understanding of the context (project brief annex 6).

Accordingly, SC adapted the content of the classes to the level of the participants, considering their lack of school experience. Students were assessed before the beginning of classes, and teachers used alternative pedagogical methods to help them better follow the teaching: *'…in this class, teachers are teaching them by playing materials so they can easily get whatever they teach them'* (teacher 4 annex 3). Beyond teaching methods and level adaption to the context, the focus of some of the classes on practical issues that are useful in the daily lives of the girls as well as the focus on obtaining an income, was contributing to make classes relevant and motivating:

'In the beginning, the girls were not aware about their cleanliness in their period time and they didn't know how to introduce themselves and about child marriage and how to save important papers. So, I taught this and now they learned. Whatever I teach they catch easily and there has started competition among them. They want to do better' (teacher 3 annex 3).

In line with this, one teacher found that learning about society and manners can be helpful for the girls' general lives (teacher 5 annex 3). Another important aspect of adapting the programme to the context was the scheduling of classes. Classes only ran for three hours every day which made it possible for the girls to assume their work-related responsibilities. In relation to the harvesting season, the hours of classes, in addition, were changed in order to enable the girls to attend while at the same time working in the field (expert 1 annex 4).

By adapting the education content to the context, SC made it possible for girls to learn more and convinced both parents and girls of the relevance of the education programme. In addition, hours were changed to enable girls to maintain their other work-related tasks. While work is a typical barrier for girls' school attendance, this was an important aspect that made it possible for girls to attend classes while at the same time complying with the norms.

6.4.3 Community Involvement in the Programme Provision

In order to ensure community involvement, SC has established Community Management Committees (CMCs) consisting of community authorities, the girls participating in the programme as well as parents. The role of the CMCs is to assess and support the implementation of the programme (project brief annex 6). CMCs along with teachers, hence, assessed who were absent and who were attending classes and tried to convince parents to let the girls participate (CMC 3 annex 2). In this way community members were involved in improving classes, not least the attendance of the girls. The CMCs also met with teachers to discuss these issues (teacher 4 annex 3) and helped ensure that there were available spaces where classes could take place (CMC 3 annex 2).

In addition to good relationships between parents and teachers and classes adapted to the context, the local involvement of the communities through CMC's enhanced the communities' engagement with the SC programme. While community members obtained an authoritative role as CMC members and traditional community authorities were included, it was more likely that the community norms were influenced. As local people become responsible for ensuring the success of the project, including attendance, this enables the functioning of norms in the closed network. This is not least due to intergenerational closure among parents (Coleman 1988: 106) since parents who are CMC members try to make sure that not only their own, but also other parent's daughters, attend the classes.

6.5 Sub-conclusion

The members of the Musahar communities have close relations and depend on each other - something that implies a high degree of social capital. The social capital of the communities, though, has not benefited girls' education, but in contrast, restricted their possibilities of attending school. This is related to norms that do not encourage girls' school attendance but prioritise their presence and workforce in and around the house. SC's success in terms of participation and positive feedback is related to their ability to adapt to norms while trying to influence them. SC has convinced the community members that the programme benefits the community. When community members are involved in the programme, they motivate others to continue the engagement.

7.0 Analysis 2 – Implications on State Perception

The following analysis will firstly present the aim and contribution to the research question. Secondly, the Performance Legitimacy Theory of Transition Framework, (Henceforth referred to as the 'Performance Legitimacy Theory') will be applied to this thesis' interview data, in order to determine to what degree, the Musahar girls perceive the Nepalese state and SC's education programme legitimate. Finally, a sub-conclusion will be made of analyses 1 and 2.

In order to give a fully explanatory answer to the research question at hand, the second working question of this thesis will be attempted answered in the forthcoming analysis. Thus, the query that will be approached is the following: *How are the Musahar girls' perceptions of public school reflecting to what degree the state is regarded as legitimate and what are possible implications of this?*

Several of the interviewed girls had previous, although limited, experiences with attending public school and were thus capable of answering questions regarding this. However, as many of them had dropped out in the lower grades, some of the experiences seemed a long time ago according to themselves – despite their relatively young ages between 13-20. Including their experiences of public school in this analysis, will allow for an idea of their view on the state's education offer.

With the Performance Legitimacy Theory, it is possible to uncover the girls' perceptions of the public school by reviewing their interview answers regarding experiences with public school versus experiences with classes provided by SC. The core of Performance Legitimacy is that legitimacy is obtained - by a state or another actor - through the provision of services and the fulfilment of basic needs (Dagher 2018: 91). The theory suggests that three factors are identified in the observed situation between the object of legitimacy and the subject which gives the object legitimacy. This, in turn, will help uncover whether an object – in this case the state of Nepal – is perceived as a legitimate actor in the field of education provision by a population group among its citizens – in this case the Musahars. The three factors are: identifying the subject's Interest; Meeting the subjects' expectations and; Having the capacity to provide services. These factors will be explained in relation to the case and will thus primarily function as the structure of this analysis.

7.1 Identifying Interest

According to the Performance Legitimacy Theory, the first step for being perceived as a legitimate actor is by identifying the needs of the subjects. If this for some reason is difficult, because of restricted access to an isolated poor population group e.g., a commonality of basic needs exists on a global scale – one being basic education (ibid).

The Nepalese state did implement policy changes back in 2000 with the 'Education for All' school project. This project attempted to improve access to basic education and quality, relevance and effectiveness for disadvantaged illiterate groups in Nepal with a special focus on girls (Ministry of Education, Nepal 2015). Considering this information, it is difficult to argue for the Nepalese state's unawareness of the Musahars' needs for education. In fact, the implementation of a project with such focus, could imply that the issue at hand is perceived as important for the state.

The literature suggests that public schools often are considered bad quality and that private schools are preferred, as clarified in the Context Section. According to some of the girls who had experience with public school, it did however not seem to be purely bad quality; *'…the teachers were also good'* (girl 5 annex 1). The dropouts were on the other hand more related to the lack of accommodation and ignorance towards the diverse needs of students and the different needs of the Musahars who typically live outside the school cities; *'…it was difficult for me…school was far away'* (girl 10 annex 1); and to the state's negligence of Musahar student's financial situation; *'We have to pay for admission and books. It was too expensive'* (girl 6 annex 1). As the 'Education for All' project promises scholarships to the least financially fortunate, it is interesting to notice that some of the Musahars still mention that they have expenses in relation to school-related equipment.

In general, there seems to be a distrust of government promises in the villages based on some of the informal conversations conducted with girls and other villagers. Some referred to the government's promises of a well and toilet seats but their continuous lack of providing these facilities. It should be acknowledged that the general distrust in the communities possibly could affect the overall trust in the state's service provision – including education.

Ultimately, it can be argued that the Nepalese state has identified and addressed the needs of disadvantaged groups, through their implementation of the education policy project from 2000-2015.

However, based on the interview answers, it has been uncovered that these initiatives are not perceived as actively carried out.

7.2 Meeting Expectations

While identifying the needs of the citizens or a specific population group is important, it is not enough in order to be perceived as a legitimate actor. The object – in this case the state - will have to meet these expectations and fulfil the needs by providing the solutions or resources (Dagher 2018: 92).

In the previous, it was established that the Nepalese state is perceived to have failed to enforce the Musahars in their inclusion policies. According to the theory, failing to act on such knowledge would result in the subject – the Musahars – being reluctant to perceive the state as legitimate (ibid).

As concluded in the first analysis, uncovering the dynamics of social capital among the girls and their parents, housework was one of the most common reasons for female Musahars to drop out of public school at an early age. Working from the assumption that the Nepalese state is aware of the obstacles to school attendance of this population group, they seem to have done little to accommodate the public school to the lives of the Musahars. Interestingly, Nepal has compulsory school attendance, but no indications of enforcement from the state could be identified in the interview answers, informal conversations or observations. Assuming these observations reflect the reality, little effort – if any – has been made by the state to include the Musahars in public education. Against this notion, it is interesting to consider an answer from one of the SC employees, interviewed for his expert knowledge in the field:

If *they don't have a birth certificate, they can't enrol in school…And for higher studies, they need citizenship…We* [SC] *assist in how to get citizenship. We just show them the way to get this certificate from the warden's office…The warden's office will tell them that they need this, but they will ignore that…*[they say] *they don't give it to us, we are marginalised, so they don't give it to us!'* (expert 1 annex 4).

This could imply that Musahars have little trust in the 'warden's office' – representing government officials – and thus assume a struggle in obtaining a birth certificate. However, according to the interviewed expert, the government facilitates a service, but Musahars do not seek it. Nevertheless, it

seems little inclusive of the state to have the same requirements for obtaining official documents for the Musahars as other, more privileged groups, without appropriate guidance. It can be assumed that the state is aware that many Musahars do not have the right to a birth certificate because their parents did not have one, or because they have difficulties obtaining one due to insufficient funds to travel to the capital to officially sign and receive it (this information was retrieved through informal conversation). At the same time, the other interviewed expert described how the young Musahars feel reluctant to seek officials as many of them are married while under the age of 20; *'…They go thinking that the government officers will tell them something bad like 'you must be 20 years old and now you say you're 18 – that's illegal'. They know the situation in Nepal – you cannot get married before you're 20, so they are in a dilemma'* (expert 2 annex 4). This, in turn, suggests that Musahars experience difficulties in the process of obtaining necessary documentation to enrol in education.

According to the Performance Legitimacy Theory, a high probability exists that other actors will provide the needed services in the absence of the state (Dagher 2018: 92). In this case, the state can be argued to fail to meet the needs of the Musahars by failing to provide them with basic education in public schools, including ensuring that it is easy to obtain the necessary official documents to be enrolled. SC, on the other hand, provided the guidance and help to obtain official documents. Drawing on the findings in the analysis 1, SC can be argued to have succeeded in creating new norms around education as well as providing classes adapted to the local context and thus met the expectations of the girls. Following the theory, this would imply that SC ultimately would be perceived as a legitimate actor in the eyes of the Musahars.

7.3 Capacity to Provide Services

According to Performance Legitimacy Theory, an actor needs to have the capacity to both identify but specially to meet the needs of the citizens by providing solutions. That is, if the actor does not have the capacity – understood as the economic, political and societal power – to provide services and solutions to basic needs, the situation will likely allow for another actor to provide these needs and thus gain the legitimacy (ibid).

In the interviews with the Musahars, it was identified that one of the reasons for some of them to drop out of public school, had to do with the closure of the school: *'When I went to school it closed due to political issues'* (girl 1 annex 1). According to the theory post-conflict states can experience a

weakened position in general which can hinder the provision of services (Dagher: 2018: 92). As described in this thesis' Context Section, the Nepalese state has experienced financial or resource-related deficits; hence, the closure of the school can be rationalised. On the other hand, Nepal is a country receiving a high amount of development aid (Karkee & Comfort 2016); thus, it can be argued that the closure of public schools in areas with more densely populated Musahar villages, could be because of a political down-prioritisation more than financial insufficiencies.

Studying the issue of capacity, it is important to consider the magnitude of citizens with the specific need that has to be met by a state or another actor, as the size can imply whether it might be a collective issue for the country and thus difficult to manage (Dagher 2018: 92). The Dalits in which the Musahars are categorised constitute 13.56% of the population. However, as 25% of the population of Nepal live under the poverty line, other lower castes besides the Dalits can be argued to have similar disadvantaged conditions in life (Bishwakarma 2019: 1, 9). As poverty is thus widespread, this increases the possibilities for other actors to attempt to meet the citizens' needs, as the state – typically in a post-conflict country – will experience inefficiencies in meeting all needs (Dagher 2018: 92).

7.4 Perceptions of Street Child's Education Programme versus Public School

When states lack the capacity to provide solutions to its citizens' needs – by identifying these and meeting them – it is most likely that other actors will seek 'the three factors'. These other actors, accordingly, become objects of legitimacy if they succeed to provide what the state has failed to (ibid: 93).

In the interviews with the girls, a clear difference in the attitudes towards the INGO provided school classes and the experiences with public school education was identified. As exemplified, some of the interviewees have had positive experiences with good teachers. Those of the students who did not experience any problems with the public school – but were not positive either - often had more neutral answers when asked about why they left school. Many of these answers were related to the lack of interest e.g.; *'My family told me to go, but I was not interested'* (girl 6 annex 1). Some, however, experienced that *'...public school teachers mostly spend time talking to each other and not to teach'* (girl 7 annex 1). More concerning information was revealed in the interviews with one CMC, who

informed that charges of sexual abuse of girls in one public school made Musahar parents afraid of sending their children to school (CMC 2 annex 2).

On the contrary, the girls most often expressed a perception of SC's programme as useful in terms of *'teaching skills of the teachers'* (girl 1 annex 1) and the provision of *'...skills classes according to our interest'* (girl 7 annex 1). In general, teachers were described as being pedagogical and repeating the curriculum until it was comprehensible. Fieldnotes made during the interviews, testified that some interviewees tended to come with various receding explanations when asked about absence in public school (girl 6 annex 1). On the other hand, most of the interviewees did not seem hesitant when talking about their experiences with the SC programme; be it absence, motivation or skills learned. The attitudes toward the two 'institutions' were therefore interestingly different in positiveness.

The reason for the girls' often receding or neutral answers related to public school experiences might be better understood with the elaborative answer from one of their SC teachers:

'Teachers in the public school are good and have more experience in teaching, but they don't spend time on teaching. They think they have a government job, so they don't have a problem. They feel they don't need to give their best. So, the children can't get what they should when they don't have enough money for private school' (teacher 4 center 3).

According to this statement, the level and engagement of teachers in public schools simply are too low, which ultimately could be the crucial factor in the generally less positive attitude toward the public school. Working from conclusions from analysis 1, SC's success in getting the girls to participate in the school activities is achieved by changing the norms of the communities through deepening their level of ownership of the programme as well as informing about the benefits of female education. The attitudes, consequently, reveal a way more positive approach to SC's education programme contrasted to that of the experiences with public school. Following the reasoning of the theory, the legitimacy of the object – be it state or INGO – is determined by their relevance in the lives of the population group (Dagher 2018: 94). According to the findings in this analysis, SC provides an approach to education which resonates with the needs of the participants to a larger extent than that of public education. This, in turn, implies that the Musahars perceive SC as a more legitimate education provider than the state. This assumption is based on the theoretical notion that the more

responsive an object is to its subjects' needs, the higher is the likeliness of them to perceive the object as legitimate (ibid: 91).

This in turn can constitute a great challenge to the general perception of the state as a legitimate actor, as citizens will tend to have lower expectations of alternative civil society actors than to states. Actors such as INGOs will thus more often be able to provide resources to selected population groups without responsibility for the entire population (ibid: 93).
In this case study, it is worth mentioning that SC solely focused on the Musahar population. In informal conversation with one of the experts, we were informed that SC has been approached by other disadvantaged population groups who had expressed the wish to participate in their programme. Ultimately, this presents an example of the unequal terms under which INGOs and states operate in the area. Eventually, INGOs can be argued to be perceived legitimate more easily by the beneficiaries, as they are not measured against the same criteria (ibid).

However, there is a time aspect to take into consideration in this analysis using Performance Legitimacy Theory. As for the girls who dropped out of public school at an early age, their memory and impressions of the school might have faded in relation to what they are presently experiencing.
Even so, the overall attitudes of the girls toward SC's programme were in general extensively more description rich, nuanced and positive than those of the public school. According to the theory in question, this could indicate SC's accomplishment in meeting the needs of the young Musahars to a greater extent than the state. Although the Nepalese state can be argued to have identified the needs of the Musahars, the interviews with the girls, teachers and experts point to the failure in the state's enforcement. In conclusion, the analysis ultimately shows that SC - as the alternative education provider – by experiencing success in their initiatives toward the girls' inclusion in the programme, is perceived as a more legitimate education provider than the stately education provider, by the girls and their parents.

7.5 Sub-conclusion

In the analyses presented, the two working questions of this thesis have been addressed. The first part scrutinised the attitudes of Musahars toward education, including public education and the INGO programme, in order to identify norms in the communities. In addition, it investigated the strategies and methods of SC to understand how participation was achieved.

Negative attitudes toward public education in particular, but also norms related to poverty and traditional gender roles, were identified as significant obstacles to girls' school attendance. In spite of these norms, engagement and participation was achieved through the creation of trustful teacher-parent relationships, adaptation of the classes to local circumstances and norms as well as flexibility to accommodate the necessity of housework. Through these approaches, SC managed to create support and change norms of the communities, and used the high level of social capital, including close social relations and strong norms, as an enabling factor for the continued education of girls. Norms about early marriage and the primary role of women as housewives nevertheless still prevail and require a continued effort from teachers and community members to prevent drop-out and absence.

The second working question addressed how girls' experiences with public school reflected their perception of the state as legitimate. While it was probable that the state was actually aware of the needs of the Musahars, and initiatives had been made for a more inclusive education provision, they had clearly failed to implement the policies successfully. Lack of capacity in combination with lack of prioritisation were factors identified as influential in this. As a result, Musahar girls' (and their parents) had mainly negative perceptions of public education which in combination with other negative experiences with state institutions, indicate a lack of state legitimacy in the eyes of this population group. In contrast, SC's education programme was considered beneficial and hence SC as more legitimate.

The above illustrates the main findings of the two analyses focusing each on their respective working question. In the following perspectives and implications of the findings will be discussed followed by a conclusion attempting to reply to this thesis' research question.

8.0 Discussion

The following discussion will review some of the findings identified in relation to the research question at hand in the two previous presented analyses. In order to provide a broader perspective to the research question, popular critiques of INGOs and governments in the education provision field, will be used to debate this case study's findings. Ultimately, the aim is to secure a critical view on our own findings, by discussing these in relation to other scholarly perspectives in the field.

This case study utilised a positive case where SC was assumed to be succeeding with their programme. This discussion will attempt to foster the more critical views on their practices since analysis 1 mainly focused on uncovering *how* they practiced. The societal concern of the phenomenon under investigation - marginalised girls' exclusion from public education and inclusion in INGO education programmes, suggested possible implications in relation to the perception of the state as a legitimate service provider. As the Performance Legitimacy Theory allowed for the identification of such perceptions, the discussion will attempt to cover the implications of this in a larger perspective.

8.1 Legitimate but Unsustainable INGOs?

This case study found that marginalised Musahar girls were successfully included in SC's education programme. This was achieved through the transformation of negative social capital to positive social capital in the communities. Hence, the programme succeeded in changing norms within the participants and their surroundings. At the same time, the girls' perceptions of SC and the public school were identified, showing that SC was perceived as the most legitimate education provider. In order to approach our own findings from a critical point of view, it is relevant to raise questions about the sustainability of such donor-funded INGO programmes, in accordance with scholars who raise such points of critique (Ghani et al 2005; Martin 2004).

SC's education programme is funded by DfID (Department for International Development in the United Kingdom) and has an implementation period of three years spanning from 2018-2021 (Development Tracker 2019). During this study's fieldwork, we learned that most of the teachers in SC's programme – besides one – were of a higher caste than the Musahars and did not live in their villages. Although SC has cooperated with smaller local community organisations to hire the teachers, these alone are not likely to be able to provide continuous salaries to well-educated teachers and remunerate them for their travels to work, without a programme extension from the donor and the facilitation by SC. In such a scenario, the education programme could easily be phased out without a continuous capacity by the community to continue the classes, when the programme funding ends in April 2021. As Musahar teachers are rare to come by, and their education is not a

target for SC, it can be argued that the Musahars' ownership of the programme is still limited. Ultimately, SC's lack of initiatives to include Musahars in the villages in teacher training present itself as an issue for the programme's sustainability. Although the immediate beneficiaries of the programme are the girls, the teachers are an essential element in reaching these beneficiaries. A suggestive measure for this sustainability deficit, could be to target some of the girls for teacher training. According to our findings, the programme has succeeded in changing the mindsets regarding the benefits of education among the girls as well as community members. Ultimately, this change could foster the possibility for the community to sustain the learning of young girls with support from local community organisations but without large donor funds. However, a facilitation and training of teachers would be crucial for this scenario to unfold.

As the literature review has shown, Nepal is not the only country that experiences INGO provided education services among fragile and marginalised population groups – case studies in countries in Africa and Asia present as examples (Brass 2010; Sacks 2012; Parkhurst 2005; Martin 2004; Winters 2018). Assuming that this thesis' findings are applicable in similar cases in other geographical locations, one can wonder what the possible magnitude and implications of INGO provided education services might be. As a large majority of the INGO critical literature suggests, heavy INGO involvement in school schemes can be argued to reinforce Western 'top-down development', steered by interests outside the benefits of the receiving country (Samoff 1993; Tabulawa 2003). In addition, there is the possibility that citizens will perceive INGOs as more legitimate actors than the state in meeting their needs, as according to the premise of Performance Legitimacy Theory and exemplified in this thesis' second analysis. Possible implications of a weakened perception of state legitimacy on a larger scale, can in line with existing critique, be that Western donors – through non-governmental actors – gain extensive amounts of power to steer a certain form of development through school curricula, education structures etc. Hence, the sovereignty of the developing states might end up at stake because another actor takes over a responsibility that was supposed to be theirs. According to Schuller (2009), there is a high possibility that INGOs risk eroding the social contract between the state and its citizens by providing services which the state should provide (85). The social contract implies that governments have a responsibility towards its citizens including basic service provision (Batley and McLoughlin 2010: 135). While states can be held accountable by

their citizens, this is not the case for INGOs which are often only accountable to foreign donors and their beneficiaries (Schuller 2009: 90).

Ultimately, such an argument leads to the question of whether INGOs and donors do disservices to certain population groups by making them trust in their work and potentially diminish their trust in the government's work. Eventually, governments might be getting a free pass in terms of responsibilities, which arguably would not benefit the most disadvantaged citizens after a donor would end funding, as the state might be reluctant to resume the responsibility and the citizens might distrust the state's capabilities in doing so.

8.2 Limitations to INGO Inclusion

Although many factors for the inclusion of the marginalised Musahars were acknowledged in analysis 1, certain limitations to this were however identified.

Through informal conversations with the two experts from SC, we learned that other low-caste groups - who had heard about the education initiative - had approached them with a wish to participate. SC had to reject these people, as the donor requirements solely focused on Musahars. As some of the approaching people can be assumed to have equally low economic capacity as many of the Musahars, it is interesting how an inclusion project excludes evenly disadvantaged people as the ones they help. Acknowledging the economic limitations and requirements of a donor funded project, it still appears that the selection of whom to help has been based on a selection of the traditionally lowest caste. Arguing for helping one of the traditionally lowest castes seems like a comprehensible idea to sell to a donor. Nevertheless, it can be argued that selecting the beneficiaries for such projects might be more inclusive based on economic requirements – as these would surpass that of caste division and acknowledge that economic differences which exist within castes why these might not be a suitable scale for measurement. This reflection can in fact be identified in newer studies in the academic field, which suggest that caste-based discrimination is decreasing and inequalities within caste-groups are significant (Subedi 2016; Khanal 2015).

In addition, some teachers in SC's project reported of girls dropping out of the programme because of marriage as their spouses would not allow them to continue. These stories imply that - although SC has succeeded in including more Musahars in active education than the public school - some girls

were still left behind. This might suggest that although targeting one of the poorest population groups it is still a challenge to include the most disadvantaged within this group. This concern has likewise been identified in the literature by Carron and Carr (1991) who have presented a study suggesting that INGO programmes are more easily accessed by those who already have had experiences with education before. Assuming such, a hierarchy within an otherwise low-social group emerges and the bottom segment is still not reached. As fathers and husbands seemed to dominate the decision making in terms of women's education, one measure SC did not take into consideration was the education of boys. Although they did succeed in informing boys about the benefits of girls' education, one could wonder if offering education to boys as well could enforce a stronger will to let girls explore the possibilities of education.

Although the idea of a different education approach has been successful in gaining the Musahar girls to attend SC's education programme and be motivated by it, some limitations to their further opportunities have been identified. With the education the girls gain from participating in SC's project, they ought to be capable of getting a job or starting a small business themselves. As such, preparation for further education has never been the aim of the project. In terms of the project's limitations and sustainability, it appears relevant to look into the constellation of the programme.
Since SC does not collaborate with any public schools, their goal is isolated from those of public schools. One implication of this could be that the education provided by SC is not officially recognised and would not allow for higher studies opportunities. Although some of the interviewed girls spoke of future plans in terms of opening small shops and not continuing higher studies, it can be argued that they are still as excluded from the official school institution as they were before their participation. In addition, by providing the Musahars with a very narrow and local option for classes, the possibility to meet people from other areas and networks is removed. Ultimately, it could be argued that an education inclusion programme should be able to foster tools to navigate in a school context outside the project. Without such measure, the girls might risk having difficulties gaining acknowledgement for their accomplishments after the project ends and SC pulls out. At the same time, there might be a risk to further weaken the girl's perception of the state as a legitimate service provider, by having no cooperation with the public schools. As suggested in analysis 2, the young Musahars already experience a perception of SC as a more legitimate education provider than the

state. Referring back to previous mentioned implications of citizens' weakened perception of the state as a service provider, it could be argued that SC would present more sustainable solutions by helping to build a bridge between the Musahar girls and the official education system – especially considering their relative short period of interference in their lives.

Ultimately, this discussion has had the aim to present some of the considerations which have been spurred by this study's fieldwork process and later data analysis. More specifically, this discussion has suggested that although SC might be perceived as a more legitimate education provider than the Nepalese state - in the eyes of the Musahars - questions of sustainability can still be posed regarding their education initiative. As SC has no teacher training for the Musahar girls nor collaborations with the public school, risks are that their project might face difficulties in continuing after ended donor funding. At the same time, it has been suggested that SC's education programme could attempt for an official recognition of the participants' education to be obtained. The limitations to the inclusion of other marginalised population groups than the Musahars has likewise been discussed as a critical pitfall of the project's all-round inclusiveness. Considering donor requirements as inevitable – SC has had to reject other poor and marginalised people based on caste divisions rather than economic standing. Thus, an alternative division strategy was discussed, suggesting more focus on economic resources rather than caste categorisation.

Being critical toward our own findings have been important for the sake of this study's validity as the data for analysis has been collected in collaboration with SC. In the forthcoming conclusion, more detailed findings derived from both analyses will be presented and will function as the finalisation of this research. As many theoretical and methodological angles to this research topic could have been relevant, a section on further study ideas will be included.

9.0 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to investigate how an INGO has succeeded in gaining active participation in their education programme and the implications of this for the legitimacy of the state. The research was, specifically, guided by the following research question:

How can an INGO education programme succeed in gaining participation from marginalised and illiterate girls in Nepal and what are the possible implications of INGO education provision for state legitimacy?

In order to address the research question, fieldwork was carried out in Janakpur, Nepal. The collected primary data, in continuation, was approached through a combined theoretical framework. Social Capital Theory helped shed light on the significance of social norms and relations for the success of social interventions. Legitimacy implications were, in turn, approached through a Performance Legitimacy Theory framework focusing on actors' deliverance of social services.
Analysis 1 showed how SC has managed to take advantage of social structures already existent in the communities to achieve their objective. The norm of girls not attending public school is slowly changing into a norm where parents and girls are sanctioned through corrections by teachers or CMCs if girls are absent. The close relations and strong norms of the communities, which was defined as negative social capital in relation to girls' education, are used by SC as a resource to ensure engagement with the programme. An important norm of the community is that the common good is prioritised before the individual's interest – something that is clear in relation to girls having to help their family rather than going to school. As demonstrated, teachers try to convince parents about how education of their daughters will benefit the family as well as the community. In this way, the existing norm is used to promote a new one. Although challenges remain, including a continued lack of prioritisation of girls' education, the programme has succeeded through context-adaptation and involvement of community members which has created a sense of ownership among the Musahar community members.

The success of SC's programme contrasts that of the public schools. In analysis 2 it was illustrated how there is a general lack of trust in public authorities, including in public education, among the

Musahars. This was related to the Musahar girls' experiences of lack of teacher engagement and school adaption to their needs, closure of schools and abuse. Utilising Performance Legitimacy Theory, it was concluded that the Nepalese state appears to be aware of the educational needs of the Musahars, but has severely failed to enforce policies to meet these needs. The Nepalese state's capacity might have been hindered financially due to the post-conflict status of the country as well as their overall poverty rank. However, the mismatch between their knowledge of the Musahars' needs and their reluctance in meeting these, suggested a lack of prioritisation. SC, on the contrary, was argued to succeed in meeting the Musahars' needs for education and was ultimately perceived as a more legitimate education provider than the state, from the viewpoint of the interviewed Musahars.

9.1 Future Studies

This case study has shed light on one group's inclusion in INGO provided education. It would be interesting to investigate, through further studies, how other groups experience public education provision. Thus, studies including other Dalit groups, but also non-Dalits, would provide a more nuanced and generalisable picture of public education provision. This could help illuminate whether dissatisfaction with public education is widespread and the consequences of this for marginalised population groups versus more privileged ones who may be able to afford private schools. Such studies would be able to explore the broader implications of stately failure in providing the population with basic education such as sustained inequality. Including perspectives of public education authorities and employees would further contribute to the understanding of the issue.
Beyond the context of Nepal, further studies could also be made in other developing countries as the problems of exclusion from public education by marginalised groups is not a Nepali phenomenon. It would be relevant to explore other marginalised groups' perspectives on the state education provision to shed light on how and why states are failing to include these groups and what is needed to redress this. In addition, successful initiatives by INGOs or other actors could also contribute to test the findings of this study and result in recommendations directed at education providers - be it stately or others.

9.2 Practical Recommendations

While social norms are important elements in educational motivation and participation, it is important to underline that social norms can never be regarded as separated from surrounding conditions as they are, off course, affected by these. The attitude toward education is hence affected by the common situation of severe poverty and lack of education among the Musahars. Thus, due to the necessity of earning an income to survive, work is naturally of high priority while education is sometimes deprioritised as it is not related to an immediate financial outcome. A sustainable change of mindsets – to believe that education is indeed valuable – accordingly, not only requires information, adaptation and involvement, but also concrete results. As long as improvements are not experienced, education is likely not to be regarded as important as opposed to income-generating activities. The ability of education, in this case of an INGO, to create real changes is therefore decisive.

Sustainability and hence ensuring the long-term inclusion of the Musahars in education, in addition, requires efforts related to holding the state accountable. While INGOs can contribute positively and help improve the life conditions of marginalised population groups when states fail to do so, the state must assume responsibility for fulfilling the basic needs of its population to ensure sustainability. In the end, INGOs cannot be held accountable by the beneficiaries in contrast to the state which is obliged to provide basic services to its population.

It is then, in the end, the ability of INGOs, not only to provide needed services that can change the lives of some individuals, but to work actively for sustainable and substantial change that contribute to decrease inequality, marginalisation and exclusion. Education and awareness-raising which can help empower people to become active citizens and demand their rights from state authorities can be one element of this. Meanwhile, the efforts must be long-term and extensive to make a real difference for marginalised population groups that still today are maintained in severe poverty in spite of large numbers of donor-funded initiatives to redress this. Support of marginalised groups' organisation and advocacy in addition to putting pressure on states to fulfil their obligations are crucial elements for INGOs wanting to contribute to sustained improved conditions for marginalised population groups.

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